



Debates

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

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

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

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

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

Budget 2021-22—review Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.02): I am pleased to rise this morning to present the 2021-22 ACT budget review. As we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I present another economic update, which continues to build on the government's principles from which we have never wavered: investing in health care and essential services; protecting and creating jobs across our territory; and continuing to support Canberrans who need it most.

Our public health response will continue to take precedence in how the ACT government supports our community. That is simply because the strength of a jurisdiction's health response directly contributes to its economic resilience. We have seen that a clear and well-communicated health response, one that is trusted by the community, gives households and businesses the confidence to invest. It provides a strong foundation for recovery and sustainable economic growth.

I am pleased to report to the Assembly that the ACT's gross state product grew by a further 2.8 per cent in the last fiscal year, 2020-21. This is our 31st consecutive year of economic growth. It was the third highest growth rate among all states and territories, and nearly double the national growth rate in that year, which was only 1½ per cent.

The ACT government has provided more than half a billion dollars in additional health funding, allocated nearly half a billion dollars in targeted support for small and medium businesses, and invested more than \$300 million in additional funding for education and skills. At this point, the pathway out of the pandemic remains uncertain, and I am afraid to report that there are other risks emerging more clearly on the horizon. However, I want to reassure the community that, during these uncertain times, we will continue to invest with an eye to the future wellbeing of Canberrans.

There is no doubt that our economy has demonstrated significant resilience in the face of disruptions to economic activity caused by the pandemic over the last two years, and the economy is expected to continue to grow over the coming period. While the pandemic is by no means over, compared to the situation at the time of the release of this fiscal year's budget around six months ago, we have been able to lower the necessary public health social measures. This has seen the easing of density limits, the reopening of both interstate and international borders and the resumption of public events.

Together, as a community, we carefully emerged from the lockdown in October 2021 as we achieved global-leading vaccination rates. Our resilient economy has been supported by increased consumer confidence as a result of a well-managed public health situation. This increased consumer confidence is reflected in the strong growth in household consumption of nearly 8½ per cent as we came out of the lockdown through the December quarter 2021.

I have used the words “cautious optimism” many times this year to describe both the public health outlook and the economic outlook. As you can see from the budget review, that cautious optimism is the right tone at this time. While the Delta outbreak and the necessary lockdown in the territory resulted in a downturn in economic activity during the September quarter last year, there was a very strong bounce back in the December quarter, a V-shaped recovery, with state final demand increasing by 1.9 per cent.

Recent data shows that the ACT is likely to record positive growth for the first half of calendar year 2022. The budget review forecasts gross state product to grow by 2½ per cent in the current fiscal year, increasing to 3¼ per cent in 2022-23, and stabilising at around our long-run growth rate of three per cent per year across the forward estimates. These forecasts reflect anticipated improvements in the private sector in the fiscal year 2022-23, coming on the back of rising consumer and business confidence and stronger demand across the economy.

We have all witnessed the spread of Omicron and the disruptions it has caused, particularly to the labour market. However, it is not expected to have a lasting impact on our jobs market. Labour force data in February, along with the trajectory of other employment market indicators, shows that a strong jobs recovery is underway, with the unemployment rate falling to three per cent, the lowest of all Australian states and territories. The budget review forecasts employment to continue to grow across the forward estimates period.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, in a period of heightened uncertainty, the government has taken the approach of being transparent about these uncertainties. We knew that keeping the community informed about the future would give households and businesses the confidence needed to support their own spending and investment decisions, despite what is an overarching uncertainty of these times.

We released the first set of forward estimates of any Australian jurisdiction after the pandemic was declared. Since that August 2020 economic and fiscal update, we have

updated our approach to forecasting to include both upside and downside scenarios to outline the potential impacts of different assumptions around pandemic-induced economic impacts.

The key drivers of both the upside and downside scenarios in this budget review outline the exogenous factors that would most greatly impact the economic outlook for the territory and what those impacts could be. These include new variants of COVID-19 or a decline in vaccine effectiveness; the rate of return of skilled migrants, international students and tourists to our territory; the length of the material effects on economic activity as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine; and changes in the cash rate by the Reserve Bank of Australia responding to emerging inflationary pressures.

These risks are on the horizon. They are the reason to be cautious. But with proper planning, monitoring and maintaining of flexibility in our fiscal policy response, we are ready to respond to these future scenarios.

The territory's strong balance sheet has allowed the government to respond strongly over the last two years to the public health, economic and financial impacts that COVID has had on individuals, the community and businesses. The territory's AAA credit rating, once again reaffirmed by S&P Global Ratings after the 2021-22 budget, continues to outperform all other state and territory governments in Australia and all subnational governments in the Asia-Pacific region.

The ACT government's emphasis on significant fiscal stimulus, job creation, economic recovery and support for the most impacted in our community is reflected in the headline net operating balance over the short term. With this update the headline net operating balance deficit is estimated to improve in the current fiscal year, to \$770 million. That is an improvement of \$181 million compared to the estimate at budget time. This improvement reflects increases in the national GST pool, GST being our single largest source of revenue, and an improvement in our own-source taxation revenue, which is reflective of the stronger economic position in the territory.

This revenue increase is partially offset by new policy decisions that we have taken to continue our effective pandemic response and to invest in the wellbeing of Canberrans for the future. The underlying position improves each year across the forward estimates, with deficits reducing to about \$370 million by fiscal year 2024-25.

Overall, the budget review sees a \$475 million improvement in the territory's fiscal position over four years to 2024-25 compared to the estimates at budget time. The path back to budget balance will continue to be a priority for the government over the medium term. However, the need to balance the competing priorities of the immediate health response and to build on the foundations of the territory's economic recovery and growth outweighs an immediate need to balance the budget in the next fiscal year, or in the couple of years after.

The budget review reaffirms the government's commitment to prioritise support for the economy to recover from the effects of the pandemic, while recognising the need for prudent fiscal management over the medium term to support intergenerational equity and ensure the wellbeing of Canberrans in the long term.

The last two years have confirmed that never has the role of government and a strong public sector been clearer: to respond quickly; to use our balance sheet and our borrowing power to invest; to support our most vulnerable; and to protect and shape the local economy through this long recovery period.

As I said at the outset, the budget review is designed to continue this policy approach—to address the immediate public health challenges and to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of Canberrans into the long term. In this budget update we expand the delivery of essential services, we further protect the environment, and we invest in the transformative infrastructure that will secure the economic future of our territory.

The government allocates around 30 per cent of the annual budget to delivering health services in the territory. The value of this investment is demonstrated in the quality of the health outcomes that we are able to achieve. At its heart, our health system is made up of people—the doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and support staff who have been there when we needed them. In the budget review, we will invest an additional \$126 million into the territory's public health system to meet future demand, address current increased needs resulting from COVID and support more complex health service delivery, now and into the future.

The budget review provides updates on the government's near half billion-dollar business support program, underpinned by the business support grants provided during last year's lockdown, as well as highlighting the targeted programs we have put in place to support a small number of specific sectors that were impacted beyond the lockdown and have been more adversely impacted by COVID during the course of the pandemic. From specific support for nightclubs, to indoor play centres, to additional grant funding for live music venues and the extension of fee waivers for hospitality businesses, the government has provided measured and targeted support as needed to protect local jobs and support local businesses.

Turning to education, we have invested over \$20 million to support the safe return of students and teachers to the classroom. This has provided additional cleaning services in public schools, the distribution of masks, hand sanitiser and hundreds of thousands of rapid antigen tests, and it has also included the delivery of ventilation improvements in classrooms. Throughout the pandemic, Canberrans know, and have witnessed, that we will continue to make the necessary investments to provide safe environments—COVID-safe learning environments in this case—for students and teachers.

Turning now to infrastructure, the budget review builds on the 2021-22 budget, which set out the territory's largest ever infrastructure program, with a number of new investments bringing the total infrastructure program, general government sector and trading enterprises to \$6.6 billion.

This Infrastructure Investment Program is part of the government's plan to deliver infrastructure that is built for Canberra and built to support our growing city. This program will deliver over \$1 billion in infrastructure in education and training,

including the CIT project in Woden; over \$870 million in new health infrastructure; and \$1.4 billion to upgrade and expand our city's sustainable and connected transport network.

Specifically, the budget review includes over \$150 million invested in new and improved school infrastructure, including: a new zero-emissions primary school and early childhood centre in Strathnairn, in west Belconnen, to open in 2025; the modernisation of the Narrabundah College in the inner south; and a significant redevelopment of Garran Primary School in the Woden Valley.

There is funding to begin planning for a food organics and garden organics waste recovery facility. There is funding for better technology and more park-and-ride facilities, to assist traffic flows and manage disruption across the territory's traffic network, as this major infrastructure program rolls out. There is also funding to progress the electrification of the Woden bus depot.

These investments combine to create and protect local jobs. This supports our economic recovery and provides lasting transformative infrastructure that provides economic opportunity for all Canberrans.

In the budget review the government will also establish a concessional loan facility as the second phase of our policy response to support the remediation of flammable cladding on private buildings—an initiative that will, first and foremost, support affected home owners, while also facilitating a further pipeline of construction works.

We will continue to protect Canberra's unique environment, building on the \$70 million we announced in the 2021-22 budget with an additional \$13 million investment in this budget review which will, amongst other initiatives, further expand the Healthy Waterways project.

I have said before that our city, and this government, should be judged on how we support the vulnerable. The 2021-22 budget delivered over \$75 million in additional funding to support those most in need, including new funding to expand homelessness services, increased community and multicultural sector funding, and more support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans. In what has been one of the toughest periods in our city's history, that support has enabled people to reach out and get help where they need it. That support has been critical and it has been available.

Through the budget review, the government will provide \$2½ million to further expand specialist homelessness service capacity, transitioning Winter Lodge from a six-month to a 12-month operating facility, and providing funding for a community mental health specialist to support the transition for rough sleepers.

The government has also invested \$3.7 million to allow for non-Australian residents who are overlooked by the Australian government to access the pandemic leave disaster payment. Ongoing community safety will also be ensured by providing over \$18 million in additional police funding to maintain specialist protective services, such as tactical responses, intelligence, and search and rescue capability.

The pandemic has highlighted the need to continue to improve the efficiency and productivity of our economy, to sustain economic growth during economic shocks and to support economic growth in the long term. Our tax reform program is one such example. It continues, year on year, to remove a significant barrier to Canberrans owning their own home. The budget review further supports this progress by expanding the off-the-plan unit conveyance duty concession by increasing the cap to \$600,000 from 1 April this year. We will continue to cut stamp duty in every budget that I deliver as Treasurer.

Wellbeing is at the centre of government decision-making. We continue to embed the wellbeing framework in our budget process, broader policy development processes and in program implementation. We are the first jurisdiction in Australia to do so. Amongst other things, this includes incorporating a gender perspective through wellbeing impact assessments. This process is helping to ensure that we are explicitly considering those factors that might influence our quality of life throughout the policy process, from design, to decision, to delivery.

At the commencement of this speech, I spoke about the risks to our economic outlook and the investments that the territory government is making to deliver on our priorities. This includes ensuring that we have the settings in place to take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead for our growing and resilient economy. Last Wednesday I launched the ACT's economic development priorities for the next four years, and I spoke about them in this place earlier in the week.

The mission-oriented, forward-looking policy document that we have released sets out our ambitions to continue growing a highly productive, increasingly diversified and progressive economy for the future, to give people back time, to move towards a net zero-emissions city and then go beyond, and to prioritise knowledge-based economic growth.

We have identified the areas of strength in our city and our economy that we will seek to build on in the coming years to support the creation of new jobs and to provide more opportunities for Canberrans in an increasingly diverse range of industry sectors. We look forward to building on this ambitious plan in the economic statements to come in this parliamentary term.

As I said, never has the role of government and a strong public sector been clearer than has been the case over the past two years—to respond quickly in a crisis, to use borrowing and our balance sheet to invest, to support our most vulnerable, and to protect and shape the local economy through this period of recovery and growth. There is still a journey ahead of us. We have a long way still to go, but the budget review I will table today is another essential step in delivering the plan, our plan, for the future as Canberra emerges stronger, together. I present the following papers:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 20A—Budget 2021-22—Budget review.

Budget 2021-22—Budget review—Ministerial statement 24 March 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Planning—draft variation 369

Ministerial statement

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.26): The ACT government is committed to making our city resilient to our changing climate. Part of this resilience is increasing our urban tree canopy to 30 per cent, and increasing our permeable surfaces to 30 per cent in urban areas. Ensuring that our city remains compact, with new development concentrated in existing areas, is another part of that resilience.

The ACT government prepared a draft territory plan variation, variation 369, as a first step in our planning system to plant more trees on our residential blocks. The variation also increases the proportion of permeable surfaces and open spaces for residential blocks. This is a big change that we are making. We are asking for a culture change from industry and home owners to move away from huge houses, to ensure that households have more yard space.

In the time since the ACT government first proposed these changes, we have seen a significant uptick in the amount of single residential blocks sold by the Suburban Land Agency. More and more Canberrans are buying and building house and land packages.

Given the significant impact that this change will have across the territory, particularly at the affordable end for people who have purchased compact blocks, I have asked officials to consider how industry and home owners can best transition to this new system before finalising and tabling the draft variation. I do not want to disadvantage people who have bought house and land packages in good faith. Similarly, I want to ensure the best possible way to increase our tree cover and permeability.

I recognise the importance of the changes DV369 is making and understand the need to ensure that we are preparing our homes for the impacts of climate change already being faced today and those that will come in the future. I am committed to taking strong and effective climate action. This must be done in a measured, considered way. Sometimes this means taking a little extra time than envisaged to ensure that we can deliver an outcome that strengthens our climate resilience without unintended impacts.

I also acknowledge that many, including my colleagues from the Greens, are disappointed that DV369 has not been tabled this week. This is an issue that goes to the core of some of the reforms that come into this place. I want to reassure them that

the government is not abandoning these reforms, and that I will continue working closely with Greens MLAs.

I look forward to continuing to deliver the planning elements that will increase our tree canopy coverage and working with my colleagues across government on a wide range of measures that we are taking to make our city resilient to our changing climate. I present the following paper:

Variation 369 to the Territory Plan—Living Infrastructure in Residential Zones—Ministerial statement, 24 March 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (10.29): I rise to make a few remarks in support of Minister Gentleman's statement regarding the progress of draft variation 369, known as the living infrastructure draft variation.

I have been a vocal supporter of this important reform that aims to embed the need for new requirements on residential blocks, both in greenfield developments and on infill sites. In my discussions with the community, there is strong support for the government to use regulation to futureproof our city and ensure that there is enough greenery to prevent heat sinks in a warming and drying climate.

The community is very supportive of the need to protect our current trees and plant enough in new developments to ensure that residents can access the benefits delivered by trees in relation to cooling our homes and our neighbourhoods, providing habitat, and increasing liveability and amenity.

There is a growing understanding of the need to ensure private, as well as public, open space, to ensure that homes are built in a manner that is appropriate for the size of the block they sit on, and that permeable surfaces enable water to soak into the soil in a way that is in harmony with human activity.

This draft variation has been under development for many years, in recognition of the fact that until now there have been no requirements for planting trees on private blocks, or limits on the house site footprints to ensure that every block has enough soil and space to plant them. This is a new and innovative policy, and positions the ACT as a world leader in creating a sustainable, biodiverse city.

We have always recognised that this reform is part of a broader range of initiatives, including new tree protection laws, the planning review and other instruments such as the estate development code. It is important that these pieces of work come together and there is clarity about how they work together.

In recognition of the significance of this reform, it is right that we work with industry and home owners to ensure that appropriate transitional arrangements are in place. It is right that people are not presented with significant changes after they have entered into contracts and arrangements with builders.

We need to ensure that these transitional arrangements are put in place, but we need also to ensure that this reform is delivered in a timely way. We know that there is strong community support for this initiative because Canberrans know our city needs this change.

Change can be challenging, but I am confident that we can finalise this variation in a way that addresses the short-term transitional issues with clarity and fairness, while locking in the rules that will deliver important long-term goals for our city.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Workers compensation—transfer from Comcare Ministerial statement

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.32): I rise to make a statement in response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts report No 4 of 2022, entitled *Inquiry into the Auditor-General's Report No. 6 of 2020: Transfer of Workers' Compensation Arrangements from Comcare*.

I welcome the public accounts committee's interest in this government's initiatives to improve services for injured and ill public servants. I was pleased to attend the committee hearings on 16 June last year to discuss the project, which designed and established a new workers compensation self-insurer for the ACT public service and which managed the transfer of all past ACT public sector workers compensation claims from Comcare to the new self-insurer.

The decision to establish a workers compensation self-insurer for the ACT public sector reflected a maturing of the ACT government's approach to work safety and injury management. Prior to March 2019, the ACT was the only Australian state or territory that outsourced responsibility for providing workers compensation services for its public servants to another government. That arrangement meant that important decisions affecting the health and wellbeing of our workers were taken by the commonwealth government.

Since commencing self-insurance, the ACT government determines the number of staff who provide services to our injured workers, the performance and service standards that govern that work, and how we measure its success. By taking responsibility for all aspects of the injury prevention, management and rehabilitation process, we have made a large and impactful improvement to health, welfare and work outcomes for public servants who become injured or ill because of their work.

The period since we commenced self-insurance has seen reductions in the amount of time that it takes to process workers compensation claims, earlier access to medical and rehabilitation services, increased client satisfaction and faster returns to safe and suitable work. It was in anticipation of achieving these types of improvements that this government invested in a major project to establish a self-insurer, including staffing and systems, legislation, licensing and complex governance.

A major component of that project involved planning and managing the transfer of approximately 30,000 past workers compensation claims to the new self-insurer. Approximately 1,500 of those claims were for people who were still receiving financial, medical and rehabilitation support and it was imperative that those services not be disrupted in the time of transition.

This was the largest claim transfer that the commonwealth insurer, Comcare, had attempted. In many cases, the systems and governance arrangements that would be used had to be co-designed and developed with the commonwealth to support the transfer. Overall, the transition process was complex and fast-moving. It had not been done on this scale before and there were very narrow margins for error, beyond which injured and ill people may not have received payments and essential services.

Given the scale, financial implications and complexity of the project, it was not surprising that the ACT Auditor-General, and subsequently the public accounts committee, would take an interest in and examine the conduct of the project. It was gratifying to see the Auditor-General's observation, in their report No 6 of 2020, that the government "has developed effective governance arrangements for the management and oversight of the public sector workers compensation fund and the territory's compliance with its self-insurance licence requirements" and, furthermore, that it "has established effective contract management arrangements to oversee the claims administration services".

The transition to workers compensation self-insurance was a project that was well conceived, planned and executed. It has produced tangible and sustainable benefits for the ACT community. Significantly, the project's success was underpinned by engagement with affected workers and their trade unions. The ACT self-insurer was co-designed by a working group comprising departmental and union officials with expertise and experience in workers compensation. The group operated over 12 months and was instrumental in designing the self-insurer's supporting governance and infrastructure. It also oversaw key aspects of the claim transition, including supporting consultation and communication processes that were integral to the transition.

The constructive and cooperative approach of that committee and the strong results it achieved influenced this government's decision to legislate a ministerial advisory body with a similar composition. The Public Sector Workers Compensation Fund Advisory Committee now monitors the scheme and advises me on the performance of the self-insurer and the government's return-to-work infrastructure.

Although Auditor-General's report 6 of 2020 made no recommendations, it did identify opportunities for improvement in respect of data validation and highlighted

an aspect of the transition project that was not yet complete at the time of the audit. This aspect of the transition project related to an incomplete transfer of funds from the commonwealth to the ACT insurer.

The issue of funds transfer arose because becoming a self-insurer meant that the ACT government would assume responsibility not only for all future public sector workers compensation claims but also for past and existing claims. The ACT government had paid workers compensation premiums to Comcare to cover the cost of those existing workers compensation claims and, at the time of the transfer, not all of those funds had been spent for that purpose.

Consequently, the project to transfer past and existing workers compensation claims also necessitated work to calculate and transfer an amount of money from the commonwealth back to the ACT to help meet the cost of those transferred claims. The process of calculating an expected ultimate cost of still ongoing workers compensation claims was a complex one that was not intended to be complete at the time that the ACT commenced its self-insurance service. Indeed, a part payment was made in 2019 and a process initiated to calculate a final amount in the future. The ACT self-insurance licence was issued with a transitional provision to accommodate that timing.

The Auditor-General's report provides a comprehensive description of the financial transfer issue, the underpinning policy and legal frameworks, and the timing of the process. It also emphasised that, until such time as the amount was settled and transferred to the ACT government, there would be a residual financial risk to the public sector workers compensation fund. This matter, and the self-insurer's associated risk management approach, was a particular focus of the public accounts committee inquiry.

Its report No 4 of 2022 makes only one recommendation: to finalise the matter and receive the funds no later than 30 June 2022. I am pleased to inform members that the matter has now been finalised and that in November 2021 the ACT government received the final payment in the form of a workers compensation premium refund. The details of that payment will form part of the public sector workers compensation fund's accounts, which will be published in its reporting for financial year 2021-22.

Receipt of that payment brought the project to establish the workers compensation self-insurer to a close. Although the transition project is successfully completed, the government's commitment to continuously improve services for our injured and ill workers is ongoing. The claim and rehabilitation management systems that underpin the workers compensation self-insurance are independently audited annually against a set of national criteria.

I can inform members that the most recent audits of these systems have found a 100 per cent compliance rate. During the period since self-insurance has commenced, the ACT government has introduced an immediate medical and rehabilitation service, which means that as soon as a workers compensation claim is made, injured workers commence receiving unlimited reasonable and necessary medical treatment and rehabilitation support.

In the event that a claim is ultimately not accepted, the costs expended on that person's care up to that point are not covered. This avoids injured and ill workers incurring out-of-pocket expenses and prevents delays in treatment. Both factors are important contributors to a timely recovery and return to work. We have also been able to introduce streamlined claiming processes for certain illnesses that the government considers are often causally related to employment.

This includes post-traumatic stress disorder in the case of emergency service workers and COVID-19 in the case of frontline workers. The COVID-19 experience has highlighted the versatility of the new self-insurance arrangements for dealing with unexpected risks to work safety and injury management. Rapid and sweeping changes to working arrangements that were necessary to respond to the pandemic introduced additional risks to worker safety.

A greater number of staff spent time working in isolation, frontline workers have been exposed to occupational violence, and work demands have increased, with longer hours being worked and fatigue being observed in many roles. Claim volatility has correlated closely with major changes to working arrangements, including, for example, in the education sector during the transitions to and from home-based schooling.

These risks are being addressed through a range of new and refined initiatives to promote safe working arrangements. For example, Move More, Work Well is a 30-minute information, question and answer session available for teams who are working from home or working differently to usual. Sessions are presented by a physiotherapist and provide information on healthy work habits, including the most recent evidence on ergonomics and how to prevent and manage discomfort and pain. It can be delivered online and at a time that suits ACT public sector employees.

The addition of these programs is further evidence of the ambition of the government in progressing hybrid and flexible working arrangements which support the wellbeing of our most valuable resource, our staff. Another initiative is the virtual physiotherapy service, which provides staff with a 15-minute physiotherapist consultation, by phone or video call, to talk about how they are working and their symptoms. The physiotherapist provides expert information and strategies to manage symptoms, and recommendations for further care or different services to support recovery.

The virtual physiotherapy service complements the existing early intervention physiotherapy program. The early intervention program provides staff with access to high-quality treatment as soon as possible if they have a musculoskeletal injury in the course of their work. Almost 350 people with musculoskeletal symptoms accessed these services last financial year and the majority of people who accessed the program were supported to recover at work and maintained their pre-injury hours and duties.

Each of these improvements was enabled by the workers compensation self-insurance arrangements put in place by the project examined by the Auditor-General in report No 6 of 2020. I thank the public accounts committee for its interest in this important project. I would also like to acknowledge the work of WSIR and Treasury in the ACT

government for their achievements with the transfer. I especially want to recognise the ongoing efforts of the ACT Public Sector Workers Compensation Commissioner and his team, who are continuing to improve the workers compensation experience and the wellbeing of our ACT government public servants.

I present the following paper:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Inquiry into the Auditor-General's Report No. 6 of 2020: Transfer of Workers' Compensation Arrangements from Comcare*—Government response—Ministerial statement, 24 March 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Health—public health workforce

Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (10.46): I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge the ACT's public health workforce and the incredible work they do each day for the Canberra community. Health workers are truly the lifeblood of our health system in the ACT. There are more than 10,000 people who work across Canberra Health Services, the ACT Health Directorate and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce. They are a significant part of our community and our public service.

From the direct care of consumers in our health services to the work they do behind the scenes to ensure that our system serves Canberrans effectively, this is an opportunity to recognise them for all that they do. We know the past two years have been simply extraordinary. Our health system has faced unprecedented pressure. Our public health workers have made incredible changes as they have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep Canberrans safe. They have worked tremendously hard, and they continue to work through the issues that confront us every day as a result of this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, fingers crossed.

We have now reached more than two years since the first case of COVID-19 in the ACT, and through this time health workers have shown incredible resilience in the face of the pandemic's challenges. They have built up our service capability so that we can be ready to respond effectively to further outbreaks as and when they occur.

Health professionals engage with our community throughout our entire lives, from birth to the very end. The ACT government respects and appreciates our health professionals, our nurses, doctors, midwives and allied health professionals. We listen to them and we support them. That is why we have committed to employing more than 400 new doctors, nurses and allied health workers in this term of government.

These additional staff will bolster the territory's workforce and provide high quality care across the health system. Recruitment of our health professional workforce is integral to our health services. That is why we have been absolutely committed to bringing on board more health professionals.

Our health services are constantly changing, with rapid developments in new technology and more sophisticated and effective interventions and models of care. We know that our region is growing and changing, which is why we are ensuring that every opportunity is taken to support our health workers now and to prepare for our future workforce needs.

Of the commitment we made to employing 400 new health professionals, the ACT government has already funded 257 full-time equivalent positions in the 2021-22 budget. We fulfilled over half of our commitment in one budget, delivering an important boost to our health workforce that we will continue to build on through this term of government. So far, our health services have recruited more than 170 of the funded FTE in this financial year, up to February 2022. That means more staff on the ground to support our community and one another.

Our investments in the 2021-22 budget include more services at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, one of which is the commencement of 24/7 medical imaging, with more allied health, nursing and support staff. This service started on 31 January 2022 and is increasing patient access to medical imaging and decreasing staff fatigue, with more health professionals joining the service.

The 2021-22 budget also invested in even more capacity for both of our emergency departments, including new models of care and positions to better support Canberrans when they need to attend the emergency department. At Canberra Hospital, significant recruitment has been underway and we have reached some of the highest levels of medical officer coverage in the ED at the Canberra Hospital in many years.

Some of the changes in the way the ED operates and its interaction with the rest of the hospital will take time to embed and mature, and this is compounded by very high presentations across both EDs in recent weeks. But with more staff and a real commitment to change, I am confident that we will see improvements, not for the sake of the numbers but because those numbers are people and we want to ensure that patients are safe and improve their experience in accessing emergency care.

To support our health workforce during the pandemic, there has been significant and ongoing recruitment occurring across our health system. There have been high numbers of health workers needing to quarantine over this pandemic, and that has been the case for workforces across the country.

The government has worked hard to make agile changes to respond to the pandemic's impact on our public health workforce, with a number of initiatives being progressed, including more than 750 nurses and midwives recruited in this financial year; junior medical officer and nursing graduate intakes brought forward to join our teams early; more new graduates recruited than ever before; the introduction of a health student workforce to our testing and vaccination services; and stronger health and wellbeing support programs to support both managers and teams through this difficult time.

We know it is still hard for our staff right now. Our health services continue to work through every option available to ensure that our public health workforce can do what they do best. We will continue to do this work with and for our health workforce.

At the 2020 election we also committed to mandating minimum ratios for nursing and midwifery staff at Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce. I was pleased recently to mark the first phase of the nurse-patient ratios framework that is being implemented in our hospitals, taking a crucial step forward in commencing ratios in the ACT.

With more than 50 of the 90 FTE nursing staff brought on board to implement ratios, there has been significant progress in ensuring that we can meet the nurse-patient ratio that will increase staff support and patient care. We are just the third jurisdiction in Australia to mandate nursing and midwifery ratios, and we are incredibly proud to be joining Victoria and Queensland in implementing this very important initiative. It is a true Labor commitment that reflects our core values and shows our respect for the health workforce.

It is also a reflection of our commitment to work collaboratively with the unions that represent ACT public sector staff—in this case, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation ACT Branch. They have driven this initiative and I thank them for their important advocacy.

Recruitment and implementation is ongoing at the moment, but I look forward to seeing the full implementation of this commitment and meeting the many new nurses that are joining our teams as part of this work. The implementation of the nurse-patient ratios framework will result in many benefits to the territory, including better patient outcomes, improved patient satisfaction, reduced length of hospital stay, and reduced inpatient mortality. The guaranteed level and skill mix of staff on each shift will improve the management of the care environment and improve job satisfaction, which also contributes to a sustainable workforce.

Looking to the future of our public health workforce and ensuring that we have a sustainable plan, the ACT government has initiated the development of a health workforce strategy and plan. This work, being led by the ACT Health Directorate, will enable long-term workforce planning to occur in a structured and informed manner. The ACT health workforce strategy will outline the health workforce priorities and key initiatives that will guide the development of our ACT public health workforce into the future. This overarching strategy will incorporate and refer to national, local and profession-specific workforce plans and frameworks to ensure that we are sustainably planning for and growing an effective workforce that can meet the needs of Canberra and the surrounding regions.

In parallel, our health services are completing essential workforce planning at the local level to attract, recruit and retain staff for the future. Canberra Health Services has developed the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Plan 2022-2023, which is due to be published in mid-April. Recruitment planning has commenced for the Canberra Hospital expansion critical services building, due to open in 2024, with a further

commitment announced today. And the ACT Health Directorate is establishing an ACT allied health workforce framework to guide and track the relevant activities from public sector allied health services that contribute to a robust workforce.

Unfortunately, we also know that there are national shortages of trained health professionals in some areas, such as midwifery. Both Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital have workforce strategies in place to mitigate this and to attract people to join our health services. These include targeted programs in areas of need and stepped approaches to assist health workers to gain qualifications.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like to touch on the importance of primary care and an integrated health system. We know that the health system is made up of health workers across many areas of the community and we recognise that there are considerable pressures everywhere. Often the first interaction a person in the community will have when seeking health care is in primary care, most likely a general practitioner but possibly a nurse practitioner or allied health worker. From there, they may have a number of contacts with other health services, and it is crucial that our health system is effectively able to integrate so that everyone can receive the right care, at the right time and in the right place.

I am sure I speak on behalf of every member of the Assembly in expressing again my sincere appreciation and thanks to the territory's health workforce for everything they have done and for their continued hard work during these difficult times.

I present the following paper:

Our Public Health Workforce—Ministerial statement, 24 March 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.55): As shadow health minister, I am pleased to begin my response to the minister's statement on our public health workforce by stating: how great are our nurses? My mum was one, so I know how awesome Canberra's nurses are. When people think of our health system, they think of nurses—of their training, the shift work, their commitment, their skills, their patience and their understanding. Their roles are not glamorous—we all know that—but Canberrans definitely appreciate their nurses. They are the beating pulse of Canberra's health system and we need them. We also need to train them, support them, mentor them and acknowledge them.

Unfortunately, our nurses are working in a health system that is broken, a health system in crisis, with exorbitant waiting lists for elective surgery, an overstretched emergency department and a hospital culture infected with bullying and harassment. The health minister is responsible for Canberra's health system. But you only need to look at the front page of the *Canberra Times* to see that it seems that the minister may have lost control of the health system.

While I welcome the government's commitment to employing more than 400 new doctors, nurses and allied health workers in this term, I have a number of concerns with other parts of the minister's update. The health minister mentions looking to the future of our public health workforce and trumpets that the government has initiated the development of a health workforce strategy and plan. Am I the only one incredulous that the government is only now developing a workforce strategy and plan?

Surely the first thing you do as health minister, with responsibility for Canberra's health system, is ask: "Where is the plan?" And if there is not a workforce plan or strategy, you develop one as a priority. But that seems to have dawned on this government only recently, which speaks volumes about why our health system is in crisis. You only need to look at our shortage of midwives to know why the minister should have developed a workforce strategy a long time ago.

The minister reveals in her statement that our health services are completing essential workforce planning at the local level to attract, recruit and retain staff. Again, this begs the question: why was this not done years ago? If the workforce planning to attract, recruit and retain staff is essential, as the minister states, why is it only now that our health services are working on this? Another issue is where are those staff going to come from? Were all of Canberra's graduate nurses employed when they finished their studies last year? If not, why not?

I refer to a *Canberra Times* report on 9 March with the headline, "Global search for hospital staff". The report reveals that there will be a massive recruitment drive for staff to work at the new critical services building at the Canberra Hospital, with our health services looking overseas for talent. The article refers to the need to recruit a highly skilled and high-calibre team and states that our health system would seek local, national and international staff.

The Canberra Liberals calls on the government to prioritise local jobs and Canberra nurses and staff first and foremost. That has to be our focus, along with the training and upskilling for our existing staff to be able to take on more senior clinical and leadership roles.

The last issue I wish to raise is to seek clarity over exactly how many new nurses the government is employing. The minister has spoken about recruiting an extra 90 nurses to achieve minimum ratios, which the Canberra Liberals support. Are these 90 nurses on top of the 200 nurses the government has committed to employ?

My final question to the health minister is to seek more information about the over 750 nurses and midwives recruited in this last financial year—750 in nine months. That is about 83 nurses and midwives a month. Are these all permanent roles or are they employed on contracts? There is a big difference, and Canberrans have a right to know. For staff on contracts, what is the nature of those contracts and why are those key staff being recruited to contract positions?

It should go without saying that one of the best ways to attract quality staff and retain them is to give them permanent employment—to support them, train them and show them how valued they are. Sadly, this government has a lot to learn about fostering a healthy and positive work culture in our health system to ensure that our hardworking staff want to go to work and stay.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (11.00), in reply: Without responding to every point Ms Castley made, I will reiterate my offer to her, made when she became shadow health minister, that she is welcome to briefings at any time and note that she has not, in fact, taken up a single offer of briefing on the response to the pandemic. She is welcome to do so at any time, including on the issues that she has raised. Obviously, we have a range of temporary staff positions to respond to the pandemic, but we are very, very happy to provide her with further information on that, if she would like to take up that offer.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Best Start for Canberra's Children—first 1,000 days strategy Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (11.01): I rise to provide an update to the Legislative Assembly on the important work that the ACT government is undertaking in partnership with the community to develop and begin implementation of the Best Start for Canberra's Children: First 1,000 Days strategy.

The ACT government wants every child in Canberra to reach their full potential in life. We provide a range of effective support programs and services that contribute to great outcomes for children in their first 1,000 days of life, including our Maternal and Child Health—MACH—nurses, who support parents and newborn babies as they grow and reach milestones. We know how important this time is in a child's and family's life, but we also know that not everyone has the same experience. Most children born in Canberra have a great start in life because their families and carers have the resources and opportunities to nurture their child's health and wellbeing, and they have strong family and community connections that allow children to grow healthily and to flourish.

We know parents want to provide the best possible start for their kids, but despite our higher-than-average incomes in Canberra, there are many families in our community who do not have all that they need to thrive. These children and families do not have the village they need. Children experiencing disadvantage do not share equally in the benefits of growing up in our city and consequently may experience poor social, health and wellbeing outcomes over the course of their lives. If poorer outcomes occur early in a child's life, this can establish or entrench a cycle of intergenerational disadvantage.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for children and families. The impacts of COVID-19 have further magnified some of the risks and challenges for children and families, and they have highlighted the importance of supporting children in early childhood. The pandemic has interrupted face-to-face learning and social interaction and, in some cases, has limited access to healthcare and support services. This has left some families feeling more isolated or struggling to access the care and support they need. The first 1,000 days, from conception to around two years of age, is an important time which sets children up well for preschool, primary school and longer-term health, education, wellbeing and social outcomes.

The Best Start strategy will create a whole-of-community approach to improving the early support in the first 1,000 days of a child's life and improve life outcomes for children and their families. The ACT government has a significant policy and reform agenda aimed at improving health, wellbeing and outcomes for children and their families in the early years. We know that support provided early in the life of a child, or in response to challenges, is the most effective way of supporting people to improve or change their long-term life trajectories and outcomes. That is why we are undertaking a significant policy and reform agenda which focuses on improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all children and their families in the early years.

We recognise that the health and wellbeing of children crosses all aspects of daily life. The supports that are required to set children and their families up for success cannot be met by a single government directorate or community service provider acting alone. It requires a coordinated effort across the range of services and directorates.

We also need to work with families and caregivers to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge, support and expertise to nurture and enjoy their child's development in the first 1,000 days. This means identifying and enhancing the important protective factors which promote and sustain health and wellbeing. The Best Start strategy will form a key component of the government's broader agenda to continually improve and evolve our public maternity services, family and community services, and early childhood supports and education. It will also be a key platform of the ACT government's commitment to establish a child and family network which seeks to establish integrated services that families who need support are able to easily navigate and access, rather than having to piece together a jigsaw of services and supports.

The Best Start strategy will complement Set Up for Success: an early childhood strategy for the ACT, which has three-year-old preschool as its flagship initiative, along with a range of other measures aimed at supporting early learning and the life chances that flow from it. A successor to the ACT government's A Step Up for Our Kids out of home care strategy will also be released soon. This new strategy will guide continued reform in the out of home care and child protection systems over the remainder of the decade. The strategy will have a broader focus than A Step Up, aiming to provide earlier support to families and prevent their engagement with the statutory child protection system wherever possible.

There is a strong alignment between the successor to A Step Up and the Best Start strategy. Development of the Best Start strategy is also a key action in the Healthy

Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025 and strongly aligns with the objectives set out in the ACT wellbeing framework. The Best Start strategy is being developed by the Community Services, Health and Education directorates, in collaborative partnership with Canberra Health Services, the community sector and people with lived experience. In 2020, the government brought together an expert reference group to guide the development of the Best Start strategy.

This group includes around 50 representatives from the community sector, academia, advocacy groups, child development specialists, paediatricians, midwives and maternal and child health nurses and government. The contribution from these passionate advocates and experts on children in their early years and their families has guided the work to date on the Best Start strategy. I want to acknowledge and thank the reference group for their invaluable assistance and, in particular, acknowledge Professor Michael Brydon for his contribution as co-chair of this group.

In the past two years we have heard from ACT families and caregivers what they want and what they see as important for their children. Their responses are not surprising. The community told us that they want their children to “live and survive and have long healthy lives”, “feel and be safe”, “have a good education”, “play, be happy and supported”, “have jobs, training, opportunities and career pathways” and “have equality and equal opportunity”. I think this is what everyone in our community wants for Canberra’s children.

In 2022 we are continuing to work with community partners to hear directly from families about what is working well and what could be improved, to help Canberra’s kids thrive in this critical first 1,000 days and beyond. These direct discussions with the parents and families of young children are helping us to define the outcomes and actions of the Best Start strategy. We recognise that to make the Best Start strategy successful and something that matters to people and the community, we need to better understand why some individuals feel uncomfortable or reluctant to access services that are currently available; where there may be gaps in the current system; where improvements could be made; and what currently works well and can be expanded on.

To better understand these questions and people’s experiences, we are engaging with the community and listening to the voices of people with lived experience. This process will build on and test the work led by the expert reference group in 2020. The ACT government has partnered with community organisations to hear from those people for whom this reform will make a difference. We are engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse community members, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, young parents, parents with disabilities, and families who currently access child support services in the ACT, as well as early childhood education centres, playgroups and new parents’ groups.

From these voices we are hearing about a diverse range of experiences. We have heard the wonderful and positive stories where people have felt supported and empowered during their birth experiences, and we are working to incorporate these experiences using a strengths-based approach. This has included how experiences such as having free access to a lactation consultant through Canberra Health Services

helped many parents learn and be supported to establish breastfeeding and bonding after birth, when they may have otherwise felt stressed or overwhelmed. We have also heard that by having MACH services co-located in child and family centres, families can access wraparound supports in their local community, from the one location.

But we have also heard about difficulty in accessing some services because, “it only goes for a certain length of time” or “my child is too old or too young to access it” or “there was a distinct lack of communication between one service and another and my family fell through the cracks” or “I don’t like taking my baby to the clinic because if they find something wrong, they might take her away”. We are listening to, and learning from, these experiences and ensuring that the strategy reflects these lessons.

The government’s commitment is to deliver a strategy that sets out actions that are meaningful and deliverable with a system-wide approach to reform. By taking a methodical, detailed and co-design approach, we are identifying key areas that we can begin delivering on, and we have already started. For example, we know that there should be a focus on actions which support health literacy. This has enabled the government to secure funding from the commonwealth to begin delivering on improving health literacy for families, because we have heard through our consultations that when families cannot access this information, it can impact on how they respond to the needs of their children, and this can have knock-on impacts. We also know that we need to support parents and caregivers to bond with their children, to increase resilience and build protective factors which reduce negative childhood experiences, such as domestic and family violence, parental conflict and trauma.

The strategy’s actions will also have a focus on supporting good health and family wellbeing during pregnancy. This means encouraging and enabling positive experiences for families in maternity services and the birthing experience. This will align with the public maternity services strategy that is also currently under development. Actions will also have a focus on supporting parents and caregivers and their children to be connected to the community, build on informal networks, and ensure better linkages with services when required. The service system must be equitable and support families in all their diversity. Services must be safe and there must be culturally appropriate support and services where and when they are needed.

We also need to build capacity in early support services so that we can support people before they reach crisis, assisting them to achieve better outcomes through universal and early support services, rather than waiting until they need crisis or tertiary services, where the impact of services is less effective in improving long-term health and wellbeing. This reimagined service system will aim to provide the foundations for every child to get the best start.

The government is committed to action and genuine change, not a strategy that sits on the shelf. Given the substantial work that has already been done, informed by lived experience, academic expertise and our dedicated service providers, the government has been able to secure specific funding to drive this work forward with a focus on innovation and prevention. To ensure that we are not waiting but continuing to build on our service system, I opened a Healthy Canberra grants round, with a focus on supporting children and families. This grants round has up to \$1 million available to

support opportunities for community organisations to develop and implement innovative and original programs to support the health and wellbeing of children and their families in the first 1,000 days. I look forward to announcing the successful grant recipients in coming months and seeing the great work and outcomes achieved through these grants.

If we can improve children's health and wellbeing outcomes from the very beginning of life, we can shape a fairer and more equitable Canberra, and a community which is culturally safe, connected, healthier and more resilient. That is why giving Canberra kids the best start to life was identified as a priority by the government in the lead-up to the last election, and by the Chief Minister in his statement to the Assembly in February. And it is why, along with the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Early Childhood Development, I remain dedicated to setting out the government's vision for reform in the long-term while getting on and making changes now.

I present the following paper:

Best Start for Canberra's Children: First 1000 Days Strategy—Ministerial statement, 22 March 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Personal explanation

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (11.13): I seek leave to correct the record. The health minister stood up and said that I am welcome to request briefings and have not done that. On 9 February, I requested a briefing on the Canberra Hospital and Clare Holland House, and also a visit to those facilities. And on 23 February, I requested a briefing on the Northside Hospital and a visit to that. So, I would like the record corrected—that I have requested briefings from the health minister in February this year.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (11.14): I apologise to Ms Castley for my misunderstanding or misrepresentation of that.

Domestic Violence Agencies Amendment Bill 2022

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

Title read by Clerk.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and

Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.15): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to table the Domestic Violence Agencies Amendment Bill 2022. The bill introduces reforms to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to ensure that the ACT's response to domestic and family violence is guided and informed by the necessary expertise, experience and leadership developed through strong government and community sector collaboration. The ACT government is absolutely committed to developing and implementing effective, evidence based policies and programs that respond to domestic and family violence, enhance prevention and early responses, and support victims-survivors.

Since its establishment over 20 years ago, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council has been integral to these efforts. The council has spearheaded key initiatives to improve the ACT's responses to domestic and family violence, including the council's 2018 extraordinary meeting into issues and responses affecting children and young people living with violence. The work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reference group has also been vital as we co-design community-based, family-centred responses to domestic and family violence in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Most recently, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council has provided me with important advice on the complex issue of whether to take steps towards criminalisation of coercive control in the ACT. Members recognised that coercive control is inextricably linked with domestic and family violence and needs to be much better acknowledged across the system. However, members also noted that criminalising coercive control may create unintended harms for women, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The DVPC have recommended that further consultation—particularly with vulnerable communities—and research is needed before a decision on criminalisation is made. They have also recommended ongoing efforts to embed stronger understandings of coercive control throughout our community. This will continue to guide our responses to the pervasive and unacceptable issue of coercive control. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all past and current members of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council for their contribution to this vital work.

The reforms to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council in this bill will ensure it continues to guide and improve the ACT's responses to domestic and family violence in an increasingly complex and challenging landscape. We know that an integrated approach to domestic and family violence is essential to deliver effective responses for victims-survivors, perpetrators, children and young people and families. Improving integration across the ACT's responses to domestic and family violence has been a key focus across many government and community sector initiatives.

An effective leadership and governance structure for government and the community sector is a vital element of this integrated approach. As the key domestic and family violence governance body in the ACT, it is critical the Domestic Violence Prevention

Council be supported to deliver such effective leadership and governance. These reforms will achieve this. The reforms proposed in this bill will revitalise the scope and membership of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to further align the council with the contemporary domestic and family violence landscape in the ACT.

The amendments clarify the Domestic Violence Prevention Council's remit, purpose and focus to reinvigorate the council's objective and functions. The Domestic Violence Prevention Council's clarified objective will be to provide advice—to myself as Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence—that identifies gaps and opportunities in the ACT's responses to domestic and family violence to enable constant improvement of our responses. The council will also function as a conduit between the community sector and government, enabling greater collaboration and integration.

The bill also introduces a new membership model for the council. This is made up of identified and standing members who have extensive experience in, knowledge of, and connectedness to, domestic and family violence responses, including service delivery, advocacy, policy and research. This new membership structure brings together experience and expertise across government and non-government organisations and our diverse Canberra community to guide our response to domestic and family violence.

To ensure that the Domestic Violence Prevention Council hears and responds to diverse and intersectional voices, the bill also enables the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to establish and convene reference groups. This will ensure the council can engage directly with diverse groups across the Canberra community and undertake focused work on identified themes. This will include continued engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reference group.

These reforms will enhance the Domestic Violence Prevention Council's capacity to serve as a statutory leadership and governance body driving collaboration between government and the community sector to provide strategic guidance which informs and improves our response to domestic and family violence. The reformed council will be able to provide whole-of-government and sector-wide approaches to responding to and preventing domestic and family violence, supporting victims-survivors and providing intervention for perpetrators. This strong sector leadership and clear source of guidance is absolutely critical as we build a more cohesive and integrated response to domestic and family violence.

The need for reform is even more pressing given the increased demands and complexities that services are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we know, domestic and family violence increases in occurrence, severity and complexity during and after lockdowns. To assist our critical domestic and family violence services to respond to these increasing challenges and to support victims-survivors across our community, clear leadership through the Domestic Violence Prevention Council is required.

This bill is a vital part of the ACT government's broader work to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence and build a Canberra community that is safe for all.

I also take this opportunity to thank, again, our community and sector partners for their participation in the consultation process and look forward working with the revitalised Domestic Violence Prevention Council. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mrs Kikkert**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Radiation Protection Amendment Bill 2022

Ms Stephen-Smith, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (11.23): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today I rise today to present the Radiation Protection Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends the Radiation Protection Act 2006 to improve the protections afforded to the health and safety of the ACT community and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation.

The use of radiation technology has truly revolutionised health care and greatly benefited society. It has delivered better outcomes for our community through advances in the use of radiation in medicine, helping to diagnose diseases and radically improving therapies for illnesses such as cancer. Radiation is also widely used in dental practices, veterinary medicine and across a variety of industries. However, while the benefits are clear, the mishandling or inappropriate use of radiation sources also presents public health risks. These risks require appropriate and contemporary management systems to mitigate and protect our community. In the ACT, the Radiation Protection Act and the Radiation Protection Regulation provide the framework to regulate activities involving radiation sources, such as the possession, use, transport, sale and disposal of radioactive materials and ionising radiation.

In 2018, the ACT government undertook a review of the operation of the Radiation Protection Act. The subsequent *Review of the Radiation Protection Act* report was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 29 November 2018. The review report made 20 recommendations to improve radiation safety, achieve greater consistency with the National Directory for Radiation Protection and harmonise with other jurisdictions.

The national directory aims to provide nationally agreed and uniform requirements for the protection of people and the environment that meet international best practice and ensure the safety of radiation use. As Minister for Health, one of my core responsibilities is minimising public health risks to the community, and this includes those risks associated with the harmful effects of radioactive materials and ionising radiation.

The bill's primary objective is to modernise our legislative framework by strengthening the controls on the safe use and ownership of radiation sources, improving licensing and registration processes, and aligning regulatory controls with other jurisdictions. The bill will also provide greater regulatory transparency and improve business and government efficiencies, radiation safety controls and stakeholder relations.

The bill includes provisions to enhance existing offences regarding dealings with registered radiation sources and realigning responsibility for licensing and disciplinary decisions from an external body, the ACT Radiation Council, to the ACT Chief Health Officer. In doing this, the bill reformulates the Radiation Council as the Radiation Advisory Committee, to advise the Chief Health Officer on radiation safety matters and matters relating to radiation, including reviewing applications for a licence or source registration. These proposed governance arrangements are consistent with most other Australian jurisdictions.

To provide greater certainty for businesses and research institutions seeking to deal with ionising radiation in the ACT, the bill clarifies requirements around the submission and content of radiation management plans and the appointment of radiation safety officers. The bill outlines the rules on acceptable radiation management plans, including approval and use of service providers and user obligations for the storage, security, shielding, disposal and safe operation of a radiation device. The requirement to appoint a radiation safety officer aims to facilitate timely identification, reporting and remediation of any radiation safety risk, as well as to promote voluntary compliance with the act. The appointment of radiation safety officers is commonplace in radiation protection legislation in other jurisdictions and it acts as an important safety measure.

To strengthen the act, the bill provides for the inclusion of new offences, with the aim of improving controls on the safe use and ownership of radiation sources. The bill introduces new improvement notices and prohibition notices with related offences, which a licensee or registered owner of a regulated radiation source must then comply with, to expand the Chief Health Officer's legislative options in the management and control of potential health and safety issues. Other offences introduced by the bill relate to the failure of a licensee or registered owner to notify the Chief Health Officer of updated contact details, disposal of a registered radiation source and the unauthorised dealing with an unregistered radiation source.

As regulated radiation sources can cause long-lasting and significant damage to business as well as human and environmental health if used, stored or managed inappropriately, the bill provides a further offence for the reckless or deliberate misuse of protected information. Under the act, a person who deals with a regulated radiation source must take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that there is no resulting harm to the health or safety of persons, property or the environment. The inclusion of new offences and enforcement tools aims to encourage compliance with the Radiation Protection Act and further protect public health and safety from the harmful effects of radiation.

An exemption provision is included in the bill to make allowance for emergency situations. Under the provision, the minister may temporarily exempt a person or business from the act if the exemption is necessary to minimise a serious or immediate risk to the health or safety of people, property or the environment—for example, in the case of a natural disaster or radioactive spill. The explanatory statement to the bill further explains that a ministerial exemption should only be considered following consultation with established radiation safety experts, such as the Commonwealth Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council, or the Radiation Advisory Committee created by the bill.

The bill also establishes a requirement that the Chief Health Officer keep a register of licences, registered radiation sources and anything else prescribed by regulation. Maintaining this radiation register is currently the responsibility of the Radiation Council. Transferring the responsibility to the Chief Health Officer is part of the reformulation of the Radiation Council to an advisory body.

In response to the recommendation from the 2018 report, the Chief Health Officer will also be able to make information on the Radiation Register public; however, the Chief Health Officer must consider it in the public interest to do so. It is not intended that the register make available information in excess of comparable health licensing registers or radiation licence registers in use in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. The ACT government takes the safety and privacy of users very seriously and, as such, any consideration to the publishing of information will be subject to a public interest test, to ensure safety, security and privacy, and to ensure that businesses are not unduly impacted by the release of information.

The bill has some minor engagements on the right to privacy and right to presumption of innocence under the Human Rights Act 2004. The Attorney-General has reviewed the provisions of the bill and considers these to be aligned with the objectives of the ACT Human Rights Act. These engagements are further detailed in the explanatory statement presented with the bill.

In drafting the bill and assessing its impact, the ACT government consulted with key stakeholders, including all ACT radiation licence holders and registered source owners, peak industry bodies and core internal stakeholders such as the ACT Radiation Council. In summary, the bill makes important changes to ensure that the Radiation Protection Act continues to provide a robust and reliable framework for the regulation of radiation in the ACT. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee Reference

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (11.31): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) in June 2020, Minister Gentleman (the then Minister for the Environment) was approached by representatives from Geoscience Australia, the Australian Marine Sciences Association, and the Geological Society of Australia (ACT Division) proposing the adoption of a fossil emblem for the ACT;
 - (b) Minister Gentleman endorsed the proposal put forward;
 - (c) during September and October 2020, the public voted on five expertly selected fossils relevant to the ACT. A total of 1135 votes were cast;
 - (d) on 21 October 2020, Minister Gentleman announced the trilobite *Batocara mitchelli* as the winner of the public selection process;
 - (e) fossil emblems have been adopted in Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia, with Victoria set to ratify a fossil emblem following a public vote; and
 - (f) a fossil emblem will complement the existing suite of Territory emblems including the Royal Bluebell (floral), Southern Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby (mammal) and the Gang-Gang Cockatoo (faunal) in representing the ACT's rich and diverse natural values;
- (2) agrees to refer consideration of the adoption of an ACT fossil emblem to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity; and
- (3) calls on the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity to inquire and report on the adoption of a fossil emblem, with due regard to the publicly voted fossil emblem, trilobite *Batocara mitchelli*.

I am pleased to table a motion for consideration of a fossil emblem for the ACT. Fossil emblems are a relatively new concept. In Australia, they have been adopted by Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia, with Victoria soon to follow suit. They join the ranks of other natural history emblems such as the floral, faunal and mammal emblems which have been adopted by all Australian states and territories.

The ACT has a diversity of natural history values. Should the ACT government decide to adopt a fossil emblem, it will complement our existing natural history emblems: the gang-gang cockatoo, our faunal emblem; the royal bluebell, our floral emblem; and the southern brush-tailed rock-wallaby, our mammal emblem.

Generally, fossil emblems are chosen to capture the public's imagination and encourage the community to learn more about the planet and their environment. Fossils show how the earth, its flora and fauna have changed considerably over the evolutionary time frame. Fossil emblems, much like our other emblems, try to capture something unique about our local context. They have particular appeal to members of the community with an interest in our regional geological history and our geodiversity.

In the latter half of 2020, Geoscience Australia, the Geological Society of Australia and the Australian Marine Sciences Association, with the endorsement of the ACT

government, selected five locally relevant fossils as potential emblems that represent the characteristics of the ACT's rich geological history.

One of the interesting things about these fossil emblem nominations is that they were all marine fossils; in other words, these are animals that all lived underwater. This shows how vastly different Canberra was in the long distant past.

During September and October 2020, the ACT community embraced the proposal to adopt a fossil emblem. The public was asked to vote on the five nominations, and 1,135 votes were cast. On 21 October 2020, my colleague Mr Gentleman and the Chief Scientist from Geoscience Australia, Dr Steve Hill, announced the winner elected by the community. The winning fossil was the trilobite *Batocara mitchelli*, which gained 30 per cent of the votes cast. The winning specimen was found in a drill core from under the Treasury building in the parliamentary triangle in central Canberra. This trilobite fossil dates from the Silurian period, about 425 million years ago.

There are many people interested in the history of the Canberra region, including such deep-time fauna. By adopting a fossil emblem for the ACT, we embrace the diversity of our environment right back to its deep-time origins.

Giving consideration to a fossil emblem for the ACT is now timely and important in light of the public selection process that occurred in October 2020 and the interest that has been demonstrated by our community in our fossil history. The Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity is well placed to provide the ACT government with further advice on the consideration and adoption of a fossil emblem for the ACT. I hope that it will consider this matter and give us advice about how to move forward.

Recognising that this is a request, and highlighting that an amendment will be moved to request the committee to do that, I look forward to hearing their views.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.36): I rise to speak on the motion and move the amendment that has been circulated in my name:

Omit paragraph (3), substitute:

“(3) requests the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity consider inquiring and reporting on the adoption of a fossil emblem, with due regard to the publicly voted fossil emblem, trilobite *Batocara mitchelli*.”.

The amendment changes the intent of the motion from calling on the committee to inquire into; instead, it requests the committee to inquire into. It is in accordance with the conventions of this place to ask committees to do things, rather than to tell them, so that they can manage their workflows. It is a minor amendment, I believe, in practice.

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) (11.37): I thank Minister Vassarotti for her motion. In my previous role as minister for heritage, I had the pleasure of announcing the fossil emblem for the ACT, and the motion before the Assembly today seeks to formalise this new emblem.

The fossil emblem was chosen by the Canberra community. It is now up to us to ratify the community's choice. The *Batocara mitchelli* was chosen by Canberrans to be their fossil emblem. This emblem will be an important reminder of our history. It is a reminder that we have been here for only a short time, and that our impact will be felt for centuries after we leave.

The ACT already has a mammal, floral and bird emblem, and these are symbols that represent our bush capital. However, we were not always the bush capital—430 million years ago, this area was under water; our fossil emblem tells us this. Our emblem embodies the concepts of deep time and geological scale representative of our region. It makes us all think about how old our landscape truly is and how much it has changed over time.

The ACT has a rich geological history, and our fossil emblem reflects this. Canberra is also home to one of Australia's most significant fossil sites, at Woolshed Creek. This site was added to the ACT heritage list in 2017 and is accessible to the public.

During the emblem voting process and announcement, I had the great pleasure of talking to a number of passionate people about the fossil emblem. Many Canberrans are interested in our natural history and the history of our region. Today, I especially want to acknowledge Geoscience Australia and the scientists who are determined that the ACT should have a fossil emblem.

This little creature that was alive 430 million years ago is a reminder that science is really cool! I was delighted to be part of the process and hope that the committee will inquire into this matter. I commend the motion and the fossil emblem to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (11.39): It is my pleasure to rise to speak briefly to Ms Vassarotti's motion. I, too, would like to thank Geoscience Australia, the Australian Marine Sciences Association and the Geological Society of Australia, ACT division, for approaching the ACT government proposing the adoption of a fossil emblem. As we have already heard, several other states have adopted a fossil emblem, and I think it would be great for the ACT to have one, to add to our existing territory emblems, which include the royal bluebell as our floral emblem, the southern brush-tailed rock-wallaby, as our mammal emblem, and the gang-gang cockatoo as our faunal emblem.

I would like to flag that we support Ms Orr's amendment, making this a request that it goes to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity to inquire into and report on. I feel this is a much more appropriate procedural way of putting forward the motion. As such, we support Ms Orr's amendment, and look forward to hearing the committee's deliberations, whatever they may be, about the adoption of a fossil emblem for the ACT, whether it is the trilobite, which got the most number of votes in the public vote, or some other fossil emblem.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (11.41): I thank members for the comments they have made, and particularly Ms Orr, for ensuring that we keep within the protocols in terms of how the motion is moved.

Again, I think we are really lucky that we have our fantastic partners in Geoscience Australia, the Geological Society of Australia and the Australian Marine Sciences Association, and I thank them for their work in bringing this to this point. I also want to acknowledge the work that Minister Gentleman has done in getting it to this point. I thank members for their support.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee

Request to consider

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (11.42): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) property price rises in the last five years have outstripped the long-term average and have exacerbated issues of housing and rental affordability in the ACT;
- (b) in 2018, after advocacy from former ACT Greens MLA, Caroline Le Couteur, the ACT Government extended land tax to vacant dwellings in addition to rented properties and included subsequent exemptions for certain properties which may have legitimate reasons for being vacant;
- (c) the ACT has a rental vacancy rate below one percent which is increasing rent prices;
- (d) the rental vacancy rate calculation does not include properties intentionally left vacant;
- (e) artificial supply constraints such as leaving habitable dwellings intentionally vacant for speculative future gains are a contributing factor to the housing and rental affordability crisis;
- (f) levying additional taxation upon intentionally vacant dwellings in line with the long-term average annual price increase of approximately five percent per annum of improved (market) value would make keeping residential dwellings intentionally vacant unprofitable, therefore bringing that housing supply back into the rental or housing market;
- (g) the Queensland Greens campaigned on a five percent improved capital value vacancy levy for Brisbane City during the 2017 State election;

- (h) the Victorian Labor Government introduced a one percent improved capital value vacancy levy in 2018 for Metro Melbourne and the NSW Labor Opposition also had this policy as part of their 2019 election platform; and
 - (i) a vacancy tax is an effective lever available to the ACT Government to rapidly increase our city's housing stock;
- (2) further notes that:
- (a) many local shopping centres around the ACT have been left untenanted for many years leaving communities without a local shopping centre;
 - (b) this has an impact on the vibrancy of communities and the liveability of a suburb to low-income people and families;
 - (c) lack of affordable commercial rentals influences the capacity for ACT small businesses to thrive and help rejuvenate local centres; and
 - (d) there are a range of opportunities available to the ACT Government to incentivise commercial landlords to regenerate these shopping centres, including introducing new taxation policies on vacant commercial sites;
- (3) refers this matter for an inquiry to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality to investigate legislative reforms, regulatory levers, and creative mechanisms available to the ACT Government to reduce the number of vacant properties and commercial sites;
- (4) requests the Committee in conducting its inquiry to have regard to:
- (a) the rapidly increasing cost of renting or buying a home in the Territory;
 - (b) the impact of intentionally vacant habitable dwellings on the housing and rental affordability crisis in Canberra;
 - (c) the ways to determine whether a residential property is vacant;
 - (d) the impact of intentionally vacant habitable dwellings on the land release program and development in greenfield areas;
 - (e) how we may reinvigorate local shopping centres by addressing long-term commercial vacancies at these sites using a vacancy tax; and
 - (f) options for changes to legislation or taxation of vacant habitable dwellings in the ACT and the impact of this on the cost of housing; and
- (5) requests the Committee to report back to the Assembly by 27 January 2023.

Rental affordability is one of the most significant issues our city is facing. I rise today to speak to my motion calling for an inquiry to further investigate vacancy tax reforms which may increase our housing stock and help to encourage the rejuvenation of local shopping centres.

Coming together under the proposal of a vacancy tax, this inquiry would investigate two interrelated social issues—namely, the withholding of otherwise vacant residential properties from the rental market and the long-term vacancy of commercial properties, particularly in local suburban shopping centres. This motion calls for a community conversation to be facilitated by a committee of the Assembly into the taxation levers possibly available to government to ensure that property investment is accountable to the community.

We are in the midst of a national housing crisis. We cannot afford to have a single home in Canberra vacant while we have so many who need a home. As an Assembly, we must use all of the tools available to us to look into the as yet unexamined levers and influences that this government could have to influence skyrocketing rental and housing prices. We should not be prepared to tolerate houses and apartments sitting empty while people go without homes.

An inquiry into this issue would allow us to examine why some properties in Canberra remain vacant for long periods of time, and how the government may be able to ascertain which properties are vacant and who is responsible for them. From this information, and with a full appreciation of the size of the problem and the impact it has on managing our housing issues, we will be in a better position to make recommendations to government on what taxation and other economic levers would be appropriate to try to influence the number of rentals and houses put on their respective markets.

This inquiry would build on the work of my colleague Caroline Le Couteur, the former member for Murrumbidgee who worked hard in the Ninth Assembly to extend land taxation to vacant residential properties. In 2014 Ms Le Couteur passed a motion calling on government to investigate the benefits of a vacancy tax. This motion eventually led to the government extending land tax to properties left vacant.

By asking the committee to undertake this inquiry, we are seeking to continue these progressive social and economic reforms by investigating the opportunities available to government to encourage landlords to ensure that the properties they own are occupied by people who need places to live.

According to SQM Research, the residential property vacancy rate as of February this year was only 0.5 per cent, which may lead one to wonder why vacancy taxation should be considered by the committee as a means to lower rental prices. This rate is calculated on the number of rentals on the market, not the number of dwellings that exist that would, with the right incentives, be let out.

There is some debate as to what constitutes a vacant property. Is it a property for which residential rates are not charged or is it another inhabitable property that for a particular length of time nobody calls home? How should the government determine what is or is not vacant? Should the vacancy rate be measured on what is offered to the market or should it include situations such as developers who keep properties on the sales market, waiting for such a point at which the market is willing to pay a price they have deemed as required to sell—often a unit? At this point that is unclear, and it should be the work of such an inquiry to determine how this rate is calculated and therefore when and how extra taxation may be applied.

During my time in real estate, prior to my election to this Assembly, it was not uncommon to find developments where sometimes only 20 to 40 per cent of new apartments and new builds were sold when the certificates of occupancy were issued. If you go out looking for a home on Saturday and you meet with one of the agents selling apartments in a new development throughout the city, they will be able to take you to several units in these blocks that are sitting empty, waiting for a buyer.

We are not at a point in this housing crisis where it can be an acceptable way of doing business, moving forward. This inquiry will enable us to have an important public conversation about how best to get people into homes.

I am not trying to single out developers who are simply using legal means to increase their profit and save themselves the hassle of managing tenants. In this conversation we need to look at the properties that sit vacant and the circumstances in which they are left without people living in them. We need every habitable dwelling in this city to be able to be inhabited by those seeking somewhere to live.

A vacancy tax on all habitable but vacant properties would either increase the government's revenue, enabling us to deliver on our ambitious policy program of social and affordable housing, or it would mean that those who own these properties find it more feasible to rent them out or put them on the housing market for sale.

In examining vacancy taxes and other economic incentives for property owners to lease their properties for rent, it would be remiss of us not to extend such an inquiry to look at how we can rejuvenate commercial properties in local suburban shopping centres by implementing similar levers. When you buy commercial property in particular, you buy suburban utility; you buy local amenity; you buy a big chunk of someone's community.

Many of Canberra's suburbs were designed around the local shops that provide services such as grocery stores, chemists, post offices and hairdressers. Owning these premises to rent them out to these small and medium-sized businesses is a privilege. It is also a responsibility to these local communities to ensure that services are accessible and that local shops are a part of the suburb's sense of community.

There are a lot of vacant suburban shopping centres across Canberra. You take something away from the suburb when you do not invest in it and you do not let those local suburban shopping centres thrive. We do not know yet why it has been permissible for property owners to keep these shops vacant for so long. What we do know, though, is that there is a high expectation from the community that that not be so.

The ACT government is investing almost \$19 million in this budget alone to upgrade local shopping centres around the territory. That is a good thing. These upgrades will make shopping centres more accessible and comfortable for the community to access. What this inquiry could help us to understand is what other mechanisms the government can use to breathe life back into these suburbs.

Vacant shopping centres haunt suburbs all around Canberra. Shop-squatting is an issue all around Canberra and there are examples in every electorate that are causing problems. In Ginninderra, McKellar shops have been vacant for years. My colleague Jo Clay has lobbied on this issue and lodged a submission on it. The planning, transport and city services committee has been running an inquiry for the last 18 months about the Giralang shops site in Yerrabi. In Murrumbidgee, the vacant Coombs shopping centre is a frequent point of community concern, an advocacy shared by my colleague Minister Davidson.

In my electorate of Brindabella, the Monash shops, the Richardson shops and the Livingston Avenue shops have sat unoccupied for years. The Livingston Avenue shops were empty when my family first moved to Kambah in 2004 and have sat derelict and run-down ever since. Richardson shops have been vacant for more than 15 years. That could be a site prime for urban infill development. It could be a thriving local shopping centre with a range of microbusinesses, maybe even co-ops looking for an affordable place to start up.

Why have landlords been allowed, because of government taxation policies, to keep these spaces vacant? Does the landlord need a bailout? Is the landlord offsetting profitable investments in other places and therefore taking away these vital community assets? If it is the latter, we must investigate what role taxation and economic levers within the power of the government could play in the redevelopment of these sites.

A vacancy tax could be a way to incentivise commercial property owners to either rent their properties or redevelop their properties. We believe the current situation, where suburban facilities become dilapidated, become hubs for graffiti and other antisocial behaviour, devalues suburbs and makes our communities less safe. We believe that commercial property owners have responsibilities to their communities to make these sites safe, engaging and of service to their communities.

Off the back of the pandemic, small, medium- and family-sized businesses are struggling with the cost of running a business in this city. A key cost of running a business is renting the space to operate from. For this reason, former Liberal Chief Minister Kate Carnell proposed a vacancy tax previously. Prior to the pandemic, during her time as the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Ms Carnell stated:

One of the great dilemmas we've got is that there is incentives for landlords to leave premises vacant rather than reduce rent.

Joining with the small business commissioners from around the country, Ms Carnell advocated for a plan to address the under-utilisation of shops and high commercial rents, to support small businesses and to bring life into community shopping centres.

As we begin to recover from the pandemic, now is the right time for the government to investigate the levers available to us to support businesses to access affordable spaces from which to operate. I am putting forward this motion today for an inquiry to begin an important community consultation and discussion about the economic levers available to our government to ensure that property investment and ownership is accountable to community needs and expectations.

As has been discussed at length in this Assembly over the past few days, to be a landlord is a right, but rights come with responsibilities. As our city continues to grow and develop, we need to have ambitious and challenging conversations about how the government can best ensure that privately owned spaces in our city are a part of the housing solution and a part of our vision for active and connected communities.

I note that I can see amendments being circulated by Mr Parton. Let me put it on the record for the Assembly that, in my enthusiasm to debate this subject, perhaps some of my language on the notice paper was a tad forceful. I take Ms Lawder's earlier points and the points raised by Ms Orr about previous conventions in this place. I would like to flag, at the earliest instance, that we will be supporting Mr Parton's amendments for that reason. Thank you very much.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.53), by leave: I move:

1. Omit paragraph (3), substitute:

“(3) requests that the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality consider investigating the legislative reforms, regulatory levers and creative mechanisms available to the ACT Government to reduce the number of vacant properties and commercial sites;”.

2. Omit paragraph (5), substitute:

“(5) requests that the Committee, should it decide to inquire into this matter, determine a reporting date based on the Committee's capacity.”.

The small debate that we are having in this chamber today is not about the substance of what Mr Davis wants the committee to examine. It is about the conventions of this place. It is about how we do business here. It is about how we bring ideas to this chamber and to committees.

After going through Mr Davis's motion, the Canberra Liberals formed a view that perhaps this was not the way to bring a matter like this to a committee, particularly given that Mr Davis is actually on the committee that he is referring this to. As a member of the EGEE committee, Mr Davis could very well just bring this to the committee table and seek a self-referred inquiry.

I am not on that committee, so I do not know if he has already done that. I am not sure. Indeed, from where I sit today, in terms of the knowledge that I have, it is within the realms of possibility that he has brought it to the committee and they have rejected it, so he is then of the belief that he can bring it to this chamber. I do not think that that has occurred, but it is within the realms of possibility, and I do not think it is up to the Assembly to strongarm committees and to set their agenda. Mr Davis mentioned Ms Le Couteur, who, on a number of occasions, came into this place and talked about how committees should be independent and that their agendas should not be determined by the Assembly.

There are, there have been and there will be some occasions where inquiries are referred to committees from this place. But I think that the circumstances around those particular cases have to be somewhat extraordinary. Although we all agree that there is a housing crisis that needs further examination, I am not sure that it fits the bill of this Assembly to force the committee to examine it.

My amendments, very simply, ask the committee to consider investigating the legislative reforms and regulatory levers, as described by Mr Davis. Further that, if

indeed it does decide to inquire, the committee should determine the reporting date based on that committee's capacity. Thank you.

Amendments agreed to.

Original question, as amended, agreed to.

Estimates 2022-2023—Select Committee Proposed establishment

Debate resumed from 10 February 2022, on motion by **Ms Lawder**:

That:

- (1) a Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023 be appointed to examine the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2022-2023, the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2022-2023 and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2022-2023 Budget and prepare a report to the Assembly;
- (2) the Committee be composed of:
 - (a) two Members to be nominated by the Government;
 - (b) two Members to be nominated by the Opposition; and
 - (c) one Member to be nominated by the Greens; andto be notified in writing to the Speaker within two hours of this motion passing;
- (3) an Opposition Member shall be elected chair of the Committee by the Committee;
- (4) funds be provided by the Assembly to permit the engagement of external expertise to work with the Committee to facilitate the analysis of the Budget and the preparation of the report of the Committee;
- (5) the Committee is to report by Friday, 29 July 2022;
- (6) if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee has completed its inquiry, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publishing and circulation; and
- (7) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (11.57): I stand today in lieu of Mr Rattenbury, who is unable to be here, and also on behalf of the ACT Greens. This motion, which Ms Orr will be moving amendments to shortly, has gone through admin and procedure and has the support of the Greens. We look forward to the estimates process for this year. Thank you.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.58), by leave: I move:

1. Omit paragraphs (2)(a) and (b), substitute:
“(a) one Member to be nominated by the Labor Party;
(b) one Member to be nominated by the Liberal Party; and”.
2. In paragraph (3), omit “an Opposition”, substitute “the Liberal Party”.
3. Insert new paragraph (3A):
“(3A) the Committee shall be established from 1 July 2022;”.
4. In paragraph (5), omit “29 July”, substitute “9 September”.

Briefly, these amendments apply a few tidy-ups to the motion, just to account for timelines and so forth that have been agreed through the admin and procedure committee.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (11.58): I will speak briefly to Ms Orr’s amendments and close the debate. We are in support of Ms Orr’s amendments. We have had some discussion about them and, as Mr Braddock flagged, they have been through the admin and procedure committee.

The changes, in summary, include changes to the number of members on the committee from my original motion, some slight wording changes and some changes to the dates to more carefully reflect the timeline of the estimates process and the budget being presented here in this place. They are logical and eminently acceptable amendments, in our view. I thank Ms Orr for bringing them to the Assembly.

Amendments agreed to.

Original question, as amended, agreed to.

Legislation (Legislative Assembly Committees) Amendment Bill 2022

Debate resumed from 10 February 2022 on motion by **Ms Burch**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (12.00): I rise to speak very, very briefly to this amendment bill that has been tabled by Ms Burch. It is a logical amendment to a range of legislation, and it reflects the review that was conducted of ACT statutes to ascertain the extent to which references to Assembly standing committees were clear, unambiguous and consistent. In that regard, it is an excellent chance to clear up some ambiguities and a lack of consistency in some of our statutes, and I am happy to express our support for this bill.

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (12.01), in reply: As members will be aware, since self-government, statutory references to Assembly committees have taken many forms, and on occasion this has been a source of some confusion. As the resolutions appointing the standing committees have changed over time—including substantial

changes to the names of committees and changes to the scope of the subject of such committees—legislative references have become outdated.

As a result, it is not always clear which committee is taken to be responsible for performing a particular function. This, members, is largely a technical bill that seeks to remedy this problem. It will ensure that there is greater precision and clarity in the way that all ACT enactments refer to Assembly standing committees.

The bill amends provisions across all ACT statutes in which there is reference to an Assembly committee so that, moving forward, it is rendered simply as “a relevant Assembly committee”. A relevant Assembly committee will be defined as a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly nominated in writing to the Speaker for that provision. What this means is that the Speaker will nominate a particular standing committee to perform that statutory function. It provides flexibility and an adaptable approach that can withstand changes, big or small, to committees’ resolutions of appointment. The bill does not alter or otherwise affect statutory functions that are performed by Assembly standing committees.

It is important to remind members that there are several important exceptions to this approach. Under the proposed amendments to the bill, the Speaker will not be given the power to nominate a committee to perform functions pursuant to the Legislative Assembly (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Act, the Auditor-General Act, the Electoral Act, the Integrity Commission Act or the Ombudsman Act. These exceptions are included so that no conflict of interest with the Speaker’s performance of other functions under these acts is seen to arise. I would like to thank members for their support, and I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.03 to 2.00 pm.

Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (2.00): Again, the Attorney-General is absent from question time, so there will be the same acting arrangements for questions as for the last two days—Attorney-General’s to Minister Cheyne, and the environment portfolio and climate change ones to me.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Hanson today, for personal reasons.

Questions without notice

Housing—affordability

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, earlier this week you seemingly agreed that Canberra is in a housing crisis, but then said that the Labor-Greens government is responsible for only two per cent of the land release in the ACT. Can you please clarify whether you mean that is two per cent of the total greenfield land released or the entire housing market?

MS BERRY: I can confirm that it is the entire market, not just greenfield.

MS LEE: Minister, how many blocks for detached housing will be released in the next financial year?

MS BERRY: I direct the Leader of the Opposition to the Indicative Land Release Program for previous years, but for this year that has not been released yet.

MR CAIN: Minister, what responsibility does your government have for Canberra's housing crisis?

MS BERRY: As members of the opposition will know, we spoke at length about this earlier in the week. The housing crisis across the country and internationally, as well as in the ACT, is rising, and the ACT has not been immune from that. The ACT has, with the levers for which it has responsibility, been able to improve housing affordability by reducing stamp duty across every budget, and by abolishing stamp duty for off-the-plan unit purchases up to \$600,000. We have our land release program; we have the homebuyer concession scheme. We are aiming to deliver 600 additional affordable dwellings. There is the Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme, and 400 public housing dwellings. We also have our Indicative Land Release Program, which has increased by more than 2,000 for the next four years, and we will continue to develop land. When other developers hold back, the ACT government does not.

ACT Health—COVID-19 data

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Today the *Canberra Times* has reported that FOI documents have revealed that health authorities did not know the vaccination status of more than one in four COVID-19 patients in our hospitals. It also reported that one person who had died of COVID in hospital was recorded as having recovered. Minister, why don't health officials know the vaccination status of one in four COVID hospital patients?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: They do. There was a period when there was a change in the way that this data was collected and the way that ACT Health was reporting this data. That period coincided with a query that the journalist was asking. To put it in summary terms, in the ACT Health Directorate the Health Emergency Control Centre had previously been responsible for case management information and collecting data on all cases of people with COVID-19, and that included collecting their vaccination status.

When the number of cases increased very rapidly, they were no longer able to undertake that kind of case investigation. There was a switch over to that vaccination status data for people who were in hospital being collected through the hospitals themselves and reported through the Clinical Health Emergency Coordination Centre to the Health Emergency Control Centre. There have also been issues around being able to match that self-reported vaccination status data up with the Australian Immunisation Register data to verify that vaccination status.

All of that changeover and the process of implementing some more automation was occurring during that January period, so I think that contributed to some of the delays in being able to gather all of that data. But, as I indicated yesterday, that data was in fact provided to the journalist. It was indeed available. The final version that I tabled yesterday afternoon indicated that, of the 22 ICU patients—this is what was asked for—15 were fully vaccinated, including three that had received a booster dose, and seven were unvaccinated.

MS CASTLEY: Why was a COVID patient who died in hospital recorded as recovered?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I think that speaks to some of the changeovers in systems that were occurring. There was a bit of an automatic process of recording people as being recovered after a period of time. We had switched to that process of recording people as being recovered. I understand that there was a data-matching issue with the unfortunate, sad passing of that individual.

Through quality assurance processes of course that was picked up. That is why it is in the FOI, because somebody went back, had a look and said, “No, actually that is not quite right.” This is why we have quality assurance processes. These are complex systems with multiple moving parts—and a lot of cases and a lot of individuals. Fortunately, there have not been a very high number of deaths, but each one of those is of course very sad and we send our condolences to those families.

This is part of a changing and moving system through the different waves of COVID-19, but all of those systems are then underpinned by quality assurance processes where data is crosschecked and matched. Ms Castley and the chamber would be aware that there have been a number of occasions through the pandemic when numbers have been updated and refreshed as a result of those quality assurance processes, and the ACT is not alone in having that experience.

MR PARTON: What are you doing to ensure that health data is accurate and complete?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Parton for the question. I think I have already gone into quite a lot of detail about the changes that were occurring through that January period. As I indicated yesterday, the cabinet gets a weekly epidemiological update report and that contains quite a significant amount of data, including vaccination data for people who are hospitalised and in intensive care. We get that data on a regular basis.

I also have regular meetings with the Chief Health Officer and her team. The Chief Health Officer is currently on leave. Until recently they have been daily meetings. They now occur three times a week. In terms of the number of meetings that I have had and that, while I was away on leave, the acting minister had, we have those meetings regularly.

We talk about the data but we also talk, very importantly, about what we are actually doing and seeing and how the response is being managed. Some of these pieces of data are being presented as being fundamentally critical for decision-making in a public health response that simply are not fundamentally critical in the context of making decisions about the public health response. So I think there is that conflation of those issues as well.

Access Canberra—services

MR CAIN: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation. Minister, in the past week several Canberrans have called the Canberra Liberals, distressed that they could not pay fines owing to Access Canberra, due to a failure in the call-back service offered by your government. One constituent waited four days to receive a call back before they were forced to go to an Access Canberra shopfront for fear of the fine being paid late. Minister, do you think four days is an acceptable time frame for Canberrans wishing to access basic Government services?

MS CHEYNE: We are aware that there is an issue with the call-back service. It has been identified to us and we are working through it. I appreciate that that may have been a distressing experience for the constituent that Mr Cain has flagged, but we are working through what is happening in that situation. I do not have an update at this stage.

MR CAIN: I have a supplementary question. Minister, is it appropriate to force Canberrans to interact with government services through Access Canberra in a way that is not in line with their preferences?

MS CHEYNE: I think I need to reject the premise of the question. Access Canberra provides a range of ways for people to engage with it, and the call-back service is just one of those. We do have our service centres and we do have our contact centre. Wait times are down, generally, across the board for our contact centre and for our service centres. Of course, Canberrans can pay on-line, as well.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why doesn't Access Canberra have appropriate resources to meet public demand?

MS CHEYNE: Access Canberra does have appropriate resources to meet its demand. In fact, Access Canberra's resources have grown in the past year, and in previous years as well. There have been more than 20 people engaged at our service centres, and more than 35 people engaged at our contact centre that was brought on recently. We need to train people, which takes time, but Access Canberra's resourcing is appropriate. As has happened across the city, Access Canberra has been affected by

COVID, and different teams have been affected at different times. We have kept a very close eye on it, and we have shifted resources to where they have been needed. But, as I have flagged, some of the transactions require training. It is not as if we can just move people and they can immediately take up the task. Access Canberra is working incredibly hard, and I take the opportunity to thank all of the teams in Access Canberra for their work and how they are supporting the Canberra community.

Employment—JobTrainer

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, how is the ACT's JobTrainer program helping Canberrans to get a job and businesses to find the skilled workers they need?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Orr for her question. As the Chief Minister's recent statement on the ACT's economic development priorities highlighted, our economy is continuing to grow. We know that Canberra businesses are calling out for more skilled workers as our economy recovers from COVID-19.

As the Chief Minister also mentioned today, in delivering the budget review, the unemployment rate in Canberra has dropped to three per cent, which is the lowest in the nation. The JobTrainer program provides free training in full qualifications, short courses and work readiness programs in areas of high skills needs, focused on both jobseekers and young people who may be looking to enter the workforce.

The current round of JobTrainer offers up to 1,000 free training places, in addition to the 2,800 that have already been taken up under JobTrainer 1. Since 2020, JobTrainer students have been able to study at CIT as well as through many of the local registered training organisations that we have here in Canberra. We know it is important to provide training locally, not only to support Canberrans who are ready for the jobs of the future but also to maintain strong links with local employers, to make sure that we are delivering the training that the industry needs.

Under JobTrainer 2, an extra requirement for RTOs applying under that program is that they demonstrate that there are employment outcomes at the other end for those who are undertaking training with them. The JobTrainer program is a great program. It is a great opportunity to get into free training, and I encourage any young Canberrans who are thinking about their plans for this year to jump online and find a great free qualification with a local skills provider.

MS ORR: Minister, what are the areas of skills needs that you are focusing on?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary. The ACT economy is currently experiencing high demand for workers across a range of different sectors. While many JobTrainer places are targeted at school leavers and jobseekers, this year's round has expanded eligibility to anyone over the age of 17 in the areas of aged care, early childhood education and care and disability care, and also in digital skills, to reflect the importance of these skills to local businesses today, and to our economy in the years to come.

Places are also available in areas like construction and renewables, to reflect the government's focus on these areas and strengthen our capacity to deliver major infrastructure projects across Canberra like the Canberra Hospital expansion which is underway. Some examples of the qualifications now open for enrolment include certificate II in construction, certificate IV in ageing support and certificate IV in mental health, as well as the ACT renewable energy skill set and ACT photovoltaic systems skill set.

Getting more Canberrans training locally in these key industries supports our economic development priority of driving skill development, and contributes to Canberra's knowledge economy.

DR PATERSON: How else is the ACT government supporting skills as Canberra's economy recovers from COVID-19?

MR STEEL: I thank Dr Paterson for her supplementary. To prepare students who are looking to enter the world of work, the ACT government is also investing in the Employment Jumpstart Grants Program. This supports organisations to build entry-level work-ready skills and micro qualifications for jobseekers and young people, like the working with vulnerable people card, the construction white card and asbestos awareness training. We know that these qualifications are often essential to enter the workforce—to get onto a construction site, for example. So undertaking them can help to make more Canberrans job ready.

Both JobTrainer and jumpstart support the ACT government's agenda to reach 250,000 local jobs by 2025, and are part of the ACT government's record \$126.3 million investment in skills in 2022. This investment will be directed towards where it is needed most to support Canberra's economic recovery—through CIT, our public TAFE, our user choice programs, the Skilled Capital subsidy programs and other initiatives and support that particularly support vulnerable Canberrans to connect with training.

Meanwhile, we are also investing in the infrastructure we need to support this learning. The new Woden CIT campus will be a state-of-the-art educational institution to support the training of around 6½ thousand students. The ACT government is currently finalising the procurement of the construction with a construction partner for the campus, with development approvals for the campus works expected to commence later this year. We know that strengthening skills is essential to helping Canberrans to find a great job and ensuring that local businesses can find the workers that they need to thrive. That is what we are delivering through the ACT government's big skill investments.

Events—Canberra Heritage Festival

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Heritage. Minister, you launched the Canberra Heritage Festival today. As the ACT Greens spokesperson for tourism and events, I am keen to better understand what we believe to be the economic benefit of the Heritage Festival to our local tourism industry.

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank Mr Davis for the question. Yes, you are correct that at lunchtime I launched the Heritage Festival, with the theme of “Curiosity”, which is really exciting. While it does not have the big headlines of some of the other festivals, such as Enlighten, this is a really important festival that runs over three weeks and attracts a wide range of people. We have over 150 diverse and interactive activities.

In relation to the opportunities for tourism, there are some significant benefits. We are quite excited this year that, for the first time, we have a hotel partner. The Mercure Canberra is our hotel partner. It is a beautiful heritage hotel and it is a perfect example. We are hoping that, through the ability to provide packages, it will create some significant tourism into Canberra.

We know that heritage is a real opportunity to attract the tourism dollar. The cultural and heritage research that was collected by Tourism Australia in 2018 found that a rich history and heritage was the fourth most important factor for the domestic market when choosing a holiday destination. It was the sixth most important in relation to international markets. We believe that significant benefits will come from this probably not as well known but really important festival in our local festival program.

MR DAVIS: Minister, what events have been planned specifically in Tuggeranong?

MS VASSAROTTI: I knew that there would be some interest in the kinds of events that are happening in different areas of the ACT. Of the 150 events that we have running, there are 32 diverse events in Brindabella, spanning the suburbs of Tuggeranong and into Tharwa, Namadgi and Tidbinbilla. We have things such as a walk back in time for the old Tuggeranong railway; a glimpse into Kambah’s past, through a heritage walk; the Milky Way photography workshop that is happening out at Namadgi; looking at how you can build a beneficial bee and insect hotel at Lanyon Homestead; the bush tucker harvest day out at Tharwa; and heritage on wheels, where you can take your mountain bike out to Tidbinbilla. There is a really wide range and something for everyone. I am hoping that members from Brindabella and across the whole city get out to some of the events.

DR PATERSON: Minister, could you outline the heritage events that will be happening in Murrumbidgee?

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank the member for her question. I do not actually have that information with me.

Dr Paterson: Take it on notice.

MS VASSAROTTI: I thought about the sorts of questions that I might get asked. There are a significant number of events in Murrumbidgee and across the region. I will ensure that every single member gets a program for the festival, which will start in a couple of weeks. I hope that we will see everyone at different events. There are some really interesting events and you will learn something about a part of your city that you think you know. It is a great range of events and there is something for everyone.

Roads—traffic data

MR PARTON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, you recently announced an intention to install transport monitoring technology across central Canberra. You said this will provide reliable real-time information to help commuters make informed choices on alternative routes during upcoming disruptions. Minister, how will this system help commuters get to their destination on time when your construction activities will create an unprecedented and impenetrable gridlock?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. This is just one initiative that the ACT government will be undertaking as part of work to minimise and mitigate the effect of disruption coming from major public and private infrastructure projects right around the city. This is just one part of what we are planning to do in addition to investing in our public transport priority in places like Vernon Circle, for example, to provide bus priority. We will be encouraging people to get onto public transport because it is a very efficient way to move large numbers of people across the traffic network. It benefits everyone—the person catching public transport, but also commuters on the road—by reducing the number of vehicles there.

Of course, we will be providing very clear communication, probably on a daily basis, on the radio and social media, and through the variable message signs that we have invested in, in the budget review, to provide commuters prior to taking a trip on the road network and also during their trip, information about the alternative routes available to them. That information is already provided on some parts of our road network—on the Tuggeranong Parkway, for example, providing options to go on the Cotter Road, with the journey time indicator on those variable message signs, or onto Parkes Way, depending on which one is quicker.

We are giving people in their cars better options to move around the traffic network. This is an investment that benefits us not only during this disruption period but well beyond—into the future. Our intelligent transport systems are systems that other cities around Australia and the world have put in place. We will be doing this ahead of the disruption to make sure that we mitigate the effects as much as possible as we build this transformational infrastructure for our city which has been designed—particularly through light rail—to make sure that we have great transport alternatives so that we can become a sustainable city.

MR PARTON: Minister, what is the point of attempting alternative routes when your workplace is located in an area potentially gridlocked for three to four hours a day?

MR STEEL: We will have better information, through the intelligent transport system, to understand the extent of that congestion, because we will have the sensors in place right across those areas where we expect congestion to occur. That will provide better information to people about rethinking their routine. That might mean going into work slightly earlier. It might mean working from home. It might mean going into work slightly later or choosing, with the better data, a different route that they may not have considered. You can criticise our government for putting in place

more data and getting more information to people. We are getting on with building the major infrastructure projects that our city needs for its future to become more efficient and sustainable. We will do that through a data-driven process to support people as we build those projects.

MS LAWDER: I have a supplementary question. Minister, what genuinely effective and practical measures will you take to relieve the congestion that will be created?

MR STEEL: I refer the member to all of the announcements that I have made thus far. There are more to come. There will be more Park and Ride spaces—like the new Park and Ride that is being constructed as we speak at the Mawson Beasley Street carpark and the new expanded Park and Ride at Weston—and the new intelligent transport system that provides better data and communication to people to make sure that they can efficiently move around our network. We have done work on a design, which is currently with the National Capital Authority for approval. Following approval we look forward to constructing the signalisation of the Coranderrk Street roundabout—a major bottleneck in our traffic network even prior to these major infrastructure projects.

The signalisation of Vernon Circle will mean that we can provide bus priority so that they can get onto Constitution Avenue and into the intercity interchange during the disruption period. Of course, we are looking at further measures that we can take, and once we have a delivery partner on board, particularly for the raising London Circuit project, we can mitigate the worst of the disruption once we know what the construction project looks like. The disruption task force has not finished its work. It is continuing to look at a range of different measures to mitigate this disruption because we are taking a proactive approach to this issue well ahead of construction starting.

ACT Policing—police services model

DR PATERSON: My question is to the minister for policing. Minister, how is the new police services model helping to keep Canberrans safe?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Paterson for her interest in keeping our community safe. The ACT government is continuing to deliver on our \$33.9 million commitment to the new police services model, helping ACT Policing to serve the Canberra community even better into the future, as our city continues to grow.

The new model is focused on crime prevention, with the aim of freeing up our police officers to deliver a more connected, dynamic and community-focused service. Our investment is enabling ACT Policing to focus more efforts on education, disruption, prevention, diversion, community engagement and problem solving activities.

With the addition of our new proactive policing teams, we now have more police officers engaging with the community to pre-emptively identify and prevent crime. Instead of reacting to crime as it occurs, the new service model is enabling our officers to address known crime risks before they can cause harm to our community. It is also empowering our officers to address issues that cause repeated calls for

service across the local community, and tackle the root causes of criminal behaviour, improving outcomes for Canberrans and diverting community members away from crime.

As part of the PSM rollout, our officers are also now better equipped, with new tools and tech, including mobile devices, tasers and body-worn cameras, as well as additional resources to provide real-time intelligence out on the road.

I want to thank all ACT police members for their involvement in the rollout of the new police services model. Their feedback and engagement have been vital to its success, and I look forward to our ongoing work on this important project. Together we will continue to deliver a more visible, proactive and connected police service to ensure the ongoing safety of the Canberra community now and into the future.

DR PATERSON: Minister, how are the ACT government and ACT Policing discouraging dangerous driving and ensuring safety on our roads?

MR GENTLEMAN: The ACT government and ACT Policing have zero tolerance for dangerous driving. ACT Policing conducts targeted traffic operations designed to identify offenders, deter illegal and antisocial driving activity, as well as promote a culture of road safety in our community. I am pleased to report that during ACT Policing's month-long traffic focus on dangerous driving and hooning in November, illegal events were disrupted, with several motorists fined. Vehicles were also seized, and numerous drivers were summoned to face court.

ACT Policing received and investigated multiple reports of burnouts, speeding and hooning events in the ACT, as well as across the border, with the assistance of the New South Wales police force. Police targeted speeding motorists on roads across the ACT throughout January, as part of the ACT Policing and Transport Canberra and City Services road safety calendar. In February, ACT Policing seized two vehicles following burnout activity in Hume and charged two drivers with improper use of a motor vehicle. Recently, this month, ACT Policing arrested and charged an individual for multiple driving offences following pursuits in Belconnen. These are just some of the examples of the good work ACT Policing has been doing to discourage dangerous driving and keep our roads safe.

Whilst our officers continue to achieve excellent results and have a significant presence on our roads, they cannot be everywhere all of the time. Information from the community is crucial in identifying problem areas and crimes at the times those issues are occurring. This information helps ACT Policing to better access, prioritise and direct resources to incidents.

I strongly encourage Canberrans to continue to report incidents of dangerous driving, either at the time on 13 14 44 or after the fact to Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how is the ACT government ensuring incidents of property crime remain low?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Pettersson for his interest in keeping Canberrans safe. The government and ACT Policing remain committed to tackling all criminal behaviour in our community, including property crime. ACT Policing is continuing to develop and implement strategies to target property crime offenders, including the establishment of a proactive intervention and disruption team. ACT Policing continues to promote property crime reduction strategies to the community, including the Outsmart the Offender campaign, which provides practical ideas that can be implemented to reduce the risk of motor vehicle theft and other property crime offences. This work is proving to be effective, with our police officers continuing to do an excellent job in ensuring that incidents of property crime remain low.

The ACT has some of the lowest property crime rates in Australia. I am pleased to report that ACT Policing recorded a seven per cent decrease in offences against property in 2020-21, when compared to 2019-20. That is a decrease of 1,256 offences.

While we will never be completely immune to all property crime in our community, ACT Policing responds quickly to incidents of property crime when they do occur. For example, ACT Policing recently arrested a duo in Kaleen following the theft of a Nissan X-Trail from a residence in Bonner. The individuals allegedly had a quantity of stolen property, drug paraphernalia, knives and a number of keys to other vehicles also believed to be stolen. Arrests were also made after recent burglaries in Curtin and Conder, as well as in connection with a burglary in the Canberra Centre involving the theft of \$60,000 worth of electronic devices.

I commend all of our ACT Policing officers for their ongoing efforts to prevent and respond to property crime, and I will continue to work with ACT Policing to address the issue into the future and build on their excellent results to date.

Budget—gender equity

MS CLAY: The Office for Women is helping the ACT government apply a gender lens to its budget decisions, but I have heard concerns about progress. Last year I asked a series of questions across directorates to understand how the gender impact assessment tool is being used, and I found out the tool is not being tracked across the Public Service. In recent estimates, we asked about this and heard that gender lens budgeting in other jurisdictions is really successful when it is tracked and integrated in all aspects of government and policy decision-making. We also heard that the wellbeing indicators are being tracked and delivered through the Chief Minister's office. Have you considered tracking and delivering gender lens budgeting alongside wellbeing indicators in the Chief Minister's office?

MR BARR: Thanks, Ms Clay, for the question. I presume by the Chief Minister's office, you mean the directorate, rather than my personal office? What I can advise is that the gender perspective on budgeting is undertaken through the wellbeing impact assessments that are at the core of each business case that comes into the budget process, as well as the policy development process.

So the wellbeing team within the policy and cabinet area of the Chief Minister's directorate, work with the Office for Women in relation to the progress of gender

responsive budgeting and reporting. And we will, as we collect more data across the wellbeing indicators, be in a position to report more fulsomely on our wellbeing progress through the budget process, as well as every day of the year through the wellbeing dashboard.

MS CLAY: Would there be benefits in embedding and tracking gender lenses budgeting in Chief Minister's?

MR BARR: It is to the extent that the data collation for the wellbeing framework, which encompasses all of the indicators under the 12 domains, are centrally collected but there is still clearly a role—a policy role and a data role—for the Office for Women.

MR DAVIS: Chief Minister, would see value in having either the Treasurer or the Minister for Women appear before the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality to discuss gender-lens budgeting and gender and economic equality?

MR BARR: Well, I believe appearances already occur. And obviously, we have just changed the nature of the budget estimates process in the Assembly today, in terms of reverting to an estimates committee. So I do not think there should be duplicate appearance, but that may be something that the estimates committee wishes to pursue both with the Minister for Women and with me, as Treasurer.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—security

MRS KIKKERT: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Corrections. On 19 March, Corrections Officers foiled an escape attempt at the AMC. A private vehicle was driven up to the fence at the same time as detainees were breaking a window to escape.

For a long time, many officers have been calling for a sterile zone around the perimeter fence, and they have had serious concerns about their ability to properly surveil the area directly surrounding the prison. The lack of quality surveillance outside the perimeter fence makes it easier for people to throw prohibited items over the fence. In this case, it allowed a vehicle to drive up to the perimeter fence almost undetected.

Minister, can you explain how this escape attempt was possible, and how you are going to prevent this from happening in future?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank the member for her question. I am advised by the Corrections Commission that two detainees did attempt to escape AMC in the evening of 19 March, and the escape was detected and they were able to quickly apprehend the detainees within the AMC. So the incident is being investigated by ACT Policing. ACT Corrective Services are also reviewing the circumstances of the incident and taking action required to prevent similar incidents. So it would not be appropriate for me to comment further, given the review and the police investigation.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, why is there no sterile zone around the perimeter fence, when officers have been calling for it for some time?

MR GENTLEMAN: That is an operational matter for AMC, and I am very happy with the work that they are doing at the moment. I will leave those operational matters with them.

MR CAIN: Minister, why is there inadequate surveillance on the outside of the perimeter fence, when officers have been calling for this for some time?

MR GENTLEMAN: We take on board every comment, of course, that officers make in relation to their particular safety and the operations at AMC, and those matters are taken on board by the commissioner and those working to improve safety for members at the AMC.

Kingston Arts Precinct—delivery

MS LAWDER: Madam Speaker, my question is to Minister for the Arts. In July 2021, the SLA Board made the decision to terminate the contract with Geocon for the Kingston Arts Precinct, following a lengthy list of issues, and your government is now planning to deliver the Kingston Arts Precinct itself through its own agencies. Resident arts organisations were informed of this decision on 4 November, prior to a 5 November meeting. Geocon was paid half a million dollars to “cover reasonable expenses of Geocon.”

Why has your government spent \$500,000 and received no tangible result that is of benefit to the community?

MR BARR: Madam Speaker, this is a major project within an urban renewal precinct. So, whilst Minister Cheyne and I are working on it, in relation to the procurement and development of the project, that sits within my urban renewal area of the Suburban Land Agency, hence my answer to the question. Ms Lawder, the government has indeed received benefit in relation to the intellectual property and the design that has been undertaken to date, so we have not paid for nothing; we have paid for some it.

MS LAWDER: Minister or Chief Minister, why were resident arts organisations kept in the dark about these decisions from July to November 2021?

MR BARR: Madam Speaker, well these are obviously complex commercial negotiations that required the government to cease the contract and take over responsibility for delivery of a project. So it is not something that could be shared publicly until that process was complete and, in advance of the public announcement, those groups were advised.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, will the government be using the designs and the IP that you say that you pay Geocon for? Is the project still on track for 2025 delivery?

MR BARR: Certainly, the SLA’s intent is to draw upon the work that has already occurred. There are further rounds of consultation and engagement still to come. The

project has obviously had some setbacks in relation to this change of delivery mechanism, and I will update the Assembly in due course on a new completion date.

Public housing—barriers to access

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services. Minister, we know that certain culturally and linguistically diverse communities have faced increased barriers and tracking outcomes is a vital step toward solving inequality. It can be said if you do not count it, you cannot see it, and if you cannot see it, you cannot make sure the service addresses the specific needs. What demographic data is collected on CALD community members who are on housing waiting lists?

MS VASSAROTTI: Thank you to Mr Braddock for the question. I think it is a really important question because you are right that if we do not actually understand the needs of our tenants and our prospective tenants, we will have difficulty responding to their needs. Certainly, a range of information is collected about prospective tenants and tenants once they are actually a part of public housing.

So as part of the application process for public housing assistance, applicants are asked to provide details on information such as country of birth, preferred language, and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity for all members of the household. As of 23 March 2022, 23 per cent of all current housing clients—and that includes tenants, residents and applicants—were born in a country other than Australia.

For those who are currently applying for public housing or have been placed on a public housing waiting list, the proportion is slightly higher—22 per cent—than for residents that are currently in public housing, which is 22 per cent. The proportion of clients who prefer to speak a language other than English is 9 per cent overall.

And again, it is slightly higher for applicants at 13 per cent than for residents of tenancies—that is 8 per cent. I know that you did not ask this bit of the question but the proportion of clients who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is consistently at 10 per cent across tenants, residents and applicants as well.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, can you explain steps being taken to reduce barriers to access for public housing for CALD communities?

MS VASSAROTTI: Thank you, Mr Braddock, for the question. Look, there is a significant body of work that is happening in relation to ensuring that we reduce barriers for all clients, particularly those that might be facing particular disadvantage and there is a really important piece of work going on in relation to reimagining the gateway process. So that is really coming in to have a look at the public-facing community services website where many public housing tenants and prospective tenants have significant engagement. So we are really looking to see that that is client-centric and really provides appropriate pathways and supports as the entry point for online service delivery.

In October 2021, housing ACT engaged an organisation called True North Content to undertake discovery and really look at the architecture and look at the content that is guiding Housing ACT's communication and engagement moving forward. So there is a range of work that has happened in relation to that, looking at working with staff and clients, including the tenants consultative group, to really understand what people's needs are.

One of the key issues that has come out of that is ensuring that information provided on that is accessible and understandable. In Australia, 14 per cent of Australian adults have low literacy and an audit of the current content on the website found that it had a pretty high reading level and only 20 per cent of pages met the Australian government's digital transformation agency's benchmark of grade 7. It also identified there was 105 webpages that contained jargon or unfamiliar words that would need further explanation.

So we are really looking at how we can improve this, and plain English will be used, because it also enables better automated software such as Google translate which will really support Housing ACT's culturally and linguistically diverse cohort. This Google translate functionality will be embedded in each page of the revised site and there will be a shift from PDF and Word documents to HTML pages to ensure this functionality, and the assisted technologies, can be utilised across all site content.
(Time expired.)

MS CLAY: As minister for homelessness services, how are you working with the sector to ensure that we have clear data including on those from CALD backgrounds, to ensure we understand who uses these services and that the services are therefore appropriate?

MS VASSAROTTI: Thank you, Ms Clay, for the question. There is a wide range of work that is happening with the sector to really understand the needs and how we support those. Particularly in relation to data content, this does also factor into work that happens nationally, because there are national datasets that are used in order to ensure that we are able to track how we are performing against other jurisdictions, and that we have consistent data measuring and data terms that are being used. So community agencies are involved in that work, and we continue to work closely with community organisations around that.

Events—Canberra Day

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how did this year's Canberra Day celebrations differ from previous years?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. After adapting to the changing COVID-19 situation and its impacts on social gatherings over the last two years, 10 days ago, on 14 March, the ACT government was able to run a fully-fledged Canberra Day in a more traditional event format. Whilst circumstances in the previous two years demanded that Canberra Day celebrations consisted of tailored enlightened programming, supporting by outreach activities, celebrations this year featured a

dedicated large scale event at Commonwealth Park, supported—in the lead up to and on the day—by community arts workshops.

Entry was free; tickets were not required. The event attracted over 15,000 attendees to enjoy 38 performance groups presented across three stages and engaged with 34 multicultural community and commercial stall holders and others. This program was supported by additional funds from the National Multicultural Festival to engage with our multicultural communities and provide revenue raising opportunities for them.

I would particularly like to highlight that the estimated total of 15,000 people attending represents a Canberra Day event attendance on par or higher than experienced over the last six years, which is a testament to the Canberra community and a reflection of Enlighten's success in general.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, can you please outline for the Assembly the other government-run events held during the Canberra Day long weekend and how they contributed to our celebrations?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. The Canberra Day long weekend featured a number of crowd favourite events for locals and visitors to enjoy. The beloved short film festival, Lights Canberra Action, took place on the night of Friday, 11 March in the Senate Rose Garden and attracted an estimated crowd of over 17,000 event goers, with awards presented to winning film makers across 16 different categories.

The Canberra Balloon Spectacular returned to the Patrick White Lawn location from Saturday 12 March, commencing at 6.15 am daily, and continued through until Sunday 20 March. The event achieved record attendance during its run this year with an estimated total of 47,500 attendees just at the official event site alone, surpassing the previous record of 44,000 achieved in 2020 and many Canberrans were delighted to meet the feature balloon this year, which was Tico the Sloth.

Symphony in the Park featured Australian singer-songwriter, Lior, and Canberra Symphony Orchestra was held on the night of Sunday 13 March and it attracted a very healthy attendance of 12,500 attendees as well. So when combining the numbers from the Canberra Day event with the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, and Enlighten Illumination attendees on Monday 14 March, I am very pleased to share that this year's Canberra Day set a new record for total daily attendance with over 39,500 people joining celebrations from the morning through to the evening.

MS ORR: Minister, what were some of the highlights of Enlighten's broader programming and initial measures of its success?

MS CHEYNE: Enlighten official sits within the Chief Minister's major events portfolio, but I am very happy to share that the community events within the program experienced a very strong attendance, with estimated attendance back to, or surpassing, pre-pandemic levels.

The city illuminations, which we all enjoyed, I think, was a new program element presented by City Renewal Authority. It features the popular Ephemeral installation in Civic Square. The illuminations contributed significantly to expanding Enlighten's offering and its footprint.

Initial reports show that the footfall across Civic on those Friday nights went up 70 per cent during the illuminations compared to usual activity. Canberra After Dark featured a range of Enlighten themed experiences and exclusive ticketed events such as art classes at Parliament House and new site-specific dance work 'LESS', presented by the Australian Dance Party at Dairy Road.

Seeing so many Canberrans come out to experience and enjoy Enlighten again was heartening and a reminder that our city is well on the way to recovering from the pandemic with energy and enthusiasm.

It is important to note that the Events ACT team and support teams across the ACT government did an outstanding job across Enlighten. They were up at 4.30 am almost every single day and often were there well into the evening—sometimes until 1 am—and they did so repeatedly with good cheer, the enthusiasm that was reflected in the community and sheer hard work.

And on behalf of the ACT government, I extend my thanks to them.

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

Supplementary answers to questions without notice

Events—Canberra Heritage Festival

MS VASSAROTTI: I want to make sure that Dr Paterson is aware of some of the events happening in the Murrumbidgee area. I want to let her know that there is a very exciting tour of Scrivener Dam, at Weston Creek. It is very exciting that we have a cultural tour happening at our newest park, Namarag. There is also a Canberra cultural walk. I understand that a couple of other members might be going on that, so it might be an opportunity for Murrumbidgee people to get together. I know that Dr Paterson enjoys getting on her bike. There is the Heritage Polaris, which will give you the opportunity to go all over Canberra and discover sites that you may not have known are heritage sites across our city.

Events—Canberra Day

Access Canberra—services

MS CHEYNE: My office has told me that I misspoke; there were 1,700 in attendance at Lights! Canberra! Action!, not 17,000. For clarity, I will give some further information about Access Canberra and its staffing levels, just to confirm that I did not misspeak another number.

Access Canberra has increased its contact centre workforce throughout the pandemic. That has included an additional 120 staff from across Access Canberra being trained and ready to answer calls. In addition to the existing call-taker workforce of 65 staff,

it also commenced a bulk recruitment round, which I referenced in my answer before, which employed 21 new frontline staff members for the service centres and 13 new staff for the contact centre, who are currently undergoing training. In terms of the current staffing levels, as at the pay period in February 2022, the figure for the contact centre and the service centre was 155 FTE. That compares to 120 FTE in January 2020.

Answers to questions on notice

Questions 647 and 648

MRS KIKKERT: Under standing order 118A, I seek an explanation from the Minister for Mental Health as to why questions 647 and 648, taken on notice on 10 February 2022, have not been answered within the 30-day time frame.

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for bringing that to my attention. I will follow that up and get back to you very quickly.

Estimates 2022-2023—Select Committee Membership

MADAM SPEAKER: Earlier today there was a motion in regard to a select committee. I have been notified in writing of the following nominations for the membership of the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023. They are Mr Milligan, Dr Paterson and Mr Braddock.

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

That the Members so nominated be appointed as members of the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023.

Papers

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Freedom of Information Act, pursuant to section 39—Copy of notice provided to the Ombudsman—Freedom of Information request—Decision not made in time—Community Services Directorate (HOU-21/46), dated 13 August 2021.

Gungahlin—Cinema development—Response to the resolution of the Assembly of 1 December 2021, dated 24 March 2022.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—

Report 2—*Inquiry into the 2020 ACT Election and the Electoral Act*—Supplementary Government response, dated March 2022.

Report 4—*Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021*—Government response—Copy of letter to the Chair from the Special Minister of State, dated 22 March 2022.

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)*—Government response, dated March 2022.

Public Sector Management Standards, pursuant to section 56—Engagements of long term senior executive service members—Schedule—1 September 2021 to 28 February 2022, dated March 2022.

Remuneration Tribunal Act, pursuant to subsection 12(2)—Determination, together with accompanying statement—Head of Service, Directors-General and Executives—Determination 1 of 2022, dated March 2022.

Remuneration Tribunal Act—determination 1 of 2022

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) (2.58): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Remuneration Tribunal Act, pursuant to subsection 12(2)—Determination, together with accompanying statement—Head of Service, Directors-General and Executives—Determination 1 of 2022.

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

Public Sector Management Standards—schedule of engagements

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) (2.58): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Public Sector Management Standards, pursuant to section 56—Engagements of long term senior executive service members—Schedule—1 September 2021 to 28 February 2022.

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

Planning—Gungahlin cinema—government response

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) (2.59): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Gungahlin—Cinema development—Response to the resolution of the Assembly of 1 December 2021

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

**Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee
Report 7—government response**

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.00): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Bill 2021 (No 2)*—Government response.

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

**Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee
Report 2—supplementary government response**

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.00): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 2—*Inquiry into the 2020 ACT Election and the Electoral Act*—Supplementary Government response.

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

**Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee
Report 4—government response**

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.01): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021*—Government response.

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

Community Services Directorate—freedom of information request

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for

Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.01): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Freedom of Information Act, pursuant to section 39—Copy of notice provided to the Ombudsman—Freedom of Information request—Decision not made in time—Community Services Directorate (HOU-21/46).

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

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Rattenbury for today for health reasons.

Justice—fines

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (3.03), by leave: I move the amended motion that has been circulated in my name:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) The ACT Government's compliance model is based on a model of *Engage, Educate, Enforce*, with the following key principles:
 - (i) risk-based;
 - (ii) proportionate;
 - (iii) effective; and
 - (iv) accountable;
- (b) nationally, abundant evidence demonstrates that fines have disproportionate and serious impacts on marginalised communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, young people, detainees, welfare recipients, the homeless and people with disabilities and/or mental health issues;
- (c) ACT Government legislation contains penalties in the form of fines for a wide range of offences varying in severity from serious to minor offences. Non-payment of fines can result in:
 - (i) further financial penalties regardless of the offender's ability to pay; and
 - (ii) interaction with the court system;
- (d) the systemic impacts of applying these penalties, and any consequential court action for non-payment of fines, may be inconsistent with the ACT Government's compliance model and its principles; and
- (e) the ACT Government has taken steps to mitigate those harms, including enabling alternatives to paying fines, and payment plans. Despite this,

vulnerable Canberrans may still face court due to non-payment of fines for what most would view as minor transgressions; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) provide information (in the form of general information and statistics, or representative samples, as appropriate) on:
 - (i) the extent to which unpaid infringement or penalty notices for minor offences are pursued through the courts; and
 - (ii) the resource implications of that enforcement action, with regard to the magnitude of the fine;
- (b) examine alternative options to improve equity, including whether and in what circumstances a fines regime would be likely to remain effective without the option to pursue a prosecution through the Courts; and
- (c) report back to the Assembly by 30 September 2022.

The primary purpose of fines is to encourage compliance with the law. On the face of it, having a system of fines for everyone results in the law being applied equally to all citizens. The reality, though, is that a system of set fines for everyone does not recognise the unequal capacity of people to pay. It does not recognise the disproportionate impact on vulnerable Canberrans. By vulnerable Canberrans, I am talking about the young, the old, the sick, the disabled, the impaired, those who lack the financial means, the illiterate, and those who speak English as a second language or not at all. They are the people who are most significantly impacted by fines and possible ensuing court action.

The genesis of this motion was the justice and community safety committee's inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill, and listening to Mr Hanson and his concerns about 16 and 17-year-olds being on a pathway to criminalisation for failing to pay a fine. It made me think of not just young people but all vulnerable Canberrans—and not just new bills but all existing legislation that is on the register.

As a recent publication by Australian researchers Julia Quilter and Russell Hogg points out:

Fines enforcement produces very real, but often hidden, hardships for the most vulnerable. Despite its familiarity and apparent simplicity and transparency, the fine is a mode of punishment that hides complex penal and social realities and effects.

I wish I could provide the statistics on the rate of vulnerable people going to court due to unpaid fines; sadly, I have not been able to find a meaningful measurement of this. Canberrans, on the whole, and on average, demonstrate higher levels of compliance than the rest of Australia. It is what has kept us safe during COVID. Therefore, where there are instances of noncompliance, we need to scratch a little deeper and determine why.

There may be smarter ways of going about achieving better outcomes—ways that do not involve the waste and expense of costly court actions, ways that foster relationships between the government and Canberrans, building trust, understanding

and behavioural change. I have heard a lot about the ACT government's "engage, educate and enforce" model of compliance. It is a model that I support, and it is an evidence-based approach reflective of the seminal work of local regulation expert Professor John Braithwaite.

Decisions by the ACT government on enforcement are based on five principles, the first being risk-based, to ensure that ACT government resources are targeted to where the risk of harm, unsafe practices or misconduct are the greatest, thereby strengthening the government's capacity to take action where the community and environment are most at risk.

The second principle is proportionate, having regard for the harm or risk, the experience and the past conduct of a person when determining what our response should be. The third principle is effective—applying the appropriate compliance tool to ensure that our regulatory interventions are responsive to the circumstances and achieve the desired outcomes. It also needs to be constructive, to provide advice, guidance and support to help the Canberra community to comply with the relevant laws. Finally, it is about being accountable so that we are willing to explain our decisions and why we have taken that enforcement action.

I am not suggesting that we should get rid of fines. I am asking whether there might be an alternative that encourages looking at what is risk-based, proportionate, effective, constructive and accountable, and an alternative option that is also socially responsible, reduces administrative burdens and is cheaper and more effective at improving compliance.

The growing reliance on out-of-court, infringement or penalty notice provisions as an alternative to criminal prosecution is also happening for an ever-increasing range of offences. It is time to ask some questions about the agencies administering fines, how the discretionary powers are being exercised and whether the systemic impacts reinforce the values of being a risk-based, constructive, proportionate and effective response.

For vulnerable Canberrans, those who are struggling the most, who, as a result of a minor transgression, end up going through the Magistrates Court, getting a criminal record, and making their lives and livelihoods even more tenuous, I would ask the question: does this abide by the principles that I have mentioned? The possibility of an unpaid fine being taken to court is a very daunting one for a member of the community. We have to make sure our responses are proportionate, where court enforcement is the response we take for moral blameworthiness, not to be conflated with disorganisation or confusion.

Fines can have a disproportionate impact on the life of someone struggling financially, and represent a very real and serious source of stress. We must keep this in mind when we want to deter behaviour. There has to be a balance we can find to minimise unnecessary suffering. Of course, enforcement can be very important so that people know if they risk someone's life by speeding they have to face up to and be accountable for that fact. But we also have a responsibility not to be so heavy-handed that we kick off a downward spiral for a community member.

I have faith that we can strike that balance. It is not just about the cases that do end up in court. There is the stress of court enforcement hanging over one's head as a possibility, or the actual, genuine harm caused by the financial stress of the fine and the compounding late fees. People can end up thousands of dollars in debt because they are anxious and just never respond. They are never taken to court, but it still weighs heavily upon them. Fines can also lead to a negative cycle, with long-term consequences for the whole family. I question whether fines for a minor transgression should be aggressively pursued, especially when the pursuit can end in financial ruin, criminal records and devastation.

There are currently two programs that assist low-income Canberrans to pay their traffic and parking fines. These programs are payment in instalments or the Work or Development Program. I must acknowledge former Greens MLA Amanda Bresnan for introducing the legislation for both of these options during the Seventh Assembly. This was followed up by her successor, Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur, with a motion in 2020. These schemes are a good start, but they also have their limitations. The first allows people to pay in instalments. But for those who are already financially unable to keep up, who cannot make ends meet, how are they ever meant to be able to catch up?

The second, the Work or Development Program, allows people to work off a fine by making an alternative contribution to the community and getting help with the problems in their life that may have led to that initial fine. For example, they can work at not-for-profits, attend workshops or participate in residential drug and alcohol programs. I applaud this initiative but note that it is only available on request by the offender and assumes they have the luxury of time in which to undertake the activity. The working poor may well not have the time to do this.

Importantly, possibly due to workload and staffing issues during COVID-19, wait times have blown out for accessing these schemes, with consequential stress and impacts on vulnerable Canberrans. We have heard that wait times now often exceed three months. It is during this time that people are unsure whether their fines have been put on hold, and they are receiving reminder notices and licence suspension notices. They are also missing out on opportunities to participate in the alternative activities provided for by this scheme.

This has left people who are unable to pay at an increased risk of losing their licence, which is often necessary for paid work and other essential activities like health care, as well as attracting further fees for non-payment. Imagine if the scheme could operate as an automatic entitlement, rather than a burdensome bureaucratic decision with a lot of stress and terrible consequences for people when it is not processed in a timely way.

Currently, people who are struggling financially have to work hard to get access to the options that are in place to help them. This mindset needs to shift to one where people are helped to access their entitlements as a step towards getting back on their feet financially.

I also ask whether fining people is effective. Does it actually drive behavioural change? Does it actually incentivise people to do the right thing? The research is very much out on the effectiveness of fines as a deterrent. The summary by the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research puts it well, when it says:

In general, there is little that would suggest a marginal deterrent effect of court-imposed fines and licence disqualification for persons convicted of driving offences.

In closing, is it really worth the government's time and money to pursue these? Is there a better alternative out there? That is why my motion calls on the government to take a look at whether our current system is really working for us and for all Canberrans.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (3.15): On behalf of the Canberra Liberals, I speak to Mr Braddock's motion to review the current compliance and enforcement system for fines for minor transgressions. The Canberra Liberals agree with the large majority of the points that Mr Braddock wishes the Assembly to note and will be supporting what he is calling on the ACT Labor-Greens government to do. The Canberra Liberals agree that fines have a disproportionate impact on marginalised communities and that this needs to be directly addressed. We also believe in measures to keep people out of the court system and understand that restorative justice options are preferable.

The Canberra Liberals will always advocate for more information and evidence, including statistics, but I want to understand how this information will be gathered, at what cost to taxpayers and by what means, including if this work will be tendered. The Canberra Liberals do have concerns about the statement that "the ACT government has taken steps to mitigate harms". This was with respect to disproportionately affected communities.

A very significant promise made by the Labor-Greens government was to develop a reintegration centre at the AMC, to the tune of \$30 million. As members are aware, in October 2021 Minister Gentleman said that this project had been put on hold "due to changing circumstances and accommodating priorities". The minister also said that there was no timeline yet for developing or designing a centre and the associated reintegration processes.

The ACT's recidivism rate currently sits at 38.5 per cent, according to the 2021 annual report. The government wants to reduce this by 25 per cent by 2025—a commendable goal. However, can the government be trusted to reduce recidivism? Three years out from meeting their own target, a major \$30 million investment in reintegration has not been actioned; nor has it been given a timeline for commencement or completion. Shame!

The Labor-Greens government fail, and fail again, to deliver services on time—or at all in this case. It does distress me that, yet again, a Greens backbencher is introducing a motion to the Assembly relating to multimillion-dollar Labor-Greens government policy commitments.

I look forward to hearing the findings on 30 September 2022 and will be closely tracking this. While the Canberra Liberals will be supporting this motion today, I note that it is with some scepticism as to how effectively such information will be used for implementing change, given the Labor-Greens government's appalling service delivery record.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra—Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.18): With the Attorney-General unable to be here today, I rise to speak firstly on his behalf to Mr Braddock's motion, and then I will speak as me, in my business and better regulation portfolio.

The government is committed to ensuring the appropriateness and effectiveness of criminal justice measures, including the use of infringement notices to deal with particular offences. Penalties are imposed to achieve a range of purposes. These include deterring behaviour which the Assembly has considered and determined should be made a criminal offence. This is generally because the behaviour is dangerous, such as speeding, or has other adverse impacts on members of the community, such as failing to comply with public health rules or littering. Where the penalty fails to deter behaviour, the imposition of the penalty operates as a sanction for the commission of an offence.

A relevant factor when looking at alternatives is the extent to which those alternatives maintain the integrity of the criminal justice system. The community would generally expect that, if a particular behaviour has been criminalised by the legislature and an appropriate penalty determined, there would be mechanisms in place to follow up on the penalty, where that offence is committed. This is the case where the predominant method for dealing with the offence is issuing an infringement notice, such as for traffic or parking offences, or the offence is one which is prosecuted in a court. The government welcomes Mr Braddock's interest in exploring these matters further and will be supporting the motion today.

Now I will speak with my usual hat on, as Minister for Business and Better Regulation. The ACT government is committed to supporting a city which is safe, accessible, fair and inclusive, a city that is open and one that is welcoming to all. We are also committed to providing a compliance framework from our regulators which is underpinned by engagement, education and enforcement and which supports a safe and liveable city.

As a key regulatory agency, Access Canberra applies a risk-based and proportionate approach to its regulatory compliance activity, be it the issuing of parking fines or improvement and show cause notices to builders, through to working effectively with local businesses—most recently demonstrated through our COVID-19 response. If a member of our community does happen to be issued with a fine, the ACT government ensures that the recipient has the information they need to make an informed decision on the approach they may choose to take, be it to pay the fine or to seek a review, appeal, withdrawal or flexibility in the way in which the infringement penalty may be paid or managed.

I have spoken before in this place about the success of Access Canberra's engage, educate and enforce model of regulation in the ACT. It is an approach underpinned by a robust and publicly available accountability commitment suite of documents. Through Access Canberra's data-led, evidence-driven and proportionate approach to risk and harm, compliance is best achieved through targeted and effective education and engagement with individuals, business and the community. This approach supports Canberrans to do the right thing without applying a financial or other significant penalty unless necessary to support public safety or to provide an immediate deterrent, thereby reducing the financial burden on Canberrans.

I will share with members just a couple of ongoing examples. Firstly, I turn to the work of the parking operations team. I have been fortunate to join these hardworking officers as they have undertaken their work and I have seen firsthand the discretion and the fairness that they demonstrate. These officers have one goal in mind: to support safe, legal and accessible parking in Canberra. If this can be achieved through a discussion with the driver, it often is. The officers also provide a ten-minute grace period, which was introduced by this government, to again demonstrate fairness and reduce the financial burden on Canberrans.

Importantly, prior to any major parking change, an education and engagement approach is taken, usually accompanied by a warning period. This assists Canberrans to adjust to the change and to understand the new requirements before any enforcement activity commences. Recent examples include the reintroduction of pay parking after the COVID-19 lockdown period; activity around sporting ovals and precincts such as Garran oval, where Access Canberra has been working closely with sporting groups; and the reconfiguration of the Bowes Street car park. Access Canberra will apply a similar approach later this month as the pay-by-phone parking provider changes in territory-operated car parks.

Secondly, I turn to the COVID-19 compliance team. I am pleased to share that Access Canberra has not issued any infringements to local businesses as part of its COVID-19 compliance activity through targeted and effective engagement and education with businesses, which has included more than 23,000 business checks and more than 244,000 direct emails and letters, along with forums, webinars and supports. We have seen excellent rates of compliance by businesses. This approach supported businesses to keep trading in a safe way and reduced the financial burden to businesses at an already challenging time. All this was done while also assisting businesses to adapt to public health directions.

I would like to also remind members that the ACT government put a pause on the payment requirement for parking in government-owned car parks during the 2021 lockdown to support essential workers and further reduce the financial burden. The government recognises that the issuing of fines can present challenges for vulnerable members of our community, which is why such a considered approach is taken, where possible, to seek compliance and also to provide options around payments.

For example, if a fine or infringement is issued, such as for a traffic offence, there are a number of options available to our community. Canberrans can contact Access

Canberra to seek a review or request a withdrawal, with information about these options outlined on the infringement as well as on the website. Infringement plans are also available to customers who may need assistance in managing infringement debt. Repayment amounts through such a plan vary, depending on individual circumstances, with a minimum of \$10 a week repayment. These plans have supported many vulnerable people in our community to clear their infringement debt, including, for example, detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. As an alternative to licence suspension, a full licence holder can also choose to serve a 12-month good behaviour period instead of serving a demerit point suspension.

The government also provides the Work or Development Program. This program allows eligible people to engage in community work or social development programs to reduce infringement debt. For those unable to access the programs I have mentioned that cannot pay the infringement, a waiver can also be sought and assessed, again through Access Canberra.

The government will continue its work to provide a regulatory approach that is fair and proportionate. Where a financial penalty is incurred, there are established options available to support anyone to manage the penalty in a responsible way. This approach will continue to support Canberra as a safe, accessible and liveable city, but of course we look forward to the outcomes from Mr Braddock's motion later this year. Thank you.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (3.27), in reply: I thank all members for your support for this motion today. Like all, I will be very interested to see the outcomes. From there, we will be able to determine what further steps may need to be taken. I commend my amended motion to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Government—procurement

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (3.27): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that the:

- (a) ACT Auditor-General's Report No 13/2021 identified serious probity issues in procurement practices for the Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project; and
- (b) ACT Integrity Commissioner has publicly stated that the probity problems identified by the Auditor-General are "likely to be endemic" in the ACT Government;

(2) recognises that:

- (a) the concerns raised by the Auditor-General are serious, and require the ACT Government to review and make necessary changes to its procurement culture, processes and practice; and
- (b) Canberrans deserve assurance that their tax dollars are being used by the ACT Government to provide the best value for money; and

(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) commission an independent audit of all ACT Government procurements contracted from 2016-17 to the present;
- (b) table the audit terms of reference and the identity of the appointed auditor in the Assembly by the next sitting; and
- (c) table the audit report in full in the Assembly within seven days of receiving it from the independent auditor.

Last month I wrote to the Chief Minister about serious probity issues raised by the Auditor-General and the Integrity Commissioner and asked him to provide Canberrans with confidence in public expenditure by committing to an audit of all ACT government procurements over the past five years.

Needless to say, the Chief Minister did not respond to my letter but did palm it off to the Special Minister of State. It is disappointing that, as the head of the Labor-Greens government, he does not seem to be taking integrity in government procurement seriously. This is exceedingly disrespectful to all Canberrans, who deserve to know that their taxpayer dollars are being spent in a way that is transparent and with the highest, utmost level of integrity and probity. All Canberrans deserve to know how and why this Labor-Greens government makes decisions—decisions that impact all of us as a community.

The Chief Minister and his cabinet are responsible for creating a culture of secrecy, and it must stop. In his correspondence, the Special Minister of State mentions the review of Procurement ACT recently completed by Renée Leon. The Labor-Greens government will not release the report. So much for open and transparent government.

The Special Minister of State also says that it would be too much work to review ACT government procurements. Perhaps it would be wise of the minister to take heed of the words of the Integrity Commissioner during the recent annual reports hearings, when the commissioner said:

... the amount of money spent on investigating could be very small compared to the public interest in ensuring this kind of thing did not happen.

Safeguarding the public interest is critical. In fact, this is a core duty of any government that is provided with the privilege of making decisions that impact our city, our future and our people. The minister's argument that it is too hard or too expensive is just not good enough. I note, in foreshadowing the minister's amendments, that he has again relied on that argument.

The Auditor-General's report that prompted my call for action, looking into the Campbell Primary School modernisation project procurement, found that the whole process lacked probity and, in particular, that there was no justification to depart from the tender evaluation team's advice. It is absolutely clear that Canberrans did not get the accountability, the transparency, the objectivity, the highest level of probity that they should expect from government procurement decisions on this one. This raises

the question: how many other procurements have there been like the Campbell Primary School modernisation project?

According to the Integrity Commissioner, the answer is that it is “very unlikely” that “this kind of thing has happened only once”. During the hearings, the Integrity Commissioner also put out a public call for information from the community “in relation to suspected improper conduct in ACT government procurement processes”. This really is extraordinary. Unbelievably, that was not the most astonishing moment of the hearings.

Appearing later in the week, the Deputy Chief Minister and minister responsible for the Campbell Primary School modernisation project stated that “there was nothing wrong that was done and the procurement processes were followed”. I am not sure that she and I read the same report. The only possible explanation for this is that the Deputy Chief Minister is in such denial about the significance of the probity issues raised by the Auditor-General that she has literally formulated her own version of the truth or she is hiding something. This culture of secrecy seems to be a common thread running through the Barr Labor-Greens government.

Later in the annual reports hearings, the Auditor-General stood by his report on the Campbell Primary School procurement. In fact, he stated that he has growing concerns about procurement and will continue to pursue it, having received a number of representations and completed several audits on this theme in recent years. Unbelievably, the Auditor-General implied that there may be an emerging pattern.

Back in 2018 the Auditor-General found that the land swap with the Tradies club in Dickson was potentially a breach of the planning act and did not achieve value for money for the territory. A damning quote from the report notes:

Significant weaknesses in the Directorate’s management of the tender means there is a high risk it has relinquished considerable financial value to the ... (Tradies).

It would not be a stretch to describe this as crony capitalism.

Another Auditor-General’s report, this one from 2021, looking into procurement exemptions, found:

... exemptions ... were used in approximately a fifth of ACT Government procurement over the past three years. This represents 770 procurements, valued at approximately \$395 million.

\$395 million is an enormous amount of public money going out the door without tenders. Whilst of course there can be good reasons for using exemptions in procurement, it does raise further questions about value for money and the culture of secrecy surrounding government procurement practices.

I wonder what the Greens members make of the culture of secrecy with their coalition partners. What actions are the Greens cabinet ministers taking to foster the right integrity culture in their portfolios? They have been oddly silent on this and will no

doubt provide the votes for Labor to amend my motion today, which again denies any responsibility for this culture of secrecy that they have fostered and are fostering.

The reality is that both Labor and the Greens enable this behaviour in their coalition government. They talk big on transparency and integrity, but they simply do not walk the walk. It is anything to stay in power. They will tell you that their procurements are at arm's length and they have guidelines for everything probity-related: "Nothing to see here." But guidelines and processes do not matter if the culture is rotten. Ultimately, the buck stops at the top of this Labor-Greens government that has been in power for 20 years.

Really, the biggest question arising from all of this is: how widespread are these issues? How far does the culture of secrecy spread under their watch? That is why, in my letter to the Chief Minister and in this motion today, I am calling on him to show leadership by commissioning an independent audit of all ACT government procurements since 2016. Canberrans deserve to know how their money is being spent and that they are getting value for money, not simply being used as pawns in a political coalition by Labor and the Greens to look out for each other.

In an annual report to shareholders in 2003 Warren Buffet said:

When managements take the low road in aspects that are visible, it is likely they are following a similar path behind the scenes. There is seldom just one cockroach in the kitchen.

It is clear that the practices that have developed, that have been allowed to be fostered by Labor and the Greens, lack probity and lack integrity. There is a history of questionable procurements and they deliberately obscure information that should be freely available to the public. We must have more transparency now, and that should start with an immediate audit of ACT government procurements. I commend my motion to the Assembly.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.37): The ACT government is committed to ensuring that all procurement activity is fair, open and undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Government Procurement Act 2001, the Government Procurement Regulation 2007 and all relevant policy and guidance material.

The ACT government welcomes the ACT Auditor-General's report on the Campbell Primary School modernisation project procurement and is currently developing a formal response to the report's recommendations. I note that the Auditor-General undertook an audit on procurement exemptions and value for money in 2021. A government response was tabled in relation to that audit in October 2021 and Procurement ACT is progressing a work plan to implement its recommendations. The Auditor-General has also undertaken at least three other audits that relate to procurement processes in recent years. In addition, directorates may periodically undertake internal audits and compliance reviews of their procurement activity.

Separately, and as discussed at the 2020-21 annual reports hearings, the Head of Service recently commissioned an independent review of Procurement ACT, in 2021, to establish whether it is delivering its role effectively and efficiently. The review was conducted by Renée Leon, currently Vice-Chancellor of Charles Stuart University and previously a departmental secretary in the commonwealth government.

Together, these reviews have provided government with a comprehensive view of current practices and processes related to procurement across the ACT government, as well as opportunities to continue strengthening these. To correct the incorrect assertions made by the Leader of the Opposition, I can foreshadow amendments that note that this will be tabled with the government's response to the Auditor-General.

Undertaking a full audit of all ACT government procurements over the past five years would be a substantial undertaking. There are generally over 1,000 notifiable contracts, valued at \$25,000 or more, entered into across the ACT government each year. Documents for each procurement would need to be manually examined for the information requested. There are also many other contracts that fall below the notification threshold for which records are not currently held centrally. The significant investment of time, staffing resources and costs required to undertake this task would be unlikely to deliver a comparable level of benefit in improving procurement outcomes.

The ACT government monitors and enhances the procurement framework and the training and support provided to agencies on an ongoing basis to improve procurement practices and build procurement capability across the ACT public service. In January 2021 the ACT government released the *Probity in Procurement Guide*, which provides guidance on probity and how to maintain probity in ACT government procurement processes. The guide was reviewed and updated in May 2021 and again in February 2022. The guide has been put in place since the procurement process for the Campbell Primary School modernisation project commenced. It establishes probity risk indicators and suggests risk treatments, including the following.

Where the estimated total cost of the procurement is high or the procurement process has a higher level of complexity—for example, multi-stage or interactive or best and final offers—the procurement would be identified as medium risk and therefore the appointment of an internal or external probity adviser would be recommended. Where there are political sensitivities or areas of keen public interest; where the procurement involves significant intellectual property; where the procurement process involves a significant negotiation phase; or where there is a higher level of supplier engagement through the procurement process, a more detailed probity plan is strongly recommended to ensure an appropriate level of governance and application of the guide and to address any specific probity risks.

The guide also establishes that, where a territory entity decides not to follow probity advice, the territory entity should fully document the decision and the reasons, along with any alternative action it takes to address the probity risks or risks identified. Procurement guidance documentation and associated templates have also been updated to reflect the guide.

A supplier complaints management procedure has also been established for managing supplier complaints about the conduct of territory procurement in a consistent way across government. The procedure provides an effective and efficient process for managing supplier complaints relating to the acquisition stage of procurement activities.

In addition, a range of steps have been taken to improve procurement practices across the ACT government. They include the development of a range of fact sheets and better practice guidance on key procurement topics and how they relate to the territory, available on the Procurement ACT website; and live, virtual and face-to-face training on a range of procurement-related topics such as probity, procurement, commissioning, value for money and panel management.

The release of the first three of a series of e-learning modules designed to support those undertaking procurement has included Introduction to Procurement, released on 13 May 2021; ACT Government Probity in Procurement, released on 25 June 2021; and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement policy, released on 11 October 2021.

We have launched the ACT government procurement capability framework to support the professional development of procurement professionals across ACT government. We have established a procurement community of practice to support procurement capability, uplift and share in better practice knowledge. We commenced the Government Procurement (Charter of Procurement Values) Direction 2020 in September of that year, which reflects the ACT government's commitment to actively considering a range of ethical, environmental and social factors to ensure that procurement processes and outcomes reflect the values of the ACT government and the broader community.

As the actions that I have outlined indicate, a significant number of new and improved procurement policy and frameworks, guidance material, training, professional development and procurement capability-building initiatives have been developed and implemented recently across the ACT government.

The government will be providing a formal response to the Auditor-General's report into the Campbell Primary School modernisation project procurement matters in April. This will also detail further work that we have in train to ensure that procurement practices across government are robust, transparent and conducted with probity.

Taken together, this demonstrates the ACT government's commitment to continuously improving the procurement framework and the training and support provided to agencies across government to ensure public confidence in future procurement processes. I move the amendments circulated in my name:

Omit all text after "That this Assembly", substitute:

"(1) notes that:

- (a) the ACT Government is committed to ensuring that all procurement activity is fair, open and undertaken in accordance with the provisions

of the *Government Procurement Act 2001*, the *Government Procurement Regulation 2007* and all relevant policy and guidance material;

- (b) the ACT Government welcomes the ACT Auditor-General's report on the Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project procurement and is currently developing a formal response to the report's recommendations. This response will be tabled in the Assembly during the April sittings;
 - (c) the Auditor-General undertook an audit on procurement exemptions and value for money in 2021. A government response was tabled in relation to that audit in October 2021 and Procurement ACT is progressing a work plan to implement its recommendations. The Auditor-General has also undertaken at least three other audits that relate to procurement processes in recent years;
 - (d) separately, in 2021, the ACT Head of Service commissioned an independent review of Procurement ACT to establish whether it is delivering its role effectively and efficiently. A copy of this review will be released publicly as part of the Government's response to the Auditor-General's inquiry into the Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project, along with details of further priorities for ongoing improvements to transparency, probity and accountability in ACT Government procurement;
 - (e) the Standing Committee on Public Accounts has an ongoing inquiry into the Auditor-General's report on the Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project; and
 - (f) the ACT Government established the ACT Integrity Commission in 2019, considered Australia's strongest integrity framework. Last month, the Integrity Commissioner made a public call for information on ACT Government procurement processes. The Commission will determine whether an investigation is justified;
- (2) further notes that, since the procurement process was undertaken for the Campbell Primary School Modernisation Project, the ACT Government has made improvements and updates to procurement frameworks and guidance, as part of a process of continuous improvement. These include:
- (a) releasing the *Probity in Procurement Guide* which provides guidance on probity and how to maintain probity in ACT Government procurement processes. The Guide was reviewed and updated in May 2021 and again in February 2022;
 - (b) establishing a *Supplier Complaints Management Procedure* for managing supplier complaints about the conduct of Territory procurement in a consistent way across government;
 - (c) developing a range of factsheets and better practice guidance on key procurement topics and how they relate to the Territory, available on the Procurement ACT website;
 - (d) creating live virtual and face-to-face training on a range of procurement related topics, such as Probity, Procurement and Commissioning, Value for Money and Procurement and Panel Management;

- (e) the release of a series of eLearning modules designed to support public servants undertaking procurement;
 - (f) Introduction to Procurement—released on 13 May 2021;
 - (g) ACT Government Probity in Procurement—released on 25 June 2021;
 - (h) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy—released on 11 October 2021;
 - (i) launching the ACT Government *Procurement Capability Framework* to support the professional development of procurement professionals across the ACT Government; and
 - (j) establishing a Procurement Community of Practice to support procurement capability uplift and sharing of better practice knowledge; and
- (3) acknowledges that:
- (a) a significant amount of new and improved procurement policy and frameworks, guidance material, training, professional development and procurement capability building initiatives have been developed and implemented recently across the ACT Government; and
 - (b) the ACT Government enters into over 1000 notifiable contracts each year. An audit of all procurement processes would entail a disproportionate investment of time, staffing resources and associated costs, while pre-empting results of ongoing inquiries.”.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (3.44): Government procurement and regulatory decisions must have a high degree of integrity and transparency. ACT government procurement decisions are an important way to support the local and regional economy but also to promote environmental and social responsibility. It is important and vital that these processes are fair and transparent, with well-resourced, independent oversight.

It is important to acknowledge that the Auditor-General’s report raised significant concerns about the procurement process for the Campbell Primary School modernisation project. The Auditor-General concluded that the procurement process lacked probity. Problems outlined in this instance by the Auditor-General raise questions about other procurement processes.

Following this report, the Integrity Commissioner urged members of the public with any information or suspicions about procurement to present that information to them. I support this call and say that if anyone has such information, please come forward with it. This is exactly why the Greens campaigned for years to get an Integrity Commission—to identify, investigate and root out corruption and to ensure that we can have confidence in our public institutions and organisations. If only we had such an ICAC at the federal level.

It is vital for our democracy that we have legislated integrity and oversight agencies that are free from outside influence, and that we resource them well and let them do their jobs and follow their processes. When they find a problem, it means that they are

doing their job and increasing the integrity and transparency of the government and of the public service.

The government has stated that it will be providing a formal, detailed response to the A-G's report into the Campbell Primary School modernisation project procurement in the April sittings, and I look forward to reading it. The response will include a copy of the review of Procurement ACT commissioned by the Head of Service in 2021 and details of further priorities for ongoing improvements to transparency, probity and accountability in ACT government procurement. Again, I look forward to seeing this response and allowing the already established processes to continue to completion. I, like many others here, also look forward to reading the Integrity Commissioner's report on this matter when it is produced, but I also recognise that this will take time.

I think it is also important to acknowledge there are other oversight instruments in place. The public accounts committee, of which I am a member, has opened an inquiry into the Auditor-General's report. I look forward to following the process and, with the outcome of the inquiry, reading the government's response to the committee's report. There is no doubt we need oversight and accountability, and it is happening. The Auditor-General has investigated and reported his findings. The public accounts committee is now inquiring. The Integrity Commission is also inquiring. These things take time to do properly. We need to be patient and let the public accounts committee and the Integrity Commission do their work.

The government's amendments to the motion also lists steps taken by the government to strengthen and improve its procurement process. Is it perfect? Well, we will see when the public accounts committee and Integrity Commissioner report back. Then we will know if further work needs to be done or not. This government's shared commitment to govern with integrity and transparency is written into our parliamentary and governing agreement. This motion is more interested in playing politics than following through with the oversight measures that are already in motion, using the tools that they have at their disposal. Therefore, let us not waste time duplicating the work that they are undertaking, and let them do their work.

Ms Lee and Mr Parton interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Davis): Ms Lee and Mr Parton, one of your colleagues is seeking the call. I cannot get to him while you continue to interrupt.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (3.48): Unbelievable! The previous speaker said this motion was a waste of time. That is unbelievable. Shame on the non-executive part of this government! Unbelievable! Mr Braddock brought on a motion earlier today pointing out a way that the government might improve its processes—a very worthy motion, which we supported. Why bother, Mr Braddock? Is it only the small things that you are interested in? Unbelievable!

Mr Steel's amendment would make a lot of sense in the following circumstance. It would make a lot of sense if there was not a damning Auditor-General's report into a significant multimillion-dollar procurement. It would make sense if there was not an initiation by the Integrity Commissioner to look into all of ACT government's

procurements. Minister Steel said that it would be a substantial undertaking to commit to an independent review. Minister, do you know when to do a substantial undertaking? You do that when there is a substantial problem, and this is a substantial problem. You are not listening to the Auditor-General; you are not listening to the Integrity Commissioner. Shame on you! What does it take for you to improve something that is clearly broken? Mr Steel's amendment should be rejected.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (3.51): I wish I could say that I was surprised, but this is so predictable and so typical of the Labor and Greens members in this place. They cannot fathom that there may be some improvements to be made—that maybe they are not doing everything correctly and that maybe they are not doing the best job for the Canberra community. They cannot fathom that, even when it is in black and white, even when it is in a damning report by the Auditor-General, and even when it is in a scathing media release by the Integrity Commissioner. This Labor-Greens government has fostered, and is continuing to foster, a culture of secrecy.

Minister Steel went to great lengths to talk about the procedures, the frameworks, the processes and the guidelines that are in place. What he has absolutely failed to grasp is that they are all good on paper, but they are not worth the paper they are written on if there is a toxic culture—a culture of secrecy that is being driven from the top. That is where the buck stops. It stops with the Chief Minister and his cabinet, of which Minister Steel is a member. He cannot fathom being able to go beyond the words written on his paper for him and acknowledge the huge role that the culture of secrecy that this Labor-Greens government has created is having on integrity, probity and confidence in government decisions that our community has every right to expect.

I will give him credit for this: he has, for the very first time, stated that the Renée Leon review will be tabled. I implore the minister to make sure that that review is tabled in full. We know that this Labor-Greens government is very good at saying, “Oh, look at us; we’ve released this document. Oh, wait; 200 out of the 205 pages are redacted.” I urge him to instil confidence in the public and to table that in full.

Let us not forget, whilst he hangs his hat on this review, that that was done before the scathing findings of the Auditor-General that were tabled in December last year. It is funny because his amendment goes on to say, “Look at us, the ACT government. We’re the ones who established the Integrity Commission to look into stuff like this.” They came to the party kicking and screaming. It was my predecessor, the former leader of the Canberra Liberals, Alistair Coe, who tabled a bill to get that moving. Let us not forget that. If it was up to this Labor-Greens government, I do not know that we would actually have that Integrity Commission right now.

Let us also not forget that, to do his job to make sure that we find and stamp out any risk of corruption in ACT government, the Integrity Commissioner must be appropriately resourced. It is very clear that, with the budget for the Integrity Commission lower this year than last, there is already a sign from the Labor-Greens government about the capacity of the Integrity Commissioner.

The minister continues to go on about its being too hard and too costly. The question that I put to the Minister now is: what is the price of integrity? That is a question neither he nor any ministers—certainly not the Chief Minister—have been able to answer. I urge him once again to reflect on the words of the Integrity Commissioner. Yes, it might be costly, but when you compare that to what we are talking about in terms of public funds spent on procurement, what is the price of integrity?

Again, the Labor-Greens members in this place have an attitude of: “Nothing to see here.” It is disrespectful to the people of Canberra that the Labor-Greens members do not take issues of integrity seriously. It is staggering that the Greens spokesperson literally said, “What a waste of time this is.” He said that it was a waste of time to debate integrity. He has no place—

Mr Braddock: I have a point of order. I believe that I said it was a waste to duplicate the work of the Integrity Commissioner.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Davis): Mr Braddock, thank you. There is no point of order. Ms Lee, continue.

MS LEE: It was a staggering statement from the Greens spokesperson, and it is unbelievable that he cannot see the hypocrisy of throwing barbs and lecturing federal parliament for not creating an ICAC. He cannot see the irony in supporting this rubbish bit of an amendment from Mr Steel that is so disrespectful. It literally strips out any call to action. In fact, as the government tends to do, it is another pat on the back: “Look at us. Acknowledge us for what we have done. Look at us. Aren’t we great?” This is not even worth the piece of paper it is written on.

This is a government that is disrespectful of public money. This is a government that is disrespectful of procurement processes that the public have every right to expect would have the utmost integrity, accountability, transparency and probity. This is a government that is responsible for a shocking culture of secrecy. The Canberra Liberals will not be supporting Mr Steel’s amendment.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 12

Noes 5

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

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

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mrs Kikkert
Ms Lee
Mr Parton

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Ginninderra electorate—repair cafe

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.04): I believe strongly in thrift and in being a wise manager of resources. If something still works, there is no need to replace it. If I can buy perfectly good second-hand clothing at an op shop, there is no reason for me to buy things that are brand new. If a button falls off, sew it back on. If something breaks, fix it if possible. And if you do not know how to fix it then this is a perfect opportunity to learn.

It does not make sense to throw something away if it still has usefulness in it. Yet this is something that happens far too often. It has been estimated that Australians produce 10 kilograms of household waste per person each week. Our nation is the second highest consumer of textiles in the world. On average, each Australian purchases 27 kilos of new clothing each year and then throws away 23 kilos.

Part of the problem is that people have forgotten that they can repair things themselves, or they lack the necessary skills. Research suggests that this is especially true amongst younger generations. Getting an object repaired by someone else can sometimes be complicated and/or too expensive, making it easier just to throw it away and buy something new.

To address these issues, Martine Postma launched the first Repair Cafe in Amsterdam in 2009, and it has since grown into a worldwide movement. Repair Cafes are free meeting places where people who have objects that they wish to repair can access the experts, materials and tools needed to get the job done. In the process, people learn how to make these repairs themselves, increasing their self-reliance, boosting their self-esteem, and eventually becoming experts that other people can learn from. Objects typically fixed at a Repair Cafe include clothing, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles, crockery, toys and so forth.

Three weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend the first gathering of the new Repair Cafe at Ginninderry, located on the western edge of my electorate of Ginninderra. It was very inspiring. In addition to a number of clothing items, repairs were made to a desk lamp and an electric kettle—changing potential waste back into valuable items, saving both resources and money.

I enjoyed spending time with Monica, whose husband was one of the expert repairers at the Repair Cafe that day. Retired from work, she is now pursuing a PhD,

demonstrating that one is never too old to learn and make a difference. I commend Monica, her husband, Paris, and everyone else involved with the Repair Cafe at Ginninderry. I wish them all the best for their next gathering on 3 April and for the future. I sincerely hope that this grassroots initiative will flourish, supporting the lives of everyone involved. Thank you.

Mr Rade Gutesa—tribute

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.06): I rise today to pay tribute to a friend who we lost last month. I speak of Bob the lawnmower man from Wheeler Crescent in Wanniassa, otherwise known as Rade Gutesa. I note the presence of his grandsons in the chamber.

A champion bloke was Bob—an absolute gem. I think that that statement could be said by just about everyone who knew him. It was an immense pleasure to have known him and to have spent time in his raucous, politically incorrect company. I dare say that Bob was the most politically incorrect person that I have ever met, but we just forgave him for it. It was impossible for Bob to get through a sentence without dropping the F-bomb.

Rade Gutesa was born on 1 October 1938 to Stevo and Marija in Bihac, Bosnia. His parents then moved to Serbia. They were farmers. They grew fruit, grapes, corn and wheat. He came to Australia as a young man searching for a better life. National Archives records indicate that he arrived in Sydney from Italy on 8 January 1964. The paperwork lists Bob's employment as locksmith, mechanic and driver, but he was brought to Australia to pick tobacco at Bonegilla.

During the mid-60s he was employed in the kitchen, feeding those working on Murray 1 and Murray 2 power stations in the Snowy Mountains. He hassled them for a real job and finally landed a position as a hard rock miner. We believe he then travelled around the Northern Territory and Western Australia. He worked as a barman. He worked as a bulldozer driver. He built a graded road out to a diamond mine around Kununurra. He was flown in by helicopter every day, would dozer the road for kilometres and then they would pick him up at the end of the day.

Bob also claims to have gotten drunk with Bob Hawke in a Darwin pub before Mr Hawke became famous. I do not know whether that is true or not. It probably is true, and I am here to tell you that it would have been one hell of a night. In the early 70s he worked on the Ord River scheme in Western Australia and at Townsville, servicing machines on the Greenvale train tunnels project. He worked with Barclay Brothers as a plant operator and a crane driver, doing subdivisions in Tuggeranong and building various bridges.

In the 70s, in Dartmouth in Victoria, he worked on a tunnel, drilling and blasting for a power station. He then came back to Canberra in 1975, working on the Googong Dam tunnel. He worked on the sewage treatment tunnels in Belconnen and at Loy Yang power station in Victoria in the late 70s, and at Tarong power station at Yarraman, driving cranes. He operated one of the three cranes that put the flag up on the new Parliament House. He worked on the ski tube in Perisher. He did everything.

In the late 80s he started his own lawnmower business in Narrabundah after injuring his back. As the owner of Wanniasa Mower Service he continued to sell, service and repair lawnmowers up until three weeks before he died. When completing official forms of any kind Bob liked to list his job title not as pensioner or lawnmower mechanic but as ex-Snowy Mountains hard rock miner.

The last 18 months had been very tough for old Bob. He lost his wife, daughter Suzie and son Craig, all unexpectedly. I attended two of those services at the Serbian monastery at Wallaroo and they were both very sombre affairs. The social isolation of COVID did not suit the social butterfly known as Rade Gutesa. He did not follow the rules much. I think I can let the cat out of the bag on that. I do not think the authorities are going to chase him up at this stage. He did not much follow the rules but people around him did, and it just made life tough for him.

Last year he was diagnosed with cancer, which, ironically, was not the thing that eventually took his life. Heart disease was the defining factor in the end, but I would love to know how many cartons of VB and how many packets of cigarettes he consumed. My word! He will be remembered by so many as the loveable rogue, the life of the party, the cheeky rebel that he was.

I think my favourite thing about Bob was that his home was genuinely yours. He was always keen to invite you into his home, at which point you were compelled to stay for a very long time, and you needed help to leave. Rade Gutesa is survived by his daughter Marija and a collection of loving grandchildren. I just wanted to put on the record today that he was a champion bloke.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Davis): We acknowledge Bob's family in the public gallery for joining us today. Thank you.

Answers to questions on notice

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (4.11): I want to provide a quick update to Mrs Kikkert about questions 657 and 658 from 10 February. Those answers will be provided by tomorrow.

Ginninderra electorate—community engagement

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.11): As I have said on many occasions in the Assembly, one of my favourite activities is getting out amongst the Ginninderra community, meeting constituents and, in particular, engaging with volunteer community organisations. Last Sunday I was privileged to visit two of those—fortunately, not very far apart from each other.

I speak first of the Hawker Men's Shed Repair Cafe. This wonderful initiative at the softball centre at Hawker provides a safe, family-friendly and literally healing environment—if you could call repairing a tool a healing moment; I think we can get

away with that—where members of the community can work on repairing various things that other members of the community bring to them for assistance with repairs.

It includes tool sharpening, and repairing bicycles, fabrics, clothes, furniture and electrical goods. It was delightful to see two separate workstations for outdoor tools and furniture, and licensed practitioners working on electrical repairs inside the Hawker softball centre facility.

It is wonderful to see these community organisations coming back out again after the COVID lockdowns. It is such an important enhancement to the Ginninderra community and, I am sure, to all the communities represented by members of this place.

Not very far away, again at the softball centre, is the Hawker Men's Shed. Congratulations on the work done there, particularly by coordinator Jon Wells. They have been able to acquire several new work areas, being old shipping containers, and a growing catalogue of tools and equipment.

It is wonderful to see these community organisations at work and being available. These volunteers give up their own time. I look forward to the future success of both these initiatives and to supporting them in every way I can, as their local MLA.

Environment—Watson micro-forest

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (4.14): Last Sunday was World Rewilding Day, and I was pleased to launch the Watson micro-forest, which has been supported by funding from an ACT environment grant and at a federal level, as well as receiving an impressive amount of community-generated crowdfunding.

As I said on Sunday, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and despondent in the face of the reality of climate change. The enormity of the problem can paralyse us and lead us to think that it is not worth doing anything. However, one of the cornerstones of the environmental movement provides another pathway. To think globally and act locally enables us to take control and to convert feelings of hopelessness into hope.

The powerful words of Rebecca Solnit come to mind from her book *Hope in the Dark*. She reminds us:

Hope is not a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky. It is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency. Hope should shove you out the door, because it will take everything you have to steer the future away from endless war, from the annihilation of the earth's treasures, and the grinding down of the poor and marginal ... To hope is to give yourself to the future—and that commitment to the future is what makes the present inhabitable.

I really saw this in action on Sunday, both in the group of people gathered to celebrate the launch after so much hard work, planning and shared vision, and in the promise contained within the micro-forest plan itself. When hope shoves us out the door, it

enables us to shape a different future—for a patch of dirt, a local community and much more than that. When groups of people come together across the planet to undertake these actions, we see that local impacts contribute to a much bigger positive change.

It was inspiring to see the enthusiastic community involvement all along the way, including consultation with local primary schoolkids, who wanted tunnels and hiding places, as well as a bird habitat and water play. It was inspiring, too, to see how the community have engaged deeply with the country in which they live. This recognises not only what we can learn from First Nations wisdom in respect of caring for country but the obligations that we all have to land—the respect we must give it, as well as striving for a deeper understanding of how it connects with us and how we are nurtured by caring for country.

As it grows, the Watson micro-forest will contain trees, shrubs, climbers and ground covers, densely planted to create a mini-ecosystem that will have a cooling effect and dramatically improve the amenity of the area. It will capture carbon and, in its small way, help to mitigate climate change. It will create habitats for native animal species, promote the growth of particular plant species, enable the community to experiment with planting techniques, and test water harvesting and management strategies.

It will create a space that can nurture our bodies and our minds—a space for quiet contemplation, a space to move through as part of the landscape, a place to nurture and care for. It also provides new opportunities for play, learning, meeting and connecting.

Being part of the launch was an inspiration on so many fronts. It was fitting, too, that the event was held on World Rewilding Day. This is a relatively new day of global recognition that commenced last year and celebrates the act of helping nature to heal by restoring the species and the land it needs to thrive. I hope we will see many more similar projects coming to fruition. There are many more micro-forests in the planning and implementation phases. I hope more people come to understand just how vital this kind of work is for our future.

Advance Australia

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (4.18): I rise today to bring to the attention of all members in this place the recent political activity of the group known as Advance Australia, which has risen to prominence through its billboards in Canberra depicting the Chinese leader Xi Jinping voting for the Australian Labor Party. Rightly, these campaign tactics have been disavowed by many for undermining Australian national security and pandering to xenophobia. I, like all other good people, condemn it. There is no place for racism in our country or our politics and it is distressing to see these ads on our streets.

Somewhat fortunately, the algorithms of social media exclude me from the far-right echo chambers which this group and its messages seem to succeed in, which is why I was unaware of its activities until now. If you want to get a flavour for some of the things that this group campaigns for, here are a few good examples straight from its

website. There is the “freedom pledge”, which calls for freedom to choose your own medical treatments. It is clearly a dog whistle to the anti-vaccine movement. There is the “unlock Australia campaign”. It, of course, calls for the lockdowns to end. Nothing subtle there.

There are very big COVID-19 denier vibes from the get-go, which, of course, would not be out of place in the Canberra Liberals. After all, the Canberra Liberals famously declared that the pandemic was over in early 2020 and then later said that COVID restrictions were absurd before the 2020 election. Then there are the classic right-wing causes like how the ABC is left wing, that the curriculum is trying to erase Western culture and that there is apparently some secret plan to cancel Anzac Day. Anyway, it is weird and far-right stuff.

However, I believe that this group is worth the attention of the Assembly. Unfortunately, it appears that there exists a relationship between the Canberra Liberals and this group which has not yet fully been revealed. A member of this place until recently, Mrs Dunne, is a director of this group. Most notably, she was a very proud Canberra Liberals member in this place, was a former speaker of this Assembly and was a former shadow health minister.

Interestingly, the *Canberra Times* reports that Mrs Dunne quit the Canberra Liberals in early February 2021, only to become a director of Advance Australia nine days later. However, Mrs Dunne’s association with the Canberra Liberals did not cease at the time of her resignation. The following month, her work on the 2020 election campaign review was handed to Canberra Liberals leadership and then published. There is no political party on earth that would accept and then publish an election review from someone that has just quit their party unless they understood the real reason for the resignation: optics.

I will make one quick suggestion to Mrs Dunne and Advance Australia as they listen to this. It would probably be helpful to the charade if Mrs Dunne would remove the links on her social media pages directing people to the Canberra Liberals. But I digress. It is not just Mrs Dunne from the Canberra Liberals involved in this group. It appears that a former staff member of Liberal Senator Zed Seselja has also been a director of this group. The Canberra Liberals need to explain to the Canberra community what their ongoing relationship with Advance Australia is and how it is that they could become a major source of their leadership.

In closing, I have a few more questions for the record. Are any current Canberra Liberal MLAs, their staff or party members involved with this group? Will the Canberra Liberals disavow the involvement of this group in the 2024 ACT election? Further, will the Canberra Liberals condemn this extremist group? Their silence so far on this issue has been deafening.

Harmony Week

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra—Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.22): I want to take a moment

to recognise Harmony Week, an important occasion to reflect on and celebrate the values of inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, and especially those from diverse cultural backgrounds and faiths.

This year Harmony Week began on Harmony Day, Monday, 21 March, and runs until Sunday. 21 March also marked the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is globally observed. Harmony Week is a timely opportunity to appreciate our rich cultural diversity and to highlight some of the work being done to ensure that Canberra is a welcoming and inclusive place for everyone. It is also a time to reflect that we still have a way to go in eliminating racial discrimination and to recognise the sheer injustice and hurt that exists while ever it persists. Part of that is our work to learn about and to embrace other cultures.

I was proud to share on 21 March that the ACT will join the UNHCR Cities #WithRefugees campaign. By signing this statement of solidarity, we have joined more than 250 cities worldwide who are committed to embracing refugees and supporting their settlement in their new home. By each of these cities highlighting their own local efforts, we are collectively providing a global showing of solidarity. The UNHCR's regional representative, Adrian Edward, remarked that this was "an especially timely and meaningful message of compassion from Australia to the world" in light of the ongoing conflict and suffering we are witnessing in Ukraine, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world.

Indeed, the ACT calendar is enriched year-round by events and activities that promote diversity and multiculturalism. That is especially reflected during Harmony Week. There have been and will be many opportunities to celebrate.

The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum hosted its peace pole event with Rotary on Sunday. Regrettably, I was unable to attend but I know it had a strong showing, as usual. Having been previously, I commend them on this initiative, their commitment to it and, most importantly, the message that it sends, which is added to the pole in more and more languages: "May peace prevail on Earth." A message for all time and especially at this time.

On Monday I was proud to attend the graduation of the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services Multicultural Leadership Development Program, where, as part of those celebrations we enjoyed dances from the duo Parice and a range of extraordinary artwork, including in the beautiful mandala style.

In Civic Square this Saturday the Persian Australian Community Association will be hosting Persian New Year, which has also just occurred, and Harmony Day celebrations featuring live music, delicious foods to try—including, I am told, a variety of desserts—traditional cultural performances, art displays and more. It is an event that is proudly supported by a multicultural grant. It is just one way to celebrate with the whole family and a great opportunity to learn about another culture and community.

Like many Australians, I have chosen to wear something orange, indeed as much orange as I own, during Harmony Week to show my support for cultural diversity and

for an inclusive Australia. I encourage my fellow members to do so as well. Earlier in the week, monuments around Canberra were also lit up in Harmony Week's official colour of orange.

In a multicultural community like Canberra, it is clear that we all share similar hopes and fears as we work hard for our families, fret over relationships and strive for dream jobs. Cultural diversity enriches our communities, our schools and our workplaces. Multiculturalism opens our mouths to new foods, our minds to new ideas and our hearts to new people. We may be different in how we express ourselves, how we worship or what foods we eat, but we all belong.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.27 pm until Tuesday, 5 April 2022 at 10 am.

Answers to questions

ActewAGL—partnership (Question No 489)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 8 October 2021 (*redirected to the Treasurer*):

- (1) When did Jemena Ltd and Icon Water Limited enter into a partnership to form ActewAGL Distribution Partnership.
- (2) How often do these businesses have to formally renew their partnership.
- (3) How is the chairman of the board selected.
- (4) Are there any rules that determine whether Icon Water or Jemena have preference in selecting the chairman of the board.
- (5) Is there a formal profit-sharing agreement between the two organisations; if so, what is the profit split.
- (6) Is Evoenergy owned equally by Jemena Ltd and Icon Water Limited; if not, which organisation owns the greater share.
- (7) If there is an unequal ownership, has the unequal ownership been the case since the establishment of Evoenergy.

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

1. The ActewAGL Distribution Partnership was formed by a partnership agreement entered into on 29 August 2000 by the AGL Gas Company (ACT) Ltd (now known as Jemena Networks (ACT) Pty Ltd) and Ecowise Services Ltd (now known as Icon Distribution Investments Ltd).
2. The ActewAGL Distribution Partnership continues until terminated in accordance with the Umbrella Agreement. There is no provision for "renewal" of the partnership in the agreement.
3. The ActewAGL Distribution Partnership and the ActewAGL Retail Partnership are governed by a single Partnership Board. The Partnership Board is comprised of three members appointed by Icon Distribution Investments Ltd and Icon Retail Investments Ltd, two members appointed by Jemena Networks (ACT) Pty Ltd and one member appointed by AGL ACT Retail Investments Pty Ltd. The Jemena and AGL partners are considered collectively to be the AGL Partners for the purposes of appointment of the Chair of the Partnership Board. The Chair must be selected from one of the six members of the Partnership Board and holds office for two years. The Actew (Icon) Partners and the AGL Partners alternately appoint the Chair every two years.
4. See the response to question 3 which sets out how the decision is made by the partners which is in accordance with the provisions of the Umbrella Agreement.
5. Both the ActewAGL Distribution Partnership Agreement and the ActewAGL Retail Partnership Agreement provide that the partners share in the profits and liabilities of those partnerships on a 50:50 basis.

6. Evoenergy is a business name under which the business of the ActewAGL Distribution Partnership trades. The ActewAGL Distribution Partnership is in all respects considered to be on a 50:50 basis.

7. See the response to question 6.

Alcohol and other drug use—rehabilitation programs (Question No 523)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Mental Health, upon notice, on 12 November 2021:

- (1) How many residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds were operated by the ACT Health Directorate on 31 October 2021.
- (2) How many drug and alcohol rehabilitation day program days were provided by the ACT Health Directorate in the week ending 31 October 2021.
- (3) How many drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds were operated by the Canberra Health Service on 31 October 2021.
- (4) How many drug and alcohol rehabilitation day program days were provided by the Canberra Health Service in the week ending 31 October 2021.
- (5) How many drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds were operated by organisations that are contracted to the ACT Health Directorate and the Canberra Health Service on 31 October 2021.
- (6) How many drug and alcohol rehabilitation day program days were provided by organisations that are contracted to the ACT Health Directorate and the Canberra Health Service in the week ending 31 October 2021.
- (7) How much did the ACT spend on drug and alcohol rehabilitation in (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12, (c) 2012-13, (d) 2013-14, (e) 2014-15, (f) 2015-16, (g) 2016-17, (h) 2017-18, (i) 2018-19, (j) 2019-20 and (k) 2020-21.
- (8) How much is the ACT budgeted to spend on drug and alcohol rehabilitation in (a) 2021-22, (b) 2022-23, (c) 2023-24 and (d) 2024-25.

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

- (1) Nil. ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) does not directly operate drug and alcohol residential services or other drug and alcohol treatment. ACTHD funds community sector providers to deliver alcohol and drug services. For further information see response to question 5 below.
- (2) Nil. See answer to Question 1.
- (3) Nil. Canberra Health Services (CHS) does not operate any drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds. CHS provides inpatient withdrawal services, as well as non-residential treatment and supports through a range of referral points including justice diversion programs and the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List.

- (4) Nil. As above, CHS Alcohol and Drug Service supports referrals consumers to rehabilitation services and provides drug and alcohol withdrawal management prior to a person's admission to a rehabilitation facility.
- (5) There are 115 Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) residential rehabilitation beds in the ACT operated by service providers who have service funding agreements with the ACTHD. These are detailed in the table below.

However, non-government organisations are allocated annual funding to use flexibly to operate a range of treatment programs. These treatment providers may also have funding sources outside the ACT Government, including the Capital Health Network and Commonwealth Government. Therefore, the number of beds funded by ACTHD is not able to be itemised.

Community Partner	AOD Residential Beds	Bed Types
Karralika Programs Inc	44 beds ¹	
Directions Health Services	11 beds ²	combined AOD rehabilitation and withdrawal beds
Ted Noffs Foundation ACT	10 beds ³	combined AOD rehabilitation and withdrawal beds, targeting 12 to 17 year-olds
The Salvation Army	50 beds ⁴	

¹ACT Health Directorate Karralika Service Funding Agreement

²Directions Health Services Annual Report 2019-20

³ACT Health Directorate Ted Noffs Service Funding Agreement

⁴ACT Health Directorate provides a financial contribution to the Salvation Army towards an unspecified number of rehabilitation beds (with the exception of the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List Program).

- (6) The ACT Government funds up to 12 dedicated day rehabilitation treatment places for ACT Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List participants.

Formal non-residential (day) rehabilitation treatment places are delivered in the ACT by Directions Health Services and Toora Women Inc. Transition from residential rehabilitation to the community can include day programs at Karralika and a day program is in the early stages of implementation with the Salvation Army. ACTHD is unable to provide advice on the specific number of places provided by each service provider in a particular week.

(7/8)

In 2021-22, the ACT Government will expend more than \$22 million in the alcohol and drug sector. This includes treatment and harm reduction services across both Government services and non-government organisations.

The figures provided in the table below represent the total funds allocated annually through the ACTHD to community providers that deliver a suite specialist alcohol and other drug treatment, including residential rehabilitation and dedicated day programs.

The annual figures provided are not exclusively for rehabilitation treatment due to the flexibility provided to service providers to deliver the most appropriate care to clients.

The figures provided do not include the ACT Government funding for a range of additional services including harm reduction, peer-led work and a range of outreach

services. The figures also exclude the services provided by CHS, which does not deliver residential rehabilitation services, as noted above.

2010-11	\$6,029,308.76
2011-12	\$6,227,943.36
2012-13	\$6,407,047.10
2013-14	\$7,459,548.92
2014-15	\$7,701,180.68
2015-16	\$8,355,735.16
2016-17	\$8,620,362.62
2017-18	\$8,781,945.28
2018-19	\$9,037,468.36
2019-20	\$9,755,756.27
2020-21	\$10,375,185.03
2021-22	\$10,402,444.04
2022-23	TBC ~\$10.61m*
2023-24	TBC ~\$10.82m*

*The figures for 2022-23 and 2023-24 are estimates based on the 2021-22 Budget and include a 2% estimate for indexation.

In addition, the 2021 22 Budget allocated \$503,000 to commence design work to deliver a new community-led AOD and mental health treatment precinct. This includes design work for a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential AOD rehabilitation facility in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah and the redevelopment of the Ted Noffs Foundation and Catholic Care facilities in Watson.

Health—mobile health clinic (Question No 525)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 12 November 2021:

In relation to the mobile health clinic at the Garran Surge Centre site that is used to administer Sotrovimab, (a) who owns the mobile health clinic, (b) what is the cost to the ACT Government of using the mobile health clinic, (c) on what day did the mobile health clinic become operational for Sotrovimab infusions, (d) how many Sotrovimab infusions have been administered in the mobile health clinic, (e) how many days since the mobile health clinic has become operational has it not been used for Sotrovimab infusions, (f) is the mobile health clinic waterproof, (g) is the mobile health clinic able to be used when it rains and (h) what make and model of air purifier is used to filter the air in the mobile health clinic.

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

- (a) The mobile health van is leased by Canberra Health Services from University of Canberra.
- (b) The lease of the van is \$1 for the term of the contract.

- (c) 9 November 2021.
- (d) The location of the Sotrovimab infusion is not captured and could have been administered in either the mobile health clinic or on the dedicated COVID ward.
- (e) The service ceased on 24 December 2021.
- (f) Yes.
- (g) Yes.
- (h) The mobile clinic utilises four mobile air purifiers. They are all Samsung AX90T708WD and the same model used throughout CHS.

Human Rights Commission—complaints relating to disability (Question No 575)

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Human Rights, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Given that the annual report for the Human Rights Commission reports an 82 percent increase of the number of complaints received by the Commissioner in the last four years, that's more than 20 percent a year, what is the total number of complaints relating to disability received by the Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner for each year for the past four years from 2016-17 to 2020 21.
- (2) How many of the complaints, referred to in part (1), related to (a) Disability discrimination, (b) those living with disability and the Health Services, (c) to those living with disability and employment, (d) those living with disability and housing, (e) those living with disability and access to education, (f) those living with disability and ACT government services, not including health.
- (3) How many of the complaints, referred to in part (1), were successfully resolved.

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

- (1) The Discrimination, Health Services, Disability & Community Services Commissioner (the Commissioner) can receive complaints relating to people with a disability in a number of complaint jurisdictions. People do not need to disclose a disability to access the complaint process other than where it is relevant to the jurisdiction eg where making a complaint about alleged disability discrimination or vilification on the basis of disability

Complaints about disability related issues can be handled by other agencies in the ACT including the Human Services Registrar (in the Community Services Directorate), the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission which commenced operation in the ACT on 1 July 2019, the office of the Senior Practitioner and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Disability service	18	26	21	9	8
Disability discrimination & vilification	40	65	78	95	101
Vulnerable people (disability – from 5/2020)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	22
TOTAL	58	91	99	106	131

(2)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
(a) Disability discrimination	40	64	77	90	100
(b) those living with disability and the Health Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
(c) to those living with disability and employment <i>(disability discrimination & vilification complaints in employment)</i>	11	17	17	13	14
(d) those living with disability and housing <i>(disability service & disability discrimination, & VP)</i>	5	12	16	18	26
(e) those living with disability and access to education <i>(Disability discrimination & vilification in education)</i>	4	9	12	11	10
(f) those living with disability and ACT government services, not including health. <i>(disability discrimination & vilification & VP)</i>	8	25	31	28	39

(3) How many of the complaints, referred to in part (1), were successfully resolved.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Disability related complaints	31	46	42	16	51

**Disability services—housing
(Question No 576)**

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Given that under the Intergovernmental Agreement for the NDIS, the Territory remains responsible for the provision of housing for those both on the NDIS, but also for those not on the NDIS, how many houses have been provided in the ACT suitable for people living with a disability.
- (2) How many people with a disability are living in those houses referred to in part (1).
- (3) Does the ACT Government also provide rental support for those living with a Disability not currently on the NDIS; if so, how many people are accessing that housing.
- (4) How many people living with a disability are currently waiting to live in suitable housing.

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

Question 1

The ACT Government provides non-NDIS funded disability housing within its remit for public housing as provided by Housing ACT within the Community Services Directorate. Currently Housing ACT has 2750 properties within its public housing portfolio that are Class C Adaptable or have been modified for disability.

Since 1 July 2015, 35 per cent of properties added to public housing are Class C adaptable housing.

Within the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program that supports the ACT Housing Strategy, Housing ACT aims to design and build to Class C wherever possible. However, where site topography constrains ability to deliver an accessible dwelling, Housing ACT will opt for the Liveable Housing Australia Gold standard. Housing ACT's expectation is that 70 per cent or more of future deliveries will meet the requirements for Class C. The vast majority of the remaining dwellings will meet or exceed the Liveable Housing Australia Gold Standard.

Adaptable housing ensures people of a range of ages and abilities can live within the home and they can be easily adapted to meet changing household needs without requiring costly or substantial modifications.

Question 2

There are 1913 people with disability currently residing in a public housing property certified as Class C adaptable or modified for disability.

Note: The numbers provided for Questions 1 and 2 refer only to public housing where tenancies are directly managed by Housing ACT and do not include numbers of people with a disability residing in properties managed by Community Housing Providers.

Question 3

The ACT Government through Housing ACT provides rental support to tenants including those with a disability in public housing through a rental rebate or via the provision of housing owned by the Commissioner that is leased to Community Housing Providers, whether they are NDIS participants or not. In public housing, a tenant's rent is not more than 25% of the household's gross assessable income.

Tenants with disability in public and community housing who receive the Disability Support Pension only pay 25% of that income for rent. People with disability in community housing may also receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) which varies depending on circumstance. Tenants pay 100% of this Commonwealth rental support to the CHP or other accommodation provider.

Question 4

Data to respond to this question is only available in relation to people waiting for a public housing property. As at 15 February, 717 people with a disability are currently on the waitlist awaiting public housing, of which:

- 97 people are in the Priority category
- 518 in the High needs category, and
- 102 in the Standard category.

**Disability services—government support
(Question No 577)**

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Given that under the Bilateral Agreement, the National Partnership on Disability Care Australia Fund, with the Commonwealth Government, payments received from the Commonwealth was to be spent on supporting those living with a disability in the ACT. The States and territories were likewise to be responsible for a financial contribution. Noting that the 2021-22 budget notes a payment of \$18.468 million received in the previous financial year, how much of this goes towards supporting those living with Disability in the ACT.
- (2) What is the total cost of the NDIS to the ACT Government.
- (3) What additional monies are spent by the ACT Government on supporting those living with a disability currently not eligible for the NDIS.
- (4) Where is this money spent.
- (5) What percentage of this is spent on supporting advocacy organisations in the ACT.
- (6) What percentage of this is spent on other organisations in the ACT.
- (7) What percentage of this is spent in grants.

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

- (1) The *DisabilityCare Australia Fund* (DCAF) was established on 1 July 2014 by the DCAF Act 2013. DCAF is funded from the Medicare Levy increase of half a percentage point, from 1.5 to 2 per cent which took effect from 1 July 2014. The DCAF National Partnership Agreement facilitates the payment of funds from the DCAF by the Commonwealth to the States to reimburse them for the increased expenditure incurred in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013. Funding received from the Commonwealth is contingent on our ongoing contribution to the NDIS for the provision of disability supports.
 - (2) Under the Bilateral Agreement, the ACT has committed to contribute \$716.8 million to the NDIS between 2019-23.
 - (3) Within *2022 Report on Government Services (ROGS) – Chapter 15: Services for people with disability Part F* incorporates disability-related information. The ACT contributes data that informs two expenditure tables within Chapter 15: (Table 15A.1 and Table 15A.2). These tables outline the ACT contribution to the NDIS as well as the ongoing commitment to people with disability in the community. ROGS is publicly available via www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services.
 - (4) Please refer to ROGS via www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services.
 - (5) Information on advocacy funding is publicly available in the ACT Community Services Directorate (CSD) Annual Report via www.communityservices.act.gov.au.
 - (6) Information on disability funding is publicly available in the CSD Annual Report via www.communityservices.act.gov.au.
 - (7) Information on grant funding is publicly available in the CSD Annual Report via www.communityservices.act.gov.au.
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Fadden Hills Pond—water quality (Question No 579)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Did anyone from the Directorate inspect the works undertaken at Fadden Pond to provide the answer to question on notice No 443; if so, when and can the Minister provide relevant supporting documentation; if not, how was the answer to question on notice No 443 determined.
- (2) In relation to how the Fadden Pond functions as a water treatment asset, can the Minister please provide information (a) on the volume of the pond and (b) all water quality data from the site.
- (3) Was there water or sediment monitoring undertaken as required under clause 18 and schedule Table 2a of the Environmental Authorisation; if so, can the Minister provide copies of the monitoring results; if not, why not.

- (4) Was there monitoring or treatment of the water discharged into the stormwater system as required under clause 19 to ensure it complied with the standards specified in Schedule 2 Table 4; if so, can the Minister provide documentation regarding the monitoring/treatment; if not, why not.
- (5) Was there approval to locate the silt drying pad close to a house to the west of the pond (on Appel Crescent) rather than to the east of the pond as shown in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP).
- (6) Was there an Environmental Protection Plan (as required in the EMP) completed; if so, can the Minister provide a copy; if not, why not.
- (7) What was the rationale for nearly all the vegetation around the pond and on the island being removed.
- (8) What type of algae is blooming in Fadden Pond.
- (9) How does continuous algal outbreak since the pond cleanout ensure the “best environmental outcome” as stated in the response to question on notice No 443.
- (10) Have there been previous algal outbreaks on Fadden Pond; if so, can the Minister provide data.
- (11) Did the answer to question on notice No 443 incorrectly identify flow from Fadden Pond to Upper Stranger Pond/wetland into Tuggeranong Weir and then into Lake Tuggeranong; if so, on this basis and assuming no monitoring was undertaken at Fadden Pond, can the Minister provide the evidence that supports the answer to question on notice No 443 that “the works were carried out to ensure the best environmental outcomes”.
- (12) Will Fadden Pond be re-stocked with native fish; if so, when and what type and number of fish/fingerlings.
- (13) Can the Minister please confirm if there is to be a study of the pond; if so, can the Minister provide details of the study.

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

- (1) Yes, as part of regular inspections conducted by officers from Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD).
- (2) The volume of Fadden Pond is approximately 2500 cubic metres. Water quality data is not retained.
- (3) Water or sediment monitoring was not undertaken because the water quality was observed as acceptable, and the pond was drained prior to commencement of desilting work.
- (4) Prior to and whilst draining the pond, the water quality was regularly observed and found acceptable. The pond was dewatered prior to the desilting work therefore testing of water quality during desilting was not applicable.

- (5) Due to an error on the contractor's behalf, approval was not sought to change the silt drying location. However, works were undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) whenever possible, with occasional minor amendments as required to accommodate actual site conditions and to improve road safety.
- (6) Works were undertaken in accordance with an Environmental Authorisation as well as an Environmental Management Plan.
- (7) During removal of woody invasive weeds from Fadden Pond and to accommodate machinery access to the pond some of the casuarinas and yellow flag iris were removed. The island has since been replanted with nine (9) casuarinas. Currently, more aquatic plants such as yellow flag iris are being planted around the riparian zone of the pond.
- (8) The algae is not blue-green algae.
- (9) Algae occurs naturally in fresh and marine waters and algal blooms are often a normal part of the seasonal cycle. Algae performs a vital role in aquatic systems by removing excess nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorous and they release large quantities of oxygen into the water column and provide a food source for aquatic insects, shrimps, tadpoles and birds. In lakes and artificial wetlands, it is natural for the phytoplankton population to rise and fall as a response to the amount of sunlight, temperature and nutrient levels in the water.
- (10) Fadden Pond like all other lakes and artificial wetlands will experience rise and fall in algal population as a response to the amount of sunlight, temperature and nutrient levels in the water.
- (11) Stormwater from Fadden Pond flows towards Isabella Pond and eventually into Lake Tuggeranong. There were no water outflows during the sediment removal process, hence the sediment was contained within the pond and turbidity testing was not a requirement.
- (12) Yes.
- (13) There are currently no plans to commission a study of the pond.

**Municipal services—Fix My Street data
(Question No 580)**

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) How many requests were made to Fix My Street in 2021.
- (2) How many requests, referred to in part (1), resulted in the issue being fixed.
- (3) How many complaints were made about the handling of Fix My Street requests in 2021.

(4) What was the average wait time for issues to be resolved via Fix My Street in 2021.

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

- (1) Fix My Street directs requests to Access Canberra (for matters related to illegal parking) and Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) (for all other matters). TCCS received 46,831 requests in 2021.
- (2) 32,292.
- (3) This information is not available.
- (4) The average wait time for an issue to be resolved was 52.20 days. During this time, officers may have already inspected the area and undertaken immediate repairs if necessary or scheduled future repair work.

The time taken for an issue to be formally resolved via Fix My Street is dependent on several factors including: the need to engage with the correspondent who lodged the request to seek further clarification of the concern, seasonal variation in request volumes, redirection of resources to respond to emergency events including COVID-19 and storm events and more.

Lake Tuggeranong—water quality (Question No 582)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Further to the response to question on notice No 477, can the Minister provide Lake Tuggeranong water quality data for the last 10 years.

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

The data requested are in the following attachments, as outlined below:

- Attachment A - Lake Tuggeranong sampling sites.
- Attachment B - Lake Tuggeranong water monitoring data 2015 – 2021.
- Attachment C - Lake Tuggeranong water monitoring data 2010 – 2015.

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

Environment—Healthy Waterways project (Question No 583)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Further to the response to question on notice No 232, can the Minister provide (a) the Healthy Waterways progress reports, including final and evaluation reports, (b) the

Healthy Waterways Business Case, (c) Model for Urban Stormwater Improvement Conceptualisation (MUSIC) models for assets, as supplied to the Government according to the 2016 Alluvium report, (d) detailed design MUSIC models and (e) the Healthy Waterways Operation and Maintenance manuals.

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

- (a) These reports are still being finalised and will be released on their completion, before the end of this financial year. The Final Report will be posted on the Healthy Waterways website and the Evaluation Report will be made available either directly or via the ACT Government's Open Access Information Portal.
- (b) The Healthy Waterways Business Case ('Final Supplementary Report - 9 Feb 2016') was released to you as a part of Freedom of Information (FOI) request 21/42215.
- (c) As provided previously, the Government does not hold the MUSIC models for the preliminary designs of assets. The models supplied to the Government in the preliminary design phase ('Phase 1') were for the seven subcatchments. These are now available to you in a folder accompanying this response.
- (d) The MUSIC models underpinning detailed designs of assets ('Phase 2') are now available in a folder accompanying this response.
- (e) The Operation and Maintenance manuals are being assessed by documentation officers against criteria for Open Access.

Officers within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development have consistently provided information on request on the Healthy Waterways program. This has included data, music models, business cases; and in response to a broad Freedom Of Information request. These continued requests are creating a significant diversion of Government resources. My officials remain available if there is a specific concern to be addressed, however continued broad requests may be seen as an excessive diversion of resources.

Municipal services—street sweeping (Question No 584)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Further to the response to question on notice No 480, is the street sweeping optimisation being progressed.

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

Yes, street sweeping in accordance with the optimisation program has progressed as outlined on <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/roads-and-paths/road-infrastructure-and-maintenance/street-sweeping>

However, due to storm events in late 2021 and early 2022, the program has been affected by approximately four weeks as street sweeping crews have been diverted to assist in additional street sweeping where impacted by storm debris.

**Environment—Healthy Waterways project
(Question No 585)**

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Further to the response to question on notice No 543, have autosamplers been relocated to Healthy Waterways sites.

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

The procurement process to have the autosamplers relocated has taken longer than expected. The contract is being finalised and the autosamplers should be transferred in the next 2-3 months.

**Government buildings—refurbishment and upgrades
(Question No 586)**

Mrs Jones asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 11 February 2022 (*redirected to the Treasurer*):

- (1) In relation to proposals to upgrade offices at 220 London Circuit, and noting the response to question on notice No 378, has consideration of the fit-out and furnishing of vacant space concluded and by whom was that consideration undertaken.
- (2) Has a decision been made about the use, fit-out or furnishing of any vacant or other space been made and who made any decision.
- (3) As a result of the consideration process referred to in part (1), has the Government considered whether to, or made a decision to, build a meeting room (including a new Cabinet meeting room) and associated ante-rooms and kitchenettes for the use of the Cabinet and Ministers at 220 London Circuit; if so, (a) does the Government intend to extend the precincts of the Legislative Assembly to include the new meeting room and other facilities, (b) will childcare facilities have to be relocated to accommodate the meeting room and other facilities and (c) will the level of amenity of the meeting room and other facilities be commensurate with, more opulent and decadent than, or inferior to, the level of amenity enjoyed by an average ACT public sector office working employee.

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

- (1) An Agreement for Lease (AFL) for the Mezzanine level at 220 London Circuit for a period of 19 years has been reached between the Landlord, Capital Property Group, and the Territory. The new facilities are expected to be available in mid-2022, this date could be influenced by unforeseen impacts of COVID 19 supply chain pressures and tradesman availability. The Mezzanine level of 220 London Circuit will comprise of a Cabinet Room, ACT Government Executive meeting rooms, family friendly workspaces and meeting rooms for the ACT Public Service and an expansion of the ground floor business centre.

- (2) Given the above AFL for the Mezzanine level of 220 London Circuit there are now no vacant spaces within the building (this does not take into consideration ground floor retail spaces).
- (3) (a) Under the Legislative Assembly Precincts Act 2001, this is a matter for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.
- (b) The Mezzanine level of 220 London Circuit was originally intended by the developer, Canberra Airport Group (CAG), to be occupied by a childcare facility and catered for in the Agreement for Lease (AFL) with the ACT Government. However, after an ongoing process with the independent accreditation body Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA), CAG concluded that the inclusion of a childcare centre in that location was not achievable and was subsequently released from their obligation under the AFL. Engagement between the Territory and childcare operators in the city region is occurring in parallel to support priority access to childcare placements for staff based in the city.
- (c) The overall amenity of the fit out will be of the same standard as the rest of the fit out for the ACT Public Service in the 220 London Circuit building. However to future proof and ensure compliance with specific design and construction requirements as prescribed by the Commonwealth Government, special consideration is needed for wall, ceiling construction, mechanical services, management of power and data arrangements, provision of services into the room and the installation of a Type 1 Alarm System. Complying with Commonwealth's Zone 4 security requirements for telepresence rooms carries a level of complexity and cost.

The amenity of technology of the Cabinet Room furniture (on a per seat ratio) for the internal fit out will be in line with telepresence/meeting room installations in ACT public sector office-working accommodation such as 220 London Circuit and the Canberra Nara Centre.

Weston—increased density (Question No 624)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Does the Government have any plans to increase the permitted commercial or residential density in the suburb of Weston; if so (a) what types of density increases will be permitted, (b) when will the density increases apply from, (c) will any increases to residential densities allow for multi-storey apartments to be built, (d) will any increases to commercial densities allow for multi-storey business suites and offices to be built and (e) will the Government waive any applicable change of use charge or other otherwise applicable fees, charges or taxes to encourage development.
- (2) What upgrades to urban infrastructure and transportation will be made by the Government to support any increased densities in Weston.
- (3) When will any upgrades be commenced.
- (4) How much will any upgrades cost.

(5) When will any upgrades be concluded.

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

The ACT Government, in accordance with the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*, is investigating opportunities for higher density development within future urban intensification locations.

The Government has not made any decision about the type of density or timeframes. Any such decisions will involve community consultation.

The Lease Variation Charge is based on the principle that the community should share the benefit from any increase in the value of land arising from changes to the original lease. If this benefit is not recovered, it provides an unearned transfer of wealth from the community to private entities.

Other fees and taxes are used to ensure compliance with community expectations as well as fund the essential services provided by the Government in the ACT.

In most circumstances, reducing these charges results in unearned wind fall gain. In cases where the benefit to the community outweighs the loss of giving up this value, economic stimulus may be appropriate. In the case of Weston this would be subject to government consideration.

Details about upcoming upgrades to urban and transport infrastructure across Canberra can be found on the City Services website at <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/>

Roads—Coppins Crossing (Question No 626)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Does the Government have any plans to upgrade the current Coppins Crossing closure notification signage, including by (a) placing additional signage on John Gorton Drive or in Wright at locations that would prevent queuing and allow U-turns, (b) automating the existing signage or (c) providing a form of real-time alert for drivers, such as via the internet or an app; if so, (i) what amount has been budgeted for the upgrade, (ii) what amount has been expended on the upgrade, (iii) when did, or will, the upgrade commence, (iv) when will the upgrade conclude and (v) will the upgrade be undertaken via a contractor to the ACT Government; if so, whom.

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

a) Transport Canberra and City Services installed additional signage in February 2022 at key locations, to provide advanced notification to motorists of road closures on Coppins Crossing. These additional locations include:

- Cotter Road;
- John Gorton Drive intersection with Holborow Avenue; and
- Uriarra Road Intersection with Coaldrake Avenue.

Total indicative cost was approximately \$2,000.

- b) There are no plans to automate the existing signage.
- c) Road closure information is publicly available on the City Services webpage at https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/roads-and-paths/act_public_road_closures. This road closure information is available to third party providers and can be accessed via various navigation applications and platforms, which can include automated alerts for subscribers.
 - (i) Refer to (a)
 - (ii) Refer to (a)
 - (iii) Refer to (a)
 - (iv) Refer to (a)
 - (v) Refer to (a)

Budget—estimates 2021-2022 (Question No 627)

Mrs Jones asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

In the development of the budgeted financial statements of directorates and agencies in the 2021-22 ACT Budget, and before the financial impact of any policy decisions of government where incorporated, (a) how, and by what percentage amount, were the controlled recurrent payments to be provided to each directorate and agency increased or decreased in each the following years (i) 2021-22, (ii) 2022-23 (iii) 2023-24 and (iv) 2024-25 (indexation of base funding) and (b) what factors affected the amount by which the base funding of each directorate and agency, and by how amount (expressed as a percentage) did each of those factors affect the base funding of each directorate and agency.

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

- (a) and (b) Controlled recurrent payments appropriation can be increased or decreased during the development of a budget for technical reasons. This increase or decrease in appropriation is adjusted against the total CRP for an agency and incorporated into amounts in the appropriation bills.

Factors impacting these technical variations can include changes in:

- Estimated payments from the Commonwealth to reflect updates in estimates for National Partnerships and Specific Purpose Payments in the Commonwealth Budget.
- Economic parameters which include variations resulting from changes to indexation factors such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Wage Price Index (WPI).
- Expected timing of cash flows leading to reprofiling of funding.

- Estimated outcome including items such as remuneration tribunal determinations, ceasing initiatives, project savings, school enrolment growth and workers compensation premium adjustments.
- Transfer of funding between agencies.

A breakdown of the percentage movements can be found below.

Agency	Category	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
ACT Gambling and Racing Commission	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
	Total Technical Variations	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
ACT Health Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	0.5%	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
	Estimated Outcome	1.3%	-0.6%	0.0%	0.2%
	Reprofiling of funding	8.0%	-1.5%	-0.4%	-0.9%
	Transfers	0.3%	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.2%
	Total Technical Variations	10.1%	-2.3%	-0.4%	0.7%
ACT Local Hospital Network	Commonwealth Budget	-0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%
	Estimated Outcome	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.4%
	Transfers	-0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	0.3%	0.8%	0.0%	2.0%
Auditor-General	Economic Parameters	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	-0.2%
	Estimated Outcome	0.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	1.1%	0.3%	0.0%	-0.2%
Canberra Institute of Technology	Commonwealth Budget	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
	Estimated Outcome	-1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
	Total Technical Variations	-0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	1.6%
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	2.7%	-0.5%	0.0%	0.1%
	Economic Parameters	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
	Estimated Outcome	-2.6%	-0.2%	0.0%	-0.3%
	Reprofiling of funding	25.9%	-5.4%	0.1%	-0.4%
	Transfers	1.0%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	27.1%	-6.1%	0.1%	0.6%
City Renewal Authority	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
	Estimated Outcome	1.8%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%
	Reprofiling of funding	9.0%	-3.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	10.8%	-3.6%	0.5%	1.3%
Community Services Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	0.4%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	Economic Parameters	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
	Estimated Outcome	0.7%	0.5%	-0.8%	0.0%
	Reprofiling of funding	3.0%	-1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	Transfers	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	4.3%	-1.0%	-0.8%	1.7%
Cultural Facilities Corporation	Economic Parameters	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	1.6%
	Estimated Outcome	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
	Reprofiling of funding	7.0%	-3.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	8.0%	-3.2%	0.1%	1.5%
Education Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	0.3%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.9%
	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
	Estimated Outcome	-0.9%	0.2%	-0.1%	0.0%
	Reprofiling of funding	1.5%	-0.3%	-0.3%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	0.9%	-0.3%	-0.3%	3.3%
Electoral Commissioner	Economic Parameters	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	2.2%
	Estimated Outcome	19.5%	-10.4%	17.2%	125.1%
	Total Technical Variations	19.6%	-10.3%	17.2%	127.2%

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	0.4%	-0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	Economic Parameters	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	1.2%
	Estimated Outcome	5.4%	2.5%	0.0%	-0.1%
	Reprofiling of funding	5.7%	-2.0%	-0.9%	0.4%
	Total Technical Variations	11.6%	0.2%	-0.9%	1.6%
Housing ACT	Commonwealth Budget	3.1%	0.4%	-3.4%	0.5%
	Reprofiling of funding	-0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	2.7%	0.8%	-3.4%	0.5%
ICON Water Limited	Estimated Outcome	14.8%	-0.7%	-0.7%	1.8%
	Total Technical Variations	14.8%	-0.7%	-0.7%	1.8%
Independent Competition and Regulator Commission	Economic Parameters	1.2%	0.0%	0.8%	1.4%
	Estimated Outcome	50.2%	-20.6%	-14.1%	20.1%
	Total Technical Variations	51.4%	-20.6%	-13.2%	21.5%
Integrity Commissioner	Economic Parameters	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	1.1%
	Estimated Outcome	14.2%	-4.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	Transfers	-2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	11.8%	-4.2%	0.0%	1.0%
Justice and Community Safety Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	1.1%	-0.3%	0.0%	-0.3%
	Economic Parameters	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
	Estimated Outcome	2.1%	2.7%	0.0%	0.6%
	Reprofiling of funding	1.9%	-0.7%	0.0%	-0.1%
	Transfers	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	5.2%	1.7%	0.0%	1.4%
Legal Aid Commission (ACT)	Commonwealth Budget	0.0%	5.5%	0.1%	0.2%
	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
	Estimated Outcome	-0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	-0.1%
	Total Technical Variations	-0.3%	5.8%	0.2%	0.8%
Major Projects Canberra	Estimated Outcome	5.2%	-0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	Reprofiling of funding	-48.3%	32.2%	-13.0%	0.0%
	Transfers	0.0%	-0.5%	-0.4%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	-43.0%	31.1%	-13.3%	0.0%
Office of the Legislative Assembly	Economic Parameters	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%
	Estimated Outcome	-0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
	Total Technical Variations	-0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Office of the Work Health and Safety Commissioner	Economic Parameters	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.9%
	Estimated Outcome	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Reprofiling of funding	0.6%	-0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	Transfers	-5.4%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
	Total Technical Variations	1.0%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.8%
Public Trustee and Guardian	Economic Parameters	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.2%
	Estimated Outcome	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Transfers	-23.9%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.3%
	Total Technical Variations	-23.3%	-0.3%	-0.4%	-0.5%
Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate	Commonwealth Budget	1.2%	-0.6%	-0.1%	0.0%
	Economic Parameters	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	1.4%
	Estimated Outcome	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%
	Reprofiling of funding	1.9%	-0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	Transfers	-0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total Technical Variations	3.7%	-0.7%	0.5%	2.6%

Notes: Percentages are based on technical variations in the 2021-22 Budget as a portion of total CRP and are sourced from the Government Budget Management System based on adjustment reason code groupings.

Economic parameters in 2024-25 includes indexation on creation of the new forward estimate.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Government—salary costs (Question No 628)

Mrs Jones asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In the costing of policy proposals, what categories of expenses are added to the salary of employees to work out the total cost of employing employees (sometimes known as “salary on-costs”).
- (2) What is the amount (expressed as a percentage, or otherwise) of each of the categories of expenses referred to in part (1) in (a) 2021-22, (b) 2022-23, (c) 2023-24 and (d) 2024-25.
- (3) How does the amount of each of those categories of expenses referred to in part (1) differ for each directorate or agency, and for each category of employee in each directorate or agency, in (a) 2021-22, (b) 2022-23, (c) 2023-24 and (d) 2024-25.

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

- (1) Standard costing guidance is released by the ACT Treasury each year. The standard costing guidance requires agencies to calculate the total cost of employing employees by including:
 - The salary of the employee (based on current Enterprise Bargaining Arrangements or Remuneration Tribunal determinations);
 - Superannuation (new employees are assumed to be Fund of Choice members and the relevant rate is therefore 11.5 per cent of an employee’s salary);
 - Leave benefits (2.5 per cent of salaries for long service leave and an annualised rate of 1.5 per cent for leave loading for non-Senior Executive Service employees);
 - Workers’ compensation premiums (calculated as a percentage of an employee’s salary and based on the rate applicable to the business area);
 - Standard administrative on-costs; and
 - Other costs assessed on a case-by-case basis (for example, vehicles for rangers or specialised equipment).

Standard Administrative On-Costs

The standard administrative on-cost per employee for 2021-22 is \$20,922 which includes:

Component	\$	%
ACT Government standard Computer/Laptop/docking station/monitor	682	3%
ACT Government Login – Infrastructure and Storage	2,343	11%
Desktop Support	1,227	6%
Microsoft – Office 365 User Licence	420	2%
Directorate Support	878	4%
Electronic Document and Records Management System	652	3%
Ricoh Managed Print Services	330	2%
Voice/Mobile/Canberra Connect Subsidy	597	3%
Accommodation	6,860	33%
Insurance	347	2%
Training	2,000	10%
Fleet	416	2%

Other Admin	1,662	8%
HR (Payroll, Non-Payroll & Records Services)	1,383	7%
Injury Management	182	1%
Finance	788	4%
Professional Standards	155	1%
Total On-Costs	20,922	100%

NB: Numbers may not add due to rounding

- (2) Administrative on-costs are indexed by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in budget outyears and the proportionate split therefore remains constant.
- (3) The only differences in the total costs of employees undertaking equivalent roles in different directorates would arise from the application of relevant workers' compensation rates.

**Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate—
financial statements
(Question No 629)**

Mrs Jones asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) How many times, since 1 January 2015, has the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate requested the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provide advice on how the ACT Government's financial statements should, or could be, presented, given the requirements in the ABS's Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2015 and related standards.
- (2) For each request for advice referred to in part (1), (a) what date was the initial request made, (b) what issue did the request relate to, (c) on what date was a final response provided by the ABS and (d) on what dates was any correspondence about the request sent to the ABS or received from the ABS (as the case may be).

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

- (1) Advice has been sought from the ABS on how the financial statements should be presented in accordance with GFS on one occasion since 1 January 2015.
- (2) The initial request was made on 19 July 2017 and related to presentation of the ABS GFS Cash Surplus / Deficit Including Finance Leases and Similar Arrangements. The final response was provided on 20 July 2017 with additional correspondence also received and sent on this date.

Advice has also been sought from the ABS during this time on the treatment and classification of various transactions and sector classification of reporting entities. A summary of this advice is provided below.

Initial Date of Request	Issue	Final Response Date	Additional Correspondence Received	Additional Correspondence Sent
11 March 2015	ACTTAB Sale GFS Treatment	28 August 2015	N/A	N/A

24 July 2015	Terminating Finance Leases	28 July 2015	27 July 2015	27 July 2015
9 April 2019	Classification of Transport Canberra	19 December 2019	10 April 2019	26 April 2019
			3 May 2019	14 May 2019
			20 June 2019	21 June 2019
			24 June 2019	22 October 2019
16 March 2018	Sector Classification of City Renewal Authority	20 March 2018	N/A	N/A
26 November 2018	Lease Variation Charge Deferrals	30 November 2018	N/A	N/A

West Belconnen severe storm event—assistance to residents (Question No 630)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022 (*redirected to the Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services*):

- (1) What specific roles did the Community Recovery (Social Recovery) division of the Community Services Directorate in assisting individuals and families to deal with the impacts of the 3 January 2022 storm that hit West Belconnen and nearby areas, including residents who experienced days-long power outages.
- (2) What personal, material and financial support or temporary accommodation was provided to those impacted.
- (3) What role did Community Recovery play in coordinating services from government agencies and charities.
- (4) What was Community Recovery's involvement in providing information on assistance available to impacted households.
- (5) What information was provided, and by what means.
- (6) What was Community Recovery's involvement in coordinating volunteers who were willing to assist impacted households following this storm.

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

1. The Community Services Directorate (CSD) has the lead for social/community recovery functions in the ACT. Social Recovery is one of four recovery pillars and is a critical component to the ACT Recovery Plan and the Emergencies Act 2004. Whilst social recovery is critical in an emergency response, it is not the only recovery pillar. It sits alongside economic recovery, environmental recovery, and built recovery. Within the Social Recovery context, CSD assisted individuals and families to deal with the impacts of the 3 January 2022 storm through:
 - a. providing a Liaison Officer at the Emergency Control Centre (ECC) which was stood up on 5 January 2022, and contributing to associated regular briefings;

- b. coordinating a food relief approach by connecting affected individuals with existing food pantries across the Territory and the Canberra Relief Network (CRN) Connect Centre. Details of food pantries and the CRN Connect Centre were provided in ECC messaging to ensure all a consistent and clear message was provided to the community;
 - c. sending messages across the Directorate and key service providers to seek feedback and/or information regarding vulnerable individuals and broader requests for support to ensure a coordinated understanding of community need;
 - d. providing onsite presence at the Community Information Hub located at the RFS Molonglo Brigade on 7 January 2022, with onsite CRN food and hygiene hampers, hard copy information about food pantries and other community services, and assisting impacted individuals to link with support services; and
 - e. coordinating targeted responses and assistance to households experiencing vulnerability during this period.
2. CRN food hampers, hard copy information about food pantries and other community services and were provided to attendees affected by the storm at the Community Information Hub on 7 January 2022.

Individuals were supported to be relocated to temporary motel accommodation for a time, with food and financial relief provided by community partners.

Information from ACT Health regarding options for people who were COVID positive (including accommodation options) was provided to community partners working with a family considering alternative accommodation.

3. CSD liaised with non-government organisations in the West Belconnen and broader region, as well as the CRN Connect Centre to understand demand on services and identify appropriate responses, including tailored responses for individuals experiencing vulnerability.
 4. CSD had a presence at ECC and the Community Information Hub to provide information to those affected by the storm.
 5. Information regarding local food pantries, contact details for the CRN Connect Centre and broader community services to assist people during the storm response was provided to ECC members as part of regular briefing, as well as the Public Information Coordination Centre to support government messaging during this period. Hard copies of this information were also available to provide to affected individuals attending the Community Information Hub.
 6. Following the storm, we saw local communities within suburbs support each other through existing networks and relationships. Individuals connected with local community organisations to seek support where needed and were able to seek information about volunteers who could support them via the Community Information Hub. Further, individuals who required assistance were able to reach out through Access Canberra (Fix My Street) or through the SES.
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West Belconnen severe storm event—electricity supply (Question No 631)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to guaranteed service levels and rebates concerning extended electricity outages following the storm on 3 January 2022, as outlined in Table s2.1 of the ACT Consumer Protection Code 2020, are customers who experienced unplanned sustained interruptions to their power supply following the 3 January 2022 storm eligible for rebates in accord with guaranteed service levels; if not, why not.
- (2) Under what specific conditions do guaranteed service levels protect electricity customers from unplanned sustained interruptions.
- (3) Do customers need to do anything to access these rebates, or will they be provided automatically.
- (4) What are the steps that must be taken if rebates are not automatically applied.

Mr Barr: The following answer to the member's question has been sought from Evoenergy, through Icon Water Limited, which operates as an independent corporation:

- (1) Evoenergy is communicating with the ACT Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (ICRC) regarding clause (S11.1(2)) under the Consumer Protection Code 2020 as the event and conditions were outside Evoenergy's control. Applying clause (S11.1(2)) means Guaranteed Service Levels are not applicable in this instance.

As a regulated service provider, Evoenergy is mindful that all costs associated with managing the electricity network, including responding to extreme weather events, are ultimately paid for by the ACT community. As the operator of the second most reliable service provider in Australia (Australian Energy Regulator State of the Energy Market 2021), Evoenergy strives to deliver safe and reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost.

A storm of the magnitude experienced on 3 January 2022 is above Evoenergy's surge capacity to respond to extreme weather events. Evoenergy allocates surge capacity resources and equipment to respond to extreme weather events in a way that balances the need to maintain network reliability and safety, while ensuring it operates its business prudently and efficiently.

In response to the storm, Evoenergy sought and received assistance from other jurisdictions to get the power back on as quickly and safely as possible.

- (2) The Consumer Protection Code 2020 Guaranteed Service Levels (GSLs) specific to unplanned sustained interruptions apply where that unplanned sustained interruption is greater than 12 hours in duration. The Consumer Protection Code 2020 includes exclusions where the Utility is not required to comply with a GSL, including events or conditions outside the Utility's control, and where a Major Event Day boundary is exceeded as defined by the Australian Energy Regulator.
- (3) Evoenergy automatically applies rebates to eligible customers and notifies when rebates are paid via customers' retail electricity bill.

(4) See above.

**West Belconnen severe storm event—electricity supply
(Question No 632)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Did EvoEnergy request assistance from any other utility companies to assist with efforts to restore power after the storm on 3 January 2022; if so, when and to whom.
- (2) Did any other utility companies offer workers to assist EvoEnergy with efforts to restore power; if so, who and when were these offers made.
- (3) When did EvoEnergy accept these offers.
- (4) Which utility companies provided workers to assist EvoEnergy in restoring power.
- (5) When did workers for any other utility company first arrive in the ACT to assist EvoEnergy in restoring power.
- (6) How many workers from any other utility were involved.
- (7) How long did these workers assist EvoEnergy.
- (8) What was the cost to EvoEnergy of using workers from any other utility company in restoring power.

Mr Barr: The following answer to the member's question has been sought from Icon Water Limited which operates as an independent corporation:

1. Evoenergy reached out to Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy on 4 January 2022 seeking support from field crew resources to assist. Evoenergy confirmed the engagement of Endeavour Energy in a meeting on Wednesday 5 January 2022 and this was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding for Disaster Support.
 2. No.
 3. See answer to question 2.
 4. Endeavour Energy.
 5. Endeavour Energy crews arrived in the ACT at 7am Thursday 6 January 2022.
 6. Endeavour Energy crews consisted of 18 field staff, 1 scheduler and 2 Operations Managers.
 7. 3.5 days in total. Endeavour Energy departed the ACT at midday Sunday 9 January 2022.
 8. Evoenergy confirmed payment to Endeavour Energy on a cost recovery basis. The amount has not been disclosed as it is commercial-in-confidence.
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**West Belconnen severe storm event—communication to residents
(Question No 633)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Through what avenues did the ACT Government distribute information about storm recovery and assistance to affected residents within the seven days immediately after the 3 January 2022 storm.
- (2) If hardcopy letters were sent out, how many were sent out and to whom.
- (3) If telephone calls were made to residents (ie, the Government made the calls rather than received the calls from residents), how many calls were made and to whom.
- (4) If ACT Government employees knocked on the doors of affected residents, how many doors were knocked and how were these selected.
- (5) If ACT Government employees were stationed at areas of high traffic such as shopping centres to distribute information, how many employees were stationed for this purpose.
- (6) Which specific areas were targeted.
- (7) What information was provided.

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

I refer the member to the answers provided by Officials during Annual Report hearings and note that the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing is conducting an inquiry into these matters.

**West Belconnen severe storm event—clean-up and recovery
(Question No 634)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Did the ACT Government bring on any additional workers to assist with clean-up after the 3 January 2022 storm, such as tree removal; if so, how many workers were used.
- (2) How many of these were sourced from ACT-based organisations, and how many were sourced from interstate organisations.
- (3) Did any other jurisdictions offer workers to assist with storm clean-up; if so, who and was the offer accepted.
- (4) Do we have any interstate workers assisting with the storm recovery, as of 10 February 2022; if so, how much longer will they be here; if not, when did each organisation cease their work in the ACT.

- (5) How much did the ACT Government spend on interstate workers who were hired for storm recovery.

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

- (1) 72 volunteers from the NSW State Emergency Service (NSWSES) assisted the ACT Emergency Services Agency (ACTESA) from 3 January to 6 January 2022 in response to the storm event.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) reassigned all available arborists (22-31 staff) from all depots to work in the Belconnen region for the two weeks immediately following the storm.

After the initial completion of urgent tasks such as clearing roads, driveways and major pathways, additional crews from other TCCS depots have continued to assist in the Belconnen area (33 staff).

23 ACT Parks and Conservation Staff completed 12 days of storm clean-up operations between 1 and 16 February 2022.

Additional contractor resources utilised include excavators, trucks, chippers and temporary traffic management which includes 14 operating workers, some of whom have come from NSW.

- (2) ESA sourced resources from the NSWSES as described in the answer to question (1).

TCCS sourced additional plant and supporting workers from contractors currently operating in the ACT, some which are contracted through the Tree Surgery Plant and Equipment and Operators Panel. These companies have additional operations in the local NSW region from which 5 workers have been sourced.

- (3) No other jurisdictions apart from those described in the response to question (1) offered resources to assist with the recovery from the storm.

- (4) No resources from the NSWSES are assisting the ACT Government recover from the storm event as of 10 February 2022.

All additional plant and supporting workers sourced by TCCS were engaged from contractors currently operating in the ACT, some of which are contracted through the Tree Surgery Plant and Equipment and Operators Panel. These companies have additional operations in the local NSW region they have drawn from. It is unknown when the additional resources will be released.

- (5) No costs were incurred to the ACT Government through the engagement of NSWSES volunteer crews. It is not possible for TCCS to separate the contractor costs for locally based workers and those from interstate.

West Belconnen severe storm event—community information hub (Question No 635)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) How many people in total attended the community information hub set up in the Rural Fire Service Molonglo Brigade after the 3 January 2022 storm.
- (2) How many bags of ice were distributed to people who went to the community information hub.
- (3) Was there a limit to how many bags of ice a day an individual or household was able to collect.
- (4) When did the community information hub close.
- (5) How many hours in total was the hub open.
- (6) Were any community organisations offered the opportunity to station one of their staff members at this hub; if so, which one/s.
- (7) Did any community services station a staff member at this hub to facilitate easier access for affected residents to engage with community services; if so, which one/s.
- (8) Did affected residents who visited the information hub receive information on how to obtain a rebate from their energy provider.
- (9) How many skips worth of spoiled food were filled.
- (10) How many showers were provided at the community information hub.
- (11) Were these showers brought in, or were they already part of the facility.
- (12) How many washers and dryers were provided at the community information hub.
- (13) Were these washers and dryers brought in, or were they already part of the facility.
- (14) What steps were taken by the ACT Government to notify storm-impacted residents/households of the existence of the community information hub and the services available there.
- (15) How were households without power (and therefore perhaps without access to radio and/or internet) notified regarding the community information hub.

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

- (1) Approximately 600 community members attended the community information hub established at the Molonglo ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) shed.
- (2) Approximately 752 ice bags were purchased for community use.
- (3) A household was able to take two bags of ice each day. Individual discretion was also considered where necessary.
- (4) The community information hub closed on Sunday, 9 January 2022. The hub operated for as long as residents were without power. Once Evoenergy advised power was restored the hub was closed.

- (5) The community information hub had set times for opening and closing each day that were publicised via multiple media channels. Residents who attended before or after these times were supported as necessary. The community information hub operated for 29 hours, not including time before and after the set times.
 - (6) Representatives of the Community Services Directorate attended the community information hub on Friday, 7 January 2022 to support the distribution of food packs.
 - (7) Refer to response to question 6.
 - (8) Evoenergy were present at the community information hub to provide information about power outages. Evoenergy also had a presence in the Public Information Coordination Centre and contributed to community messaging about the impact of the storm and relief/recovery assistance.
 - (9) 1.5 skip loads of spoilt food from effected residents were collected.
 - (10) Three showers, six washers and dryers and a freezer were hired from Coates Hire to support residents at the community information hub.
 - (11) Refer to response to question 10.
 - (12) Refer to response to question 10.
 - (13) Refer to response to question 10.
 - (14) Canberra residents were notified of the establishment community information hub by the Emergency Service Agency (ESA) and other directorates across ACT Government through multiple communication channels. These include social media channels, ESA news alerts, live press conference resulting in media mentions across several media stations (print, radio, digital and tv), face-to-face communication via volunteers and local radio interviews and ads.
 - (15) Households without power were targeted via radio platforms and crews on the ground responding to requests for assistance. The community information hub also provided a means for residents without power to charge portable electronic devices (phones, ipads, etc) allowing these devices to keep operating and receiving online information.
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Roads—William Hovell Drive (Question No 636)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to William Hovell Drive duplication, is the independent verification of the noise monitoring still on track to be completed by the end of February 2022; if not, what is the cause of the delay.
- (2) Is the revised environmental impact statement still on track to be submitted by the end of March 2022; if not, what is the cause of the delay.

- (3) Is the “what we heard” report still on track to be released by the end of February 2022; if not, what is the cause of the delay.
- (4) Which shared path option between William Hovell Drive and the Mainoru, Florina and Kurundi cul-de-sacs is being the most strongly considered by the Government.

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

- (1) The noise monitoring was completed in February 2022. These results are now being analysed ahead of a report being drafted.
- (2) Submission of the revised draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is dependent on finalisation of the noise monitoring report but has not been delayed at this time.
- (3) The finalisation of the ‘What We Heard’ Report is also dependent on results of the noise monitoring and is expected to be released ahead of the submission of the revised EIS.
- (4) The relocation of the shared path onto the western side of William Hovell Drive (away from Hawker residents) is the preferred option being progressed.

**West Belconnen severe storm event—clean-up and recovery
(Question No 637)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to corflutes and electronic road signs installed in Belconnen notifying residents that storm clean-up is ongoing, how many of these corflutes have been made.
- (2) How much was the cost of producing these corflutes.
- (3) If produced in more than one size, what sizes have been made, and how many of each size.
- (4) Which directorate’s workers have installed these corflutes, and how many workers have been involved,
- (5) How long will these corflutes be in place.
- (6) What will happen to these corflutes after they are removed.
- (7) How many electronic road signs have been deployed to provide information about storm debris clean-up.
- (8) What is the total cost of these electronic road signs.
- (9) What ongoing maintenance do these electronic road signs require, and which directorate’s workers perform this maintenance.

- (10) How long will these electronic road signs be in place.

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

- (1) 170 Corflute signs were printed, based on 10 per suburb for the 17 most affected Belconnen suburbs.
- (2) \$3,230.00
- (3) Approximately half of the signs were printed sized 600mm x 900mm and half at A2. The larger signs are located in more prominent locations.
- (4) The corflute signs were erected by a small team of Transport Canberra and City Services officers who were already in the area auditing the locations of storm damage.
- (5) The corflute signs will remain in place until the clean-up is completed or until they are considered to be no longer required.
- (6) When removed, the corflute signs will be recycled through the ACT NoWaste corflute recycling trial at the Mitchell Resource Management Centre and Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre.
- (7) Six Variable Message Sign (VMS) boards were located at key points within Belconnen.
- (8) The total cost is yet to be determined as this is subject to how long the signs are required to remain on site.
- (9) No ongoing maintenance is required and any unforeseen repairs are the responsibility of the contracted provider.
- (10) The VMS signs will remain in place until the clean-up is completed or until they are considered to be no longer required.

**Municipal services—cycle lanes
(Question No 638)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Further to the Minister's response to petition 25-21 and the ACT Government Online Maps and Apps website, which map on this site identifies the intended and future on-road cycling routes.
- (2) Which map on this site identifies the intended and future off-road community routes.
- (3) Given that the map file titled "Map for Snez – COPA Condition and Cycle Paths" is listed as publicly available and after clicking on the map file and then clicking on "view application", the user is asked for a username and password, is this map file publicly available; if so, how can this file be accessed.

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

1. On-road cycling routes can be seen through the Active Travel Practitioner Tool by navigating to 'Routes' then 'On-Road Cycling Routes' (see Figure below).

(Available at the Chamber Support Office).

2. Intended community routes can be identified by navigating to 'Routes' then 'Community Routes' (see Figure below).

(Available at the Chamber Support Office).

Off-road paths can be identified by navigating to 'Facilities' then 'Paths' (see Figure below)

(Available at the Chamber Support Office).

3. The ArcGIS Online web application file titled 'Map for Snez-COPA Condition and Cycle Paths' has been created for internal use only and this map is no longer listed as publicly available.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—staff disciplinary action (Question No 639)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Have any Alexander Maconochie Centre staff been subject to any disciplinary or remedial actions for any proven cases of negligence or poor performance of their job responsibilities in relation to the escape of the detainee in July 2021; if so, what was the nature of these disciplinary or remedial actions.

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

There has been no disciplinary or remedial action taken against any ACT Corrective Services staff member in relation to the escape of a detainee in July 2021.

Government—land purchase (Question No 640)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Further to the responses to questions on notice Nos 537 and 538, is Ginninderra Falls part of the two blocks of land purchased from NSW referenced in the Minister's response.
- (2) How much did the Government spend to purchase each block of land.
- (3) How big is each block.

- (4) Does the Government intend to annex these purchased blocks at a later time (ie, change the borders of the ACT to encapsulate these purchased blocks within the ACT).
- (5) Will land owners who purchase ACT Government owned land in NSW (in the recently purchased blocks) have to pay land tax to the NSW Government or the ACT Government.
- (6) Are the two blocks of land big enough to accommodate the planned construction of McNamara and Strathnairn.
- (7) Has any excess land been purchased for a potential future third suburb.

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

- (1) No. Ginninderra Falls is part of the block adjacent to those purchased.
- (2) 527 Parkwood Road - \$8.12M

495 Parkwood Road - The SLA has entered into a call option deed for the acquisition of this block. The block will not settle until the SLA has met its obligations under the deed. The purchase price is therefore not public at this stage.
- (3) 527 Parkwood Road – 80ha
495 Parkwood Road – 80ha
- (4) The blocks have been purchased as additional land for the Ginninderry Joint Venture. Should an agreement between relevant jurisdictions be negotiated on border relocation, these blocks will be included in that consideration.
- (5) Arrangements for the payment of rates and charges for the NSW land are still the subject of inter jurisdictional consideration.
- (6) The suburbs of Strathnairn and Macnamara are wholly within the ACT. This land will be in a new, as yet unnamed suburb, currently referred to as Suburb 3. Suburb 3 will comprise these blocks as well as the existing land brought to the joint venture by Riverview Developments.
- (7) No further land has been purchased.

Roads—pedestrian refuges (Question No 641)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) What criteria were used to determine how wide each of the pedestrian refuges in Krefft Street, Florey, would be.
- (2) What consideration is given to the impact that the width of a pedestrian refuge will have on bicycle lanes.

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

- (1) The minimum width of a refuge island used in the ACT is 2m. This provides adequate width for a bicycle or a person with a pram to safely wait within the refuge for a safe moment to cross the road.
- (2) The traffic lanes either side of the island are required to be a minimum width of 3.7m. This lane width provides space for a vehicle to safely pass a cyclist. The width of the traffic lanes past the refuge islands is greater than the minimum 3.7m required. In addition to the width, "Watch for Bicycles" signs have been installed at the refuge island near Ennor Crescent.

**Umbagong District Park—bridges
(Question No 642)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

Did the Government, during a Belconnen Community Council meeting, inform attendees that ecological and heritage assessments would be undertaken to inform the most suitable design approach for the construction of Umbagong foot bridges and that these assessments would be completed by the end of summer 2022; if so, are these assessments still on track to be completed at the end of February; if not, what is the cause of the delay and when are they now projected to be completed.

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

Belconnen Community Council members and attendees were advised that the above assessments would be undertaken to inform the design of the Umbagong foot bridges, and this would be completed by the end of Summer 2022.

The on-site survey for the ecological evaluation is complete, and the *Ecological Impact Assessment* report, with the results of the survey, is complete.

The on-site survey for Heritage assessment has been completed in consultation with the Aboriginal Representative Organisations Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs), including participation in the field survey.

The draft report of the *Heritage Site Survey and Impact Assessment* is complete. The final consultation phase with the RAOs is currently underway, involving review and confirmation, prior to final issue.

**Waste—green waste services relocation
(Question No 643)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Are there any other locations still being considered by the ACT Government for a new northside green waste facility, given that an alternative site for the Parkwood green waste facility was proposed in January 2022; if so, where are those locations.

- (2) Is the development application process still on track to begin in late February or early March; if not, what is the cause of the delay and what is the new date the government aims to begin the development application.

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

- (1) There are no other locations being considered by the ACT Government.
- (2) Lodgement of a development application will be undertaken soon.

**Municipal services—footpaths
(Question No 644)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) What plans exist for the construction of a community path along Lange Place from Lampard Circuit to bus stop No 4008.
- (2) Will there be a public consultation period with the residents before any construction begins.
- (3) Is the option to reduce the scope of the footpath to just a connection from Lange Place to bus stop No 4008 viable.

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

- (1) A community request has been received for the construction of a community path along Lange Place from Lampard Circuit to bus stop No 4008. Transport Canberra and City Services has undertaken a warrant assessment of the proposed missing link to assess its relative merit. The path has been included on the community path infill program list to be considered in a future capital works program.
 - (2) The community path infill program includes engagement ahead of construction commencement. If a project progresses, residents in the vicinity of the works will receive a letterbox drop at least seven days prior, informing them of the upcoming construction period and any potential impacts they may experience during the works. This includes residents whose driveways may be directly impacted by the construction of the path. These residents will be engaged with both prior to and during works at their property.
 - (3) The ranking of this missing link has been assessed based on the original community request. The warrant assessment process does not involve options assessment – requests are assessed on whether a safe path can be provided for all path users, and if this can be met then the assessment criteria of strategic, community, public transport and demand needs are applied to prioritise the requests.
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**Municipal services—Charnwood shops
(Question No 645)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) What is the next stage to address trip hazards at Charnwood shops, now that the listening report for the trip hazards at Charnwood shops has been completed and released.
- (2) When can residents and other interested parties expect updates from the Government on this project.

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

- 1) TCCS has engaged a consultant to undertake design planning to improve the paved area at Charnwood shops including consideration of feedback received through the consultation process.
- 2) Information and updates on the program can be found at <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/charnwoodshops>. It is also expected that targeted consultation with building owners and key stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the design planning study.

**COVID-19 stimulus packages—Jobs for Canberrans scheme
(Question No 646)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) How many people were hired under the Jobs for Canberrans scheme.
- (2) How many were (a) casual, (b) part-time and (c) were full-time.
- (3) In what fields were they hired.
- (4) Were any of these jobs specifically for the construction of community paths.

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

- (1) Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) engaged 134 workers under the Jobs for Canberrans (JfC) initiative. Other directorates also employed workers under JfC.
- (2) (a) 59 workers were employed on a casual basis
(b) 75 workers were employed on part-time / full time basis.
- (3) The workers within TCCS were engaged in the following roles:

Administration support
Bus operations
Candidate care officers (to support JfC workers)
City cleaning team (inc City Renewal Authority)
Indigenous cultural coordinator
Data and digital officers
Grounds maintenance workers
Libraries customer service officers (Mystery box initiative)
Light rail support
Yarralumla plant issue and maintenance
Program development (path inspections and admin)
Road maintenance
Strategic asset assessment officers
Traffic signals
Tree maintenance workers
Work health and safety officer

(4) No.

Domestic and family violence—screening tools (Question No 649)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 11 February 2022
(*redirected to the Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence*):

- (1) When did a trial of a screening tool, to assist staff in understanding and identifying domestic and family violence, at Calvary Maternity Unit commence and end.
- (2) How many staff at the maternity unit were trained to use the screening tool and participated in the trial.
- (3) How many patients participated in the trial.
- (4) Can the Minister detail the key indicators and statistics that determined the success of the trial.
- (5) Does the ACT Government have any plans to make the screening tool a permanent practice; if so, (a) when, (b) for whom and (c) in what settings.
- (6) What manner of feedback was sought by the ACT Government in regards to this trial, and what were the results.

- (7) Were the same screening questions trialled at the Calvary Maternity Unit also rolled out across the Canberra Hospital as part of the Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence program; if so, when did this occur.
- (8) How many and which staff at the hospital have been trained to use the screening questions, and have subsequently put them into practice.
- (9) Can the Minister provide a copy of the Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence program that is being utilised by the Canberra Hospital as part of the answer to this question on notice.
- (10) Given that according to the draft ACT Risk Assessment and Management Framework, a risk assessment should be undertaken whenever domestic and family violence has been disclosed or identified through the consideration of 13 key risk factors stated in the Framework, are there any screening mechanisms in practice at hospitals in the ACT to identify and understand domestic and family violence where there has been no disclosure or observable risk factors; if so, can the Minister provide further details.
- (11) When will the final publication of the ACT Risk Assessment and Management Framework be released.

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

- (1) A trial of a screening tool commenced at Calvary Maternity Unit in February 2020. The trial was not completed due to COVID-19.
- (2) All staff at the Maternity Unit were trained to use the screening tool.
- (3) The trial was a process trial to test the framework and screening tool for use. It was not a clinical trial and patient participation, and outcomes were not recorded.
- (4) The trial was useful in determining some changes to the screening tool and administrative processes to support screening which have been incorporated into the final framework and tool. However, the trial was not completed due to COVID-19.
- (5) The ACT Government supports the use of a screening tool and process in any appropriate setting. The ACT Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework is in its final stages of completion. The draft Framework is published on the CSD website, and its use is encouraged across all service settings.
- (6) The trial was a process-based trial to both support Calvary staff in identifying and responding to Domestic and Family Violence and to see how a screening process could be introduced. Despite the trial being cut short by the pandemic, OCGFS obtained feedback directly from the (then) head of Calvary Maternity Services and this has been incorporated into the final framework.
- (7) Canberra Health Services (CHS) did not participate in the pilot to introduce screening questions for the maternity unit at Calvary Hospital. In line with the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Frontline Worker Training Strategy, CHS has adopted the Strengthening Health Responses to Family Violence (SHRFV) model which utilises a 'Sensitive Practice' model to enquire about family violence.

- (8) All Calvary maternity staff were provided training on use of the screening tool and a process was put in place for all staff. Feedback from head of Calvary Maternity Services was that many staff had put the process into practice, prior to the arrival of COVID-19.
- (9) CHS do not have a specific program. SHRFV embodies a whole of organisation cultural change process aimed at sustained attitudinal and behavioural change relating to the drivers and responses to family violence. It was originally developed in 2014 by the Royal Women's Hospital and Bendigo Health and is led in CHS by the Executive Oversight Committee.
- (10) CHS has adopted the 'identifying' pathway from the ACT Risk Assessment and Management Framework (Framework), using the Sensitive Practice model that assists and supports clinicians to identify and respond to consumers experiencing family violence.

Sensitive Practice includes noticing the signs of family violence, including the 13 key risk factors from the Framework, sensitively enquiring about these signs, responding respectfully and non-judgmentally, and developing an action plan with the consumer that includes referral to specialist supports and agencies.

In accordance with the Framework, CHS has implemented a comprehensive Risk Assessment and Management Process to safely respond to a disclosure of family violence in the health setting.

Sensitive Practice has proven effective at CHS to date in identifying and responding to family violence where there has been no disclosure or observable risk factors.

- (11) The Framework is in its final stages of development and is likely to be released in early 2022.

Environment—carbon-emitting vehicles (Question No 650)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) What is the definition of a high emitting vehicle.
- (2) What are the figures of high emitting vehicles registered in the ACT for the last five years.
- (3) How does the Government intend to reduce the number of high emitting vehicles on our roads.
- (4) What research has the Government done into electric trucks.
- (5) Given that the 2021-22 annual report for the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) stated on page 61 that the "Directorate supported... trialling of an electric tipper truck", (a) how much did it cost to trial this truck, (b) what KPIs were used to determine if the trial was a success, (c) was the trial

considered a success by the Directorate, (d) was new charging infrastructure required to trial the electric tipper truck; if so, what was the cost of installing new infrastructure and (e) will the ACT Government continue to use the electric tipper truck that was trialled; if not, what will the ACT Government do with the new charging infrastructure it has installed.

- (6) Given that in the 2021-22 annual report for the EPSDD state on page 61 that “Work to identify options for zero emission utes and other special purpose vehicles will continue to ensure that more fit-for-purpose zero emission vehicles are available in the future”, (a) can the Minister provide a breakdown of zero emission utes and special purpose vehicles that the EPSDD have identified, (b) what criteria does EPSDD use to evaluate if the zero emission utes and special purpose vehicles that they have identified are fit-for-purpose.

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

- (1) The ACT Government considers light vehicles to fit within one of four emissions categories based on their carbon dioxide emissions. The highest emitting vehicles receive a Vehicle Performance Rating of D. This includes vehicles with emissions of 221 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre or above, as measured under the Commonwealth Green Vehicle Guide scheme.
- (2) The numbers of category D vehicles registered in the ACT are as follows:

Year	Registrations of Category D Vehicles
July 2017-December 2017	840
2018	1377
2019	1045
2020	1243
2021	894
Source: Access Canberra stamp duty records	

- (3) The ACT Government is applying multiple strategies to reduce the number of high emitting vehicles on our roads.

Technological improvement and vehicle replacement means that the number of high emitting vehicles on our roads will naturally decrease over time. Between 2003 and 2019, there was a 28% reduction in the average emissions intensity of new light passenger and commercial vehicles in Australia¹. This gradual improvement is expected to continue. However, the ACT Government recognises that natural replacement alone will not be sufficient to achieve our emissions reduction targets. This is why the ACT Government has implemented the most generous financial support for low and zero emissions vehicles through two years of free registration, stamp duty discounts and access to no-interest loans. The ACT Government also supports public and active travel to provide alternative travel options and advocates for higher emissions standards settings nationally.

The tiered stamp duty pricing system, based on vehicle emissions, acts to incentivise buyers away from high emitting vehicles toward lower emitting alternatives. Current zero emissions vehicles (ZEV) policies also incentivise the purchase of ZEVs over high emissions vehicles, including ZEVs’ inclusion in the Sustainable Household Scheme.

A significant factor in reducing high emitting vehicles is vehicle emissions standards, which are set at the Federal level. The ACT Government has advocated to the Commonwealth for stricter emissions standards for new vehicles, as unilateral Territory action on this policy setting is not possible.

- (4) The ACT Government conducts market and literature research regarding electric trucks as part of the commitment to achieve net zero emissions in government operations by 2040. Locally available models are limited at present to those built upon platforms designed for internal combustion engine vehicles. Prototypes from Volvo and SEA Electric are in active service in Australia, though at small scale. The advent of hydrogen fuel cell electric trucks, with around 400km of range², will also help in addressing range concerns in electric vehicles.

The ACT Government is trialling multiple electric truck opportunities. Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) has commenced a trial of a fully electric 6.5T truck with tipper body. Since the commencement of the trial, the truck has been utilised by TCCS in general purpose operations – further information can be found in answer (5). The ACT Emergency Services Agency will introduce a hybrid electric fire truck in 2022, which will primarily use its battery for propulsion, but has a diesel range extender for use if necessary.

(5)

(a) \$123,926 for the twelve-month trial.

(b) Success of the trial will be evaluated based on key performance indicators including safety; operational suitability; range and user experience.

(c) While the trial is showing favourable results across all performance indicators, a full assessment will be undertaken following completion of the trial.

(d) Two existing chargers were upgraded to 22kW AC chargers at Allara Depot and Holder Depot to allow for heavy vehicle charging. The cost of these upgrades was approximately \$4,000.

(e) Following completion of the trial, TCCS will use the outcome of the trial to develop a transition plan which may involve adoption of the vehicle into its fleet. The two chargers will enable transition of heavy vehicles to zero emissions options, consistent with the objectives of the ACT Climate Change Strategy.

(6)

(a) GB Auto Group: ZED 70 ute (Toyota LandCruiser series 79 battery electric conversion). Currently available to order.

ZERO Automotive: Tembo e-LV ute (Toyota LandCruiser and Hilux battery electric conversions). Currently available to order.

SafeScape: Bortana EV ute (Agrale Marruá battery electric conversion). Taking registration of interest.

H2X: Warrego hydrogen ute (Ford Ranger fuel cell conversion). Currently available to order.

(b) The criteria to determine whether a zero emissions vehicle is a fit for purpose replacement are based on the duties of each vehicle. They include cost, safety, range, size and where relevant, more specific requirements such as off-road capability, load capacity, towing capacity and internal dimensions.

¹Source: <https://www.ntc.gov.au/sites/default/files/assets/files/Carbon%20dioxide%20emissions%20intensity%20for%20new%20Australian%20light%20vehicles%202020.pdf>.

²Source: <https://afma.org.au/the-hyundai-xcient-hydrogen-truck-reaches-new-zealand-shores/>

Climate change strategy—funding (Question No 652)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to the Budget Outlook, page 170, can the Minister provide a breakdown of how the \$2.647m of funding for Climate Action – Adaptation and Resilience will be spent over the next four years.
- (2) What are the KPIs for this budget item.
- (3) As a total of \$2.647m has been allocated over four years of which \$700,000 has been allocated for 2021/22, can the Minister explain the \$150,000 offset, given it was going to cost \$849,000.

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

- (1) The Climate Action – Adaptation and Resilience funding will support continued delivery of priority climate change adaptation initiatives to support the implementation of the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025* and will replace expiring funding to continue the implementation of *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City* and the 30% living infrastructure targets. This work includes approximately:
 - \$250,000 to support continued monitoring, evaluation and spatial data visualisation tools of living infrastructure, canopy cover and surface permeability targets.
 - \$300,000 to investigate planning system options for living infrastructure requirements for commercial and industrial zones.
 - \$100,000 to continue to monitor progress of community resilience to the effects of climate change through the continuation of the ACT Longitudinal Survey on Climate Change and other data collection.
 - \$150,000 to deliver a Climate Risk Assessment for the ACT.
 - \$1.847 million to support three ongoing staff, replacing expired funding.
- (2) As funding supports continued implementation of the *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025* (the Strategy) and *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City* (the Plan), the budget item is reported as part of implementation of the Strategy and the Plan.

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate reports progress of actions from the Strategy and the Plan to the relevant Subcommittee of Cabinet, including where relevant as part of the quarterly Whole of Government Climate Action progress report. Implementation progress is publicly reported in the Minister's Annual Report under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010.

- (3) A Climate Risk Assessment for the ACT was identified as a core piece of work to be undertaken in 2021-22. This assessment contributes to the 2021 Territory Wide Risk Assessment and will help to inform future climate adaptation and resilience action priorities. Funding for this assessment is offset through existing funding of \$150,000 through the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate Office of Climate Action.

Environment—Community Zero Emissions Grant program (Question No 653)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) When did the Community Zero Emission Grants program start.
- (2) How much funding has the program received since it began and can the Minister provide a breakdown per year.
- (3) Has there been a review of the program; if so, can the Minister provide details.
- (4) How many and what community organisations have participated.
- (5) Is there a capped amount for grants; if so, can the Minister provide details.
- (6) Can the Minister provide a breakdown of all community groups which have received grants and the amount.
- (7) How does the grants program operate and what is the criteria.
- (8) Can the Minister provide a breakdown of how many applications have been received each year since the program started and how many applications have been accepted and rejected.
- (9) What are the reasons grants are rejected.
- (10) Does the ACT Government administer the grants; if so, who is responsible for accepting/rejecting applications; if not, who is the program outsourced to and how much does the ACT Government pay them to run this program.
- (11) Given that Budget Paper E 2021-22, page 33, states that \$150,000 has been allocated each year until 2025, does the \$150,000 include administration and advertising costs of the program; if so, how much does this cost.

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

- (1) The Community Zero Emissions Grant (CZEG) program started in 2017-18.
- (2) From 2017 to 2021, there was \$550,000 available over four years for eligible community groups and individuals.

The funding allocated was:

Financial year	Total amount funded (excluding GST)
2017-18	\$117,910
2018-19	\$142,587
2019-20	\$159,986
2020-21	\$127,424

- (3) An internal evaluation of the CZEG program was conducted in 2019-20 to review the impact of funded projects and options to refine the program guidelines for future rounds. The findings have been incorporated to improve the process for the fifth round of the program.
- (4) To date 19 community groups have received funding under the CZEG program. Over the four years, approximately 35 other organisations applied for grants and were unsuccessful.

Over the four previous rounds, a wide range of community organisations have applied including groups focused on the environment, rental advocates, mental health advocates, religious groups, and renewable energy co-operatives. A list of all organisations that have received grants is provided at question 6.

- (5) Rounds 1-4 provided grants of up to \$25,000 for individual applications or \$50,000 for joint applications. Round 5 is offering up to \$50,000 for individual applications or \$75,000 for joint applications.
- (6) The community groups, grant funding amounts and project are publicly available on the web, in the EPSDD Annual report, and for completeness listed below.

Round 4:

- The Conservation Council ACT Region and the Canberra Environment Centre received \$39,572 for 'Make the Move' to help people in the workplace make sustainable transport choices.
- The Australian Electric Vehicle Association ACT Branch received \$24,940 for 'Zero Emissions, Go Electric' to show the benefits of electric vehicles at public events.
- Localjinni received \$24,923 for its Dynamo mobile-projector festival to show the economic and health benefits of e-bikes and car and bike-sharing schemes.
- Rebus Theatre Inc received \$19,000 for 'Inner Climate' to explore psychological, social and political issues in lowering carbon emissions.
- Liz Lea Dance received \$18,989 for 'And...Breathe', a short film about net zero emissions by 2045.

Round 3:

- Australian Dance Party Limited received \$24,952 for 'Move to Zero 2.0: It's Electrifying' to show easy ways to reduce emissions through transport.
- SEE-Change received \$24,985 to run short film competition and festival, 'Future Film', for young people.
- Conservation Council ACT Region received \$24,620 for 'Make the Switch' to help homeowners move from gas to electricity.
- Canberra Environment Centre received \$24,403.50 for the 'Canberra Community Recyclery' where volunteers service and repair bikes.
- JT Clay received \$11,765 for 'The Carbon Diet' to show how to lower carbon footprint by 75 percent.
- The Hackett Compost Collective received \$24,260 to install a community composter.
- Pre POWER ONE Co-op received \$25,000 to get people involved in renewable electricity generation.

Round 2:

- Better Renting Limited received \$24,875.55 for 'Home Truths' to help renters make their homes more energy efficient.
- Canberra Environment Centre received \$24,680 for 'Accessible Sustainable Living Resources for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities in Canberra' to translate information about sustainable behaviour into Mandarin and simplified Chinese.
- Australian PV Institute Limited received \$23,531 for 'SunSPot' to map urban ACT's solar potential to help people make better decisions about installations.
- Woden SEE-Change Incorporated received \$24,000 to transform the Canberra City Farm into a low energy super shed.
- Mental Health Foundation ACT received \$20,750 for 'More awareness - less waste' workshops to show people living with a mental illness and their carers how to reduce household waste.
- Brindabella Christian Education Limited received \$24,750 for 'Solar Tree' to feed solar energy into their grid and power a video learning display, provide charging stations, and night lighting.

Round 1:

- Australian Dance Party Limited received \$21,550 for 'Moving to ZERO', a short film to change perceptions and behaviour of the ACT community about zero emissions targets.
- Canberra Environment Centre received \$24,200 for the Canberra Community Compost project to collect organic kitchen waste and compost the Acton Community Garden.
- SEE-Change received \$22,160 for a sustainable home demonstration project to teach the community about a zero emissions lifestyle in the ACT.

- ClimateXchange on behalf of The Neighbourhood Effect Canberra received \$25,000 for 'The Neighbourhood Effect Canberra' app and website to help people to reduce their carbon footprint.
 - Oz Harvest Limited received \$25,000 to expand its capacity to store and redistribute surplus food.
- (7) The full list of criteria for the program is available in the guidelines which are available at: <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/policy-programs/community-zero-emissions-grants>.
- (8) The table below shows the number of applications received each year and how many of those were successful in receiving grants.

Financial year	Number of funded projects	Total number of applications (including funded projects)
2017-18	5	19
2018-19	6	18
2019-20	7	21
2020-21	5	16

- (9) As a competitive process with finite funding availability, applications are ranked compared to each other. Feedback is offered to all unsuccessful applicants, and they are encouraged to reapply in subsequent rounds.
- (10) The ACT Government administers the grants. The projects are selected by an assessment panel and the Deputy Director-General is the delegate.
- (11) \$150,000 is the amount available for grant funding each year.

Environment—social cost of carbon (Question No 654)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Given that Budget Paper E 2021-22, page 36, states that the revenue from the social cost of carbon is estimated at \$1.340m for 2021/22, how has that figure been arrived at and can the Minister provide a breakdown for each directorate and their estimated social cost.
- (2) Given that the Budget Outlook 2021-22, page 172, has forward estimates for revenue for the social cost of carbon of (a) 2022-23 – \$1.23m, (b) 2023-24 – \$1.12m and (c) 2024-25 – \$1.01m), has this revenue already been allocated for spending programs and can the Minister provide a breakdown of how this revenue has been allocated in 2021-22 and over the forward estimates.
- (3) If a directorate produces more or less emissions than what has been estimated by the Government, will future budgets be updated to show the increase/decrease in emissions from directorates.

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

- (1) This budget measure applies the \$20 social cost of carbon (SCC) to 2021-22 ACT Government emissions, which are estimated to be 67,000 tonnes CO₂-e. As these figures are based on an estimate for the current financial year, a breakdown of Directorate emissions is not yet available.

Action 5.11 of the ACT Climate Change Strategy establishes an interim SCC of \$20 per tonne of Government emissions. Under this action, Government will arrange for an independent body to develop a social cost of carbon for application from 2025.

- (2) The Budget Outlook reflects the SCC being applied to a projection of Government emissions to 2024-25. The emissions projection reflects the ACT Government meeting its target of a 33 percent reduction in Government emissions from 2019-20 to end of 2024-25. The relationship between the Budget Outlook and projected Government emissions is outlined below.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
SCC Fund budget	\$1,340,000	\$1,230,000	\$1,120,000	\$1,010,000
Projected Government emissions (t CO ₂ -e)	67,000	61,500	56,000	50,500

An internal Social Cost of Carbon Panel has been established to allocate funding to projects under the SCC Fund. The Panel has shortlisted projects for funding in 2021-22. The details of successful applications will be published each year in the Minister's Annual Report under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*. The Social Cost of Carbon Panel will continue to assess projects over the forward estimates.

- (3) The amount allocated to this budget measure is being reviewed at the end of each financial year.

Energy—Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme (Question No 655)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to the Budget Outlook 2021-22, page 176, has the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme started; if so, can the Minister provide a breakdown of energy efficiency upgrades that have been installed as a result of this program since it began.
- (2) How many households will be helped by the scheme.
- (3) How will the scheme operate and will it go to tender.
- (4) What involvement has there been from the ACT Council of Social Service and social housing advocacy groups.
- (5) What types of projects will be funded under the scheme.
- (6) Who will do the work/carry out the projects.

- (7) How will the scheme be monitored.
- (8) What are the scheme's key performance indicators.
- (9) How much has been allocated each year for the next three years.
- (10) When will the rest of the \$50 million be allocated.
- (11) Where is the \$5 million, already allocated in this current Budget, listed in the Budget papers.
- (12) Can the Minister explain the figures at page 176 of the Budget Outlook 2021-22.

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

(1) Breakdown of energy efficiency upgrades

Phase one of the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme commenced following release of the funding late in 2021 to support energy efficiency and ceiling insulation upgrades for Housing ACT and low-income homeowners. With the scheme in early stages of delivery, upgrades have not commenced at this time.

(2) Scheme Outcomes and Operation

The scheme aims to reduce energy hardship and provide greater thermal comfort and is expected to:

- deliver ceiling insulation upgrades to eligible Housing ACT properties; and
- provide rebates and interest-free loans for priority homeowners and rental providers to upgrade ceiling insulation and to install electric energy efficient appliances including reverse cycle air conditioning and hot water heat pumps.

Some activities, such as Housing ACT ceiling insulation upgrades, will be carried out under existing mechanisms through the existing government tendered provider.

- (3) As appropriate, activities are expected to be announced as part of standard tender processes. Eligible energy efficient products will be installed by accredited, professional suppliers, and overseen by a third-party provider.

(4) ACT Council of Social Service (ACTOSS) and social housing advocacy groups

ACTCOSS has provided ongoing design input into several streams of the scheme, with consultation also sought from community housing groups. This includes through public consultation undertaken as part of the development of minimum energy efficiency standards for rental homes. Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) will continue engaging with ACTCOSS and other social housing advocacy groups throughout the scheme.

- (5) See response to Question 2.

- (6) See response to Questions 2 and 3.

(7) Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation framework, including refined key performance indicators for the scheme, is currently being developed as part of phase two design.

(8) See response to Question 7.

(9) Current and future Budget allocation (page 176 of the Budget Outlook 2021-22)

Funding of \$5 million was allocated for phase one of the scheme in the 2021-22 Budget, as shown on page 176 of the Budget Outlook and duplicated below. Funding in 2021-22 includes capital for Housing ACT upgrades, noted as Capital in the following table. Expenses include funding to support energy efficiency upgrades for priority (including low income) homeowners in 2021-22. Expenses from 2021-22 to 2024-25 includes initial ongoing funding for staffing to manage and implement the scheme by Housing ACT and EPSDD.

The following table (taken from page 176 of the Budget Outlook) includes offsets from provisional funding allocated in the 2020-21 Budget. The ACT Government is currently considering allocation of the remaining provisioned funds, which is noted as “Capital-Provision”.

(Available at the Chamber Support Office).

(10) See response to Question (9).

(11) Allocation in current Budget Papers

The \$5 million allocated in the current budget can be found within *Budget Statements E* in Table 33 and within *Budget Statements G* in Table 36 and Table 37, as shown below.

Budget Statements E

(Available at the Chamber Support Office).

Budget Statements G

(Available at the Chamber Support Office).

(12) See response to Question 9.

Environment—electric vehicle charging stations (Question No 656)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) How much does it cost the Government to install an electric vehicle public charging station.
- (2) How long will it take to charge a car at these stations.
- (3) What is the Government’s target in terms of how many drivers will use each charger.
- (4) Are there any plans to charge people to use charging stations; if so, how much will it cost people to use a public charging station and when will this come into effect.

- (5) How many public chargers does the Government plan to provide by 2030.

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

- (1) The ACT Government has allocated \$1,287,500 to the 50 chargers project to support the installation of publicly accessible charging infrastructure. The final cost of installation for these 50 charging stations is not known at this time as a procurement process is underway.
 - (2) Vehicle charging duration is dependent on a number of factors, including; the specific vehicle model, the vehicle's state of charge, and the type of charger being used.
 - (3) The ACT Government has not set a usage target for the chargers. The *ACT Public Electric Vehicles (EV) Charging Outlook*, shows that demand for 50 chargers is expected to be exceeded by financial year 2024, indicating that high future usage is forecast.
 - (4) Public chargers will not be owned or operated by the ACT Government. The ACT Government will require that the chargers be publicly accessible, however; pricing for provision of charging services will be at the discretion of charging providers.
 - (5) The ACT Government has committed to provide funding to support the installation of 50 publicly available chargers. Future considerations will be informed by the rate of electric vehicle uptake and whether there is a need for additional government intervention to boost charging station availability.
-

**Environment—fleet advisory service
(Question No 657)**

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) What is the fleet advisory service and when was it established.
- (2) Who manages the fleet advisory service.
- (3) What is the cost of the fleet advisory service
- (4) How much money is allocated for this service in the budget this financial year and how much has been allocated since it began.
- (5) How many people are employed in the fleet advisory service.
- (6) How many businesses and groups has it helped and can the Minister provide details.
- (7) What are the service's outcomes and achievements.
- (8) Is there a cost to business and groups to use the fleet advisory service; if so, can the Minister provide details and cost breakdown.

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

- (1) The Fleet Advisory Service (FAS) is a free government run information service that provides targeted information and materials to Canberra businesses and community organisations to assist them in transitioning their vehicle fleets to Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs). The service has been operating since December 2021.
 - (2) The Fleet Advisory Service is managed by Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.
 - (3) The service is free to Canberra businesses and community organisations.
 - (4) The operating budget for 2021-22 is \$250,000. The previous financial year, \$30,000 was allocated to fund program design.
 - (5) There is one full time employee associated with the Fleet Advisory Service.
 - (6) A total of 10 businesses, from a range of industries, have applied for and received tailored advice specific to transitioning to electric vehicles from the FAS. These businesses include Canberra Vikings Club, Capital Brewing, Icon Water, Norris Cleaning, Rnb Solutions, Royal Australian Mint, Sentinel, St Vincent de Paul ACT, and Woden Community Service. Actual transition of fleets will be up to the businesses involved.
 - (7) The Fleet Advisory Service has been operating for less than three months, and in this time it has assisted 10 businesses as previously described. It is too early to evaluate outcomes and achievements more broadly.
 - (8) The service is free to Canberra businesses and community organisations.
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Municipal services—nature strips (Question No 658)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) How does the ACT Government ensure that expectations of residents under the Guidelines for Use of Residential Nature Strips 2019 are upheld.
- (2) Can the Minister provide a breakdown of fines or actions the Government takes to prompt residents to meet their expectations under the guidelines.
- (3) How many Fix My Street requests have been lodged since 2016 for nature strip maintenance, which are considered expectations of residents under the guidelines.
- (4) How many of the Fix My Street requests, referred to in part 3, were completed by (a) residents and (b) the ACT Government.
- (5) Is the Act Government considering any fines or actions in the future against a resident if they do not meet the expectations outlined in the guidelines.

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

- (1) The *Guidelines for Use of Residential Nature Strips 2019* (the Guidelines) are not legislatively enforced. As noted in the disclaimer at the front of the Guidelines, they “are not law nor do they have the effect of a law, and they do not replace the law regulating the use of nature strips in the ACT.” The Guidelines are advice to residents about best practice in managing and maintaining residential nature strips. They are designed to help Canberra residents determine what types of activities can be undertaken on a nature strip and when approval is required for an activity, as well as to encourage everyone to take pride in maintaining their nature strips.

The Guidelines are aligned with provisions within the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013* (the Act). For example, the Guidelines provide advice for clearance zones for pedestrians and cyclists to safely use footpaths and roads. In accordance with section 31 of the Act, the occupier of a residence may be issued with a direction notice to prune a tree or other plant if it is overhanging public unleased land and it is likely to obstruct or inconvenience anyone on the public unleased land. It is an offence to fail to comply with a plant pruning direction.

Similar provisions also exist for the enforcement of unauthorised work carried out on nature strips (public unleased land) without approval, or if a person carries on an activity that excludes members of the public from the land without an approved permit.

- (2) Government authorised officers routinely engage with residents and members of the community regarding overhanging foliage and unauthorised use of nature strips. These actions are taken in response to complaints and/or through pro-active identification of non-compliance issues. Officers also provide written reminders (letterbox drop) where required to remind residents about the expectations for them to maintain their nature strip.
- (3) and (4) I have been advised by my Directorate that the information sought is not in an easily retrievable form, and that to collect and assemble the information sought solely for the purpose of answering the question would require a considerable diversion of resources.
- (5) Non-compliance with the legislative provisions of the Act is managed in accordance with the City Services Licensing and Compliance unit Accountability Commitment available at https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1251343/DAS-Accountability-Commitment.pdf

Roads—traffic management (Question No 659)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to the response to question on notice No 511 in which the Minister stated that “An interim solution to relocate the existing STOP line forward by 2m will be implemented by January 2022. The timing of any further improvements arising from the Consultant’s report will be dependent upon the type and scale of recommended improvements”, can the Minister advise what existing STOP line he is referring to, given that there are only give-way signs at the intersection?

- (2) If the Minister means the give-way lines, can he advise which give-way lines are moving forward two metres.
- (3) Can the Minister advise how the decision to “relocate the existing STOP line forward by 2m” was made and if there was any review.
- (4) Did the Minister review or sign off on the decision to “relocate the existing STOP line forward by 2m” even though there are only give-way lines at this intersection.

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

- (1) The line marking at the intersection are Give Way lines, the reference made to STOP lines in Question on Notice 511 was made in error.
- (2) The Give Way lines that have been relocated are on the western approach to the Efkarpidis Street / Gungahlin Place intersection (i.e. travelling from Gozzard Street, travelling east on Efkarpidis Street to meet the Efkarpidis Street / Gungahlin Place intersection).
- (3) An review undertaken by Transport Canberra and City Services officers during 2021 and identified minor improvements, including movement of the Give Way lines. The relocation of the Give Way lines forward (into the intersection) brings drivers forward and makes them more visible to drivers on Gungahlin Place and improves visibility for traffic turning out of the side streets.
- (4) No.

Orroral Valley—campground (Question No 660)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 11 February 2022 (*redirected to the Minister for Transport and City Services*):

- (1) Has Orroral Valley Campground been closed since 1 January 2021 and will remain closed until the 1 January 2023 because of recent flooding; if so, can the Minister provide a breakdown of the damage that was caused to the access of Orroral Valley campground.
- (2) What work has the ACT Government done to fix the access to the campground and can the Minister provide a breakdown of costs of past work.
- (3) What work does the ACT Government still have to complete to fix the access to the campground and can the Minister provide a breakdown of the projected costs of these works.
- (4) How many hours were worked on fixing the access to Orroral Valley campground in 2021.
- (5) How many hours is estimated to be required in 2022 to fix the access to Orroral Valley campground.

- (6) Has there been any other work on Orroral Valley campground between 1 January 2021 and present; if so, can the Minister provide details and breakdown of costs and hours worked.
- (7) When will Canberrans be able to use the campground.

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

- (1) The Orroral Valley Campground has been closed since March 2021 due to flooding damage to Orroral Road. The damage to Orroral Road Crossing (over Gudgenby River) and the access to Orroral Road from Boboyan Road was first observed in February 2020, following the major storm event that followed the long period of drought and the bushfires, bringing an unusually high debris load at this location. A subsequent storm in August 2020 exacerbated the damage to the crossing and temporary works to fix the access were implemented, while planning for a permanent remediation commenced. A further storm in March 2021 had some extreme peak flows that compromised the safety of the crossing and caused the closure of the road. This storm rendered the crossing unsafe and unfortunately also irreparably damaged the temporary works undertaken in 2020.
- (2) The temporary bridge repairs to address the 2020 storm damage were completed in February 2021 for a cost of approximately \$47,000, in addition to other ongoing management of the road closures totalling approximately \$30,000.
- (3) Orroral Road Crossing is currently being redesigned to cope better with the frequency and extremity of weather events. This design stage, which includes technical investigations, analysis and assessment of options, was completed in January 2022 at a cost of approximately \$42,000. The construction cost is estimated to be in the order of \$700,000.
- (4) This information is not available.
- (5) This information is not available.
- (6) No major works have been undertaken at the Orroral Valley Campground between 1 January 2021 and present. Routine maintenance is undertaken at regular intervals to ensure the campground does not fall into a state of disrepair while access issues are resolved.
- (7) Orroral Road Crossing and the access to Orroral Road from Boboyan Road is estimated to be reopened in mid-2022. The timeframes for restoring the crossing are indicative only and are subject to wet weather, and construction tender outcomes.

Roads—Ngunnawal (Question No 661)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Can the Minister provide an update on the road works at Jabanungga Avenue and Tarra Place in Ngunnawal.

- (2) Why have barriers been left at these streets.
- (3) Has the ACT Government carried out any work on these streets before; if so, can the Minister provide details since 2016.
- (4) How much has carrying out works on these streets cost since 2016.
- (5) How many hours have been worked in total on these streets since 2016.
- (6) Will the Government have to barricade and work on these streets after the roadworks are complete.
- (7) How long will the barriers be left on these streets.
- (8) What notice and information did the Government give residents in this area.

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

- 1) The design and investigations have been carried out and tender documents have been prepared.
- 2) Barriers have been installed for safety reasons to alert road users of the road issues which, once rectified, will be removed.
- 3) Roads Maintenance have undertaken maintenance related pavement repairs in this area 16 times since 2016 according to available records, 10 of those relating to heavy patching/hot mix, and 6 of those relating to make-safe (cold mix) pavement repairs.
- 4) This information is not available.
- 5) This information is not available.
- 6) Once roadworks have been completed no barricades will be required.
- 7) Once roadworks have been completed the barricades will be removed.
- 8) A letter drop has been carried out informing the residents that investigations were being carried out to determine the cause of the problem and to find a pavement rehabilitation solution.

Animals—wildlife entrapment (Question No 663)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) In relation to animal entrapments in government infrastructure, does Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) have a policy or already address the issue of trapped wildlife in Canberra's lakes and ponds; if so, what is the policy and/or how is the issue addressed.

- (2) Have issues of the entrapment of waterbirds and aquatic wildlife in spillways and sumps in Canberra waterways been raised with TCCS before; if so, how have these issues been dealt with.
- (3) What are the barriers to TCCS consulting with relevant groups and developing solutions to avoid wildlife entrapment in TCCS infrastructure.
- (4) More broadly, are TCCS involved in the design process of lakes and ponds; if so, how and are wildlife hazards considered in the design process.

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

- (1) There is no Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) policy relating to animal entrapment in government infrastructure. Where entrapped animals are encountered and TCCS can safely undertake or enable the safe recovery of wildlife, our officers support and assist where possible.
- (2) Regarding the spillways of Territory dams, TCCS are anecdotally aware of a couple of matters at Yerrabi Dam and Point Hut Dam. In these matters, where waterbirds and aquatic wildlife had perished, they were disposed of appropriately. Alternately, where rescue could be safely facilitated this was undertaken.
- (3) TCCS is open to consultation with relevant wildlife groups. For example, TCCS was recently contacted about a wildlife issue at a TCCS dam, on that occasion, TCCS coordinated a site visit with the interested parties to consider options.
- (4) Yes, TCCS assists the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) in the design process for new dams. Many factors including wildlife hazards are considered in the design process to minimise the risk to the environment, community, and economy.

Roads—Rocky Crossing (Question No 664)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Can the Minister explain what has been the delay in road repairs at Rocky Crossing and what is being done.
- (2) When will technical investigations, analysis and assessment of options be completed.
- (3) What are the current projected completion dates for Rocky Crossing and opening of Orroral Road.
- (4) What are the contingencies for a similar flooding event during construction in the narrow, steep valley at Rocky Crossing.

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

- (1) The Orroral Valley Campground has been closed since March 2021 due to flooding damage to Orroral Road. The damage to Orroral Road Crossing (over Gudgenby

River) and the access to Orroral Road from Boboyan Road was first observed in February 2020, following the major storm event that followed the long period of drought and the bushfires, bringing an unusually high debris load at this location. A subsequent storm in August 2020 exacerbated the damage to the crossing and temporary works to fix the access were implemented, while planning for a permanent remediation commenced. A further storm in March 2021 had some extreme peak flows that compromised the safety of the crossing and caused the closure of the road. This storm rendered the crossing unsafe and unfortunately also irreparably damaged the temporary works undertaken in 2020.

- (2) The design stage, which includes technical investigations, analysis, and assessment of options, was completed in January 2022.
 - (3) Orroral Road Crossing and the access to Orroral Road from Boboyan Road is estimated to be reopened in mid-2022. The timeframes for restoring the crossing are indicative only and are subject to wet weather, and construction tender outcomes.
 - (4) The construction methodology will include contingencies for flooding events. The design of the new crossing is compliant with flood immunity standards and will result in increased flood immunity and resilience compared to the existing culvert crossing.
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Planning—western edge (Question No 665)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 11 February 2022:

- (1) Can the Minister advise exactly which blocks form part of the total Western Edge Investigation area and can the Minister publicly release a map clearly identifying the blocks that are in the Western Edge Investigation area.
- (2) How many blocks in or abutting the Western Edge Investigation area are currently up for sale and how many have been sold off in the last five years for residential and other developments.
- (3) What will the Minister do to ensure that the environmental values on this piece of land and all blocks in the Western Edge are carefully examined during the planning process.

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

- (1) The attached map ([Figure 1](#)) identifies the blocks that are included in the Western Edge investigation area. Noting the area identified in the ACT Planning Strategy is an indicative area i.e. not with set boundaries.
- (2) Five blocks in the Western Edge Investigation Area have been sold in the last 5 years*.

*Note - Blocks abutting the Western Edge Investigation Area (in the suburbs of Kambah, Chapman, Duffy, Wright, Denman Prospect, Hawker, Higgins, Holt and Strathnairn) are excluded. This is because these blocks are already zoned by the Territory Plan for development, such as for residential uses and therefore not

considered relevant in response to the query in relation to being ‘up for sale’ nor were they ‘sold off’ in the preceding 5 years.

- (3) The environmental values of the land in the Western Edge Investigation area will be carefully examined. The Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is undertaking a scoping and preliminary investigations program into the suitability of the Western Edge Investigation Area for potential future uses. These potential future uses are not predetermined or limited other than through the direction of the ACT Planning Strategy (Action No. 1.2.1 – ‘*Undertake environmental, infrastructure and planning studies for the western edge of the city to identify suitable areas for a range of uses.*’) and includes consideration of whether areas may be suitable for environmental conservation.

More detailed studies, investigations and surveys will be needed in the coming years to refine where specific uses might occur, and this work will support advice to government. Relevant information will also be considered by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna. In addition, the provisions of the Commonwealth’s *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) together with the ACT’s *Planning and Development Act 2007* provide for consideration of environmental values.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Questions without notice taken on notice

Suburban Land Agency—sales

Ms Berry (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Hanson on Wednesday, 9 February 2022*):

Land and property reports do not represent targets for single dwelling blocks. The 2021-22 to 2025-26 Indicative Land Release Program provides the estimated dwelling mix to be released. It shows 25 percent of releases, or 4,171 dwellings, as single dwelling blocks out of a total of 16,434 dwellings.

The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) and Ginninderry joint venture manage the delivery of single residential dwellings and other release types year to year and as part of a complex delivery strategy. They perform well against the ILRP estimates. The makeup of releases each year depends on a variety of factors but is designed so that overall ILRP estimates are met. For example, the estimate for releases by the SLA and Ginninderry joint venture for 2021-20 was 1,194 single residential blocks. They released 1,113 blocks which represented 93 percent of the estimated releases for that year.

As at the end of the second quarter of 2021-22 financial year (31 December 2021), the SLA and Ginninderry joint venture had released 218 single residential blocks. This exceeded the forecast of releases for the first half of the year, which was 173 blocks. These figures do not include private sector releases as they are separate to the Indicative Land Release Program.

Further releases are scheduled for the remainder of the financial year in Whitlam, Jacka and Macnamara. The SLA and Ginninderry joint venture will continue to closely monitor statutory planning processes and potential risks to the release of single residential blocks.

COVID-19 pandemic—Check In CBR app

Mr Barr (*in reply to a supplementary question by Ms Castley on Wednesday, 9 February 2022*):

The Chief Health Officer determined that places such as licensed bars and restaurants continue to present a risk of transmission due to the high number of case and outbreaks associated with these places since August 2021. Throughout the pandemic, residential aged care facilities (RACFs) were not required to use the Check In CBR app as operators of the facilities are able to maintain appropriate visitor and staff records. However it was, and still is, strongly encouraged that they do so. RACFs have also been advised to continue to screen all staff and visitors before entering their facility using the screening questions in the Chief Health Officer advice for high-risk settings.

Municipal services—footpaths

Mr Steel (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Mr Hanson on Wednesday, 9 February 2022*):

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) receives many requests each year for the construction of new community paths to provide improved connectivity within the existing community path network. Each year a program of capital works is carried out across the network using funding allocated through the ACT Budget for renewal and new investment.

Allocation of this funding is approached strategically to meet the community's needs and support the ACT Government's policy direction. This includes adding new connections and replacing, renewing or upgrading existing connections as needed. It also involves investing in strategic transport corridors through the construction of new shared path connections along trunk routes.

Once funded, design and construction is undertaken by private contractors and some works are delivered in larger contracts throughout the year to ensure efficiency.

In recent years, there have been high levels of investment in path projects both through Budget initiatives and also additional stimulus funding provided throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2020 more than 50 new paths have been constructed across all regions of Canberra. The paths chosen for construction were based on those listed on the community path priority list. The individual projects are listed at <https://www.act.gov.au/fasttrack>

Priority has also been given to investing in maintenance of the existing network. In order to achieve this, as part of the Jobs for Canberrans program, our team has

significantly increased inspection and assessment of the community path network to assist in proactively identifying locations for renewal based on condition assessment. As a result, during 2021-22 there has been an increased emphasis on renewing and maintaining existing paths to ensure our paths remain safe and in good condition.

In regard to the footpaths listed in the November 2021 report, due to internal resource diversion associated with competing priorities, the priority list had not been fully updated as works were undertaken. This has since been addressed to ensure up-to-date account of works undertaken in response to community feedback.

Roads—Gungahlin

Mr Steel (*in reply to a question by Ms Castley on Wednesday, 9 February 2022*):

Due to external consultancy resource unavailability, TCCS utilised an internal Traffic Management Engineer to undertake the assessment of the Efkarpidis/Gungahlin Place intersection.

Municipal services—firewood deliveries

Mr Steel (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Cain on Thursday, 10 February 2022*):

I can confirm that there is no approved firewood delivery service in operation by Transport Canberra and City Services. There are no plans to commence such services to the community. The subject of the constituent's complaint is currently undergoing an independent investigation.

Fadden Hills Pond—water quality

Mr Steel (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Ms Castley on Thursday, 10 February 2022*):

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) undertakes sediment removal, draining of ponds and water quality monitoring in accordance with the applicable Environmental Authorisation, Environmental Management Plan and industry best practice.

Regular inspections were carried out to detect changes in the colour and clarity of water, algal blooms, appearance of surface scum and odours which can give a good indication of water quality.

Water quality sampling for turbidity was not undertaken prior to draining because work involving disturbance of sediment had not commenced, and the water quality was observed as acceptable. The sediment in the pond was allowed to settle prior to draining and care was taken to ensure sediments were not being drained along with the water.

Prior to and whilst draining the pond, the water quality was regularly observed and found acceptable. During the sediment removal process for Fadden Pond there were

no water outflows, ensuring the sediment was contained within the pond and additional turbidity testing was not a requirement.

The practice of chemical dosing can improve water quality however other methods are generally pursued which do not introduce chemicals into the water ways, for example, allowing sufficient time for sediment to settle or employing media filtration and screening.

TCCS regularly review procedures for water quality monitoring and turbidity reduction during draining and sediment removal to ensure all maintenance work continues to be carried out in accordance with Environmental Authorisation, Environmental Management Plan and industry best practice.