



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

TENTH ASSEMBLY

1 JUNE 2022

www.hansard.act.gov.au

Wednesday, 1 June 2022

Absence of Clerk.....	1435
Petitions:	
Roads—Narrabundah—petition 13-22.....	1435
Roads—Lyneham—petition 7-22.....	1436
Motion to take note of petitions	1437
Roads—Narrabundah—petition 13-22	1437
Roads—Lyneham—petition 7-22	1437
Roads—Narrabundah—petition 13-22	1437
Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee	1440
Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee.....	1440
Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee	1441
Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee	1442
Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee.....	1442
Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee.....	1443
Public Accounts—Standing Committee	1443
Federal election 2022—impact on the ACT (Ministerial statement).....	1444
COVID-19 pandemic—update (Ministerial statement).....	1451
Reconciliation Week (Ministerial statement)	1457
Roads—emissions reductions (Ministerial statement).....	1466
Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022—consultation draft (Ministerial statement)	1470
Ministerial arrangements	1475
Questions without notice:	
Building—combustible cladding.....	1475
Calwell High School—safety	1476
Sport—community wellbeing.....	1477
Influenza—vaccination.....	1477
Labor Party—Labor Club donations	1479
Trees—urban canopy.....	1482
Economy—federal government.....	1483
ACT Health—elective surgery	1485
Gungahlin—swimming pool	1487
ACT Health—nurses	1488
Land—Macnamara	1488
Access Canberra—Dickson service centre.....	1490
Government—infrastructure investment	1491
Supplementary answers to questions without notice:	
ACT Health—elective surgery	1493
Calwell High School—safety	1493
Building—combustible cladding.....	1494
ACT Health—elective surgery	1494
Papers.....	1494
Leave of absence.....	1494
Papers.....	1495
Financial Management Act—consolidated financial report	1496
Capital works programs—progress report	1496
Leave of absence.....	1496

Schools—teachers	1496
Gaming—online gambling and advertising	1509
Public Accounts—Standing Committee	1523
Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee.....	1523
Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee	1524
Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee	1525
Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee.....	1525
Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee.....	1526
Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee	1526
Adjournment:	
Municipal services—footpaths	1527
Seniors—health and wellbeing	1528
Transport—Brisbane Metro electric buses	1529
Mrs Rosemary Lissimore—tribute	1530
Environment—Holt micro-forest	1531
Yerrabi electorate—community organisations	1533
Federal election 2022—election day	1534

Wednesday, 1 June 2022

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.

Absence of Clerk

Madam Speaker informed the Assembly that, due to the absence of the Clerk, the Clerk Assistant would act as Clerk.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Roads—Narrabundah—petition 13-22

By Ms Vassarotti, from 651 residents:

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly that:

1. The road infrastructure in parts of the inner south of Canberra was designed over sixty years ago when the level of population and car ownership was significantly less than today;
2. The growth of urban infill within the Inner South, including large developments in the Red Hill area, has contributed significantly to the congestion of the old road system as well as leading to a greater incidence of speeding traffic;
3. Local citizens, parents of school children and residents of aged care facilities in the inner south have expressed significant concerns regarding the danger to pedestrians when attempting to cross our unsafe roads that can no longer meet the needs of a rapidly expanding population;

4. The risk grows daily that a child or an aged resident may lose their life whilst attempting to cross our streets, in particular at the dangerous intersection of La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call upon the Government to:

undertake to improve our local road infrastructure by slowing the traffic at the approaches to the La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent intersection, including surrounding streets, and implementing measures to lessen the current high traffic congestion within the area.

Roads—Lyneham—petition 7-22

By Ms Vassarotti, from 613 residents:

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly:

Brigalow Street is a busy route for Lyneham Primary students walking or cycling to and from school. It is a part of the Transport Canberra and City Services' (TCCS) Active Streets for Schools Program.

There is an unsafe pedestrian crossing at 136 Brigalow Street (Brindabella College) that impedes active travel and puts vulnerable road users at risk. Cars cross over the footpath at a makeshift pedestrian crossing when the footpath is busy with students and families from both schools. Cars often fail to yield and block the footpath.

The car park traffic restricts the active travel amenity of the community, especially Lyneham Primary students. It contributes to congestion and adversely impacts the safe and efficient functioning of local traffic, including public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call upon the Government to:

- a) Ensure a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) of the pedestrian crossing and car park development is completed, including a survey of traffic and impacts on all road users, including on-road public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.
- b) Use this information to review and find a safe and appropriate solution that facilitates safe pedestrian and cyclist movements and gives precedence to active travel and public transport operations as per Section 5.11 of the TCCS Guidelines for Transport Impact Assessment.
- c) Ensure an opportunity for community consultation, including liaison with Lyneham Primary School, families and community.

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

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

Motion to take note of petitions

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

That the petitions and responses so lodged be noted.

Roads—Narrabundah—petition 13-22

Roads—Lyneham—petition 7-22

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.03): I would like to speak briefly about the two petitions sponsored by my colleague Rebecca Vassarotti, one of the Greens members for Kurrajong. I know Rebecca is very pleased to bring these to the Assembly. I am really pleased to see them too. We are hearing more and more concern and interest from Canberrans about encouraging active transport and making sure that we have really safe streets for pedestrians and vulnerable road users.

It is really, really great to see these voices coming to the Assembly, to give us a chance to think about these. I know we have done some really great work here about increasing our slower speed zones, getting more slower streets around Canberra and really reforming our built environment to make sure that we are encouraging children to ride to school. We are making sure that older people can walk around on our footpaths and that we are keeping those repaired, and just making sure that we have a really, really good environment that suits our people and encourages active transport.

It is great to see these petitions. I have actually met with many of these petitioners and I understand the concerns. I think it is really good for us. Sometimes, simply when people want better crossings, that alone might be a really good reason; that alone might encourage them to walk and ride to places they would not otherwise do. So it is great that we see this democratic process in play. I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes.

Roads—Narrabundah—petition 13-22

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (10.04): I thank Timothy DeWan and the over 600 residents who have signed this petition, in addition to the over 100 people who responded when I put up this issue on my website. I also thank Timothy for his time, passion and advocacy in addressing the problematic intersection, highlighted by his five-minute video, released last year, titled *10 Seconds More*. The video gives vivid clarity to the serious safety issues that local residents in Red Hill have been raising concerns about for years. The petition points out the glaring fact that the intersection at La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent is dangerous and no longer fit for purpose. It was designed and built at a time when the focus was on driving and less on pedestrians and active travel.

Despite repeated requests for pedestrian priority measures to be taken at this intersection, this Labor-Greens government has repeatedly ignored the plight of this community and those affected by the traffic conditions and the dangers that this intersection presents. Many parents have been forced to drive their children to school rather than let them negotiate this intersection on foot, which is described by Timothy as “a death trap”. Older residents who use mobility aids or those who require wheelchair access or those who just want to walk the streets are also concerned for their safety over the impact of speeding cars and increased traffic.

It is also of note that there are a couple of aged-care homes within the vicinity, and some residents tell me that they are traumatised by regularly witnessing vehicle accidents and near misses almost on a daily basis. You only have to look at the coverage by *CityNews*, the *Riotact*, *Canberra Weekly* and the *Canberra Times*, as well as the discussions in the local residents’ newsletters and Facebook groups, over the past few years to fathom the extent of concerns over this particular intersection. Just last week I was sent yet another series of photos of a vehicle accident at this site.

Since my time as local member for this area, I have repeatedly brought this to the attention of this Labor-Greens government. My most recent letter to Minister Steel, which was in February this year—the latest of several about this intersection—did not even warrant a response. Local groups, including the Griffith Narrabundah Community Association, Red Hill Primary School P&C, Safe Streets to School Canberra, and many, many local constituents that I have met with, have all expressed their dismay at Labor’s and the Greens’ lack of action, especially when it comes to the safety of vulnerable road users. That is, of course, a stark contrast to what Ms Clay has just spoken about. This government’s own Active Streets for Schools program encourages schoolchildren to get active on the commute to and from school by riding, walking or scootering. Yet this intersection’s current hazards would seem to be starkly in contrast to that initiative.

Whilst I wholeheartedly support this petition—after all, I am the only local member that has been raising this for years and years—it is galling that Minister Vassarotti is sponsoring this. She is a minister in this government, as well as the local member—literally in the cabinet that makes the decisions, that allocates the funding, that supposedly gets things done. It is a sad, sad, indictment and it is absolutely and abundantly clear that Minister Vassarotti has no influence whatsoever on getting things done in her own electorate.

The latest from Minister Steel is that there will be more studies done and they will be public. The residents are sick of more studies. They want action and they need it now. They are, rightly, concerned that if this intersection is not fixed soon the safety of vulnerable road users, and in particular school students that go to the primary school nearby, is going to continue to be at risk. The issue has dragged on for years, and the subsequent inaction by this Labor-Greens government is unacceptable. It is absolutely clear that every member of the Labor-Greens government knows how to talk the talk, but when it comes to action, they go starkly missing.

If Minister Vassarotti, as a minister in this cabinet, cannot even get basic outcomes on municipal services that impact the safety of her constituents, then, really, what is she

doing in that place? I hope that now that this petition has been signed—and I note Ms Clay’s comments that she will, at least, keep on top of her Greens colleagues in cabinet who are making these decisions—we see some action as soon as possible.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (10.09): I was not planning on speaking to this until the government responded formally; but I will, to correct the inaccurate statement by Ms Lee in relation to this matter.

Ms Lee interjecting—

MR STEEL: The ACT government has been working for some time with stakeholders around the Narrabundah area to discuss options for the traffic issues, and getting the evidence base to inform improvements to traffic conditions in the Carnegie Crescent and La Perouse intersection area and beyond.

Ms Lee interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lee, that is enough.

MR STEEL: We have already taken action in relation to some of their requests by installing peafowl signage around Narrabundah, which of course responds to their concerns about peafowl and the impact of traffic on that animal population in the area. Following a meeting with the Narrabundah Peafowlers in March 2021—and I met with them myself, Madam Speaker—it was agreed that Roads ACT would conduct a study to better understand the traffic issues in the area and recommend the treatment options that would be required. A consultant was engaged to investigate the recommended options to improve safety in the area. The study has now been completed and a report, with recommendations to inform discussions with the Narrabundah Peafowlers and other community groups, has been prepared.

Following that, I can now provide the Assembly with some information about the measures that we want to discuss with the stakeholders in the area. The measures that are proposed are the installation of speed humps on each approach to the La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent intersection; refuge islands; and upgrades to the wildlife hazard peafowl signs. A pedestrian crossing facility is also proposed, particularly to support schoolchildren who are crossing over to Red Hill Primary School. They are looking at the 50-kilometre speed limit as well.

TCCS will be engaging with key community stakeholders about this specific proposal, including the Red Hill Primary School—they have already been talking with them for some time—as well as the Narrabundah Peafowlers, the Griffith Narrabundah Community Association, and the Old Narrabundah Community Council, who have expressed an interest in traffic management in the Narrabundah area. That consultation will be occurring on those measures. Following that, we will look at implementing those measures.

Ms Lee mentioned the school safety program, Active Streets for Schools. That program has heavily engaged with the Red Hill Primary School community. That is

one of the reasons that, under that program, we will be putting in a pedestrian crossing facility for students in the area. So the government has been listening. We have been taking action to get the evidence base to inform measures which will improve the safety of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users in the Narrabundah area. We are getting on with the work.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee Report 4

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.13): I present the following report:

Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee—
Report 4—*Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021*, dated 31 May
2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

The Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality held public hearings on 21 February, 22 February, 24 February, 1 March and 3 March, via videoconference, with Ministers Barr, Gentleman, Steel and Cheyne, and their accompanying directorate officials. A total of 68 questions were lodged during the inquiry. The committee has made 10 recommendations. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the ACT government ministers and others who participated in or otherwise assisted this inquiry. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee Report 4

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.14): I present the following report:

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Inquiry
into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021*, dated May 2022, together with a
copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I rise to speak to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion's report on the *Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021*. This is the committee's fourth report for the current Assembly. During its inquiry, the committee examined all or part of five annual reports for the 2020-21 financial year and one report for the 2021 calendar year.

The committee held three public hearings during the inquiry. Due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, these were conducted via videoconference. During the hearings the committee heard from ACT government ministers, directorate officials and others about a range of issues affecting the ACT community.

The report makes 26 recommendations to the ACT government, covering several portfolio areas. A total of 56 questions were lodged during the inquiry. This includes 31 questions taken on notice during the hearings and 25 questions submitted by members of the committee and other members of the Assembly.

Regrettably, the committee received several late responses to questions. There were also four responses that had not been received as at the date of the committee report. Accordingly, the committee reminds all members to ensure that responses to questions are provided in a timely manner. The committee has made a recommendation to this effect in its report.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank those who participated in or otherwise assisted with this inquiry, including ministers, directorate officials and statutory officers. I commend the committee's report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee Report 3

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.16): I present the following report:

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee—
Report 3—*Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021*, dated 20 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I am speaking about the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity inquiry into annual and financial reports. This is the third report of our committee. This report reflects evidence taken by the committee in relation to the annual and financial reports 2020-21 and presents recommendations arising from examination.

The committee held three public hearings via videoconference. A total of 26 questions were taken and placed on notice during the inquiry. The report makes 12 recommendations on a range of topics, including scope 3 emissions, active travel, weed management, recycling of batteries and solar panels, and energy efficiency in social housing.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone who participated in and assisted this inquiry, including the ministers and directorate officials, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, members' staff and staff of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

I just want to make special note that the committee secretariat at the moment is dealing with a great deal of staff absence due to illness, and we really, really, appreciate the way that everybody is stepping in and helping us out. You are doing a marvellous job, and hopefully we will be back to normal soon. I would also like to thank my colleagues, Dr Paterson, who unfortunately is away today, and Ms Castley, for their contributions to this inquiry. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee Report 6

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (10.18): I present the following report:

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee—Report 6—*Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21*, dated 26 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing. The committee held public hearings on 21 February and on 2 and 4 March this year, 2022. At the hearings the committee heard from ACT government ministers and accompanying directorate officials. As a consequence of its work, the committee has made 10 recommendations to the government.

On behalf of the committee, I thank everybody who contributed to this inquiry, particularly the other members of the committee, Mr Milligan and Mr Pettersson. I extend a particular thanks to our committee secretary, Dr David Monk, who, above being our committee secretary, also plays a senior leadership role throughout the committee support office. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Report 6

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (10.19): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 6—*Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21*, dated 19 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. The committee held public hearings on 21 to 23 February and 16 March this year. At the hearings the committee heard from ACT government ministers and their accompanying directorate officials, statutory officers and members of governing boards. The committee has made, as is apparent in the report, 29 recommendations, which I commend to the government to review.

On behalf of the committee, I thank everyone who contributed to this inquiry, particularly our secretariat for their professional and competent service: Ms Kathleen de Kleuver and Ms Miona Ikeda. I would also like to thank Dr Paterson and Mr Braddock for their committee-level support. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Report 10

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.21): I present the following report:

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee—Report 10—*Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021*, dated 31 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services. The committee held public hearings on 24 and 25 February and 4 March. At the hearings the committee heard from ACT government ministers and their accompanying directorate officials. The committee made 22 recommendations.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this inquiry and to once again thank our very hardworking team of staff who have pulled this together. I thank the other members of the committee, Ms Suzanne Orr and Mr Mark Parton. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee Report 8

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.22): I present the following report:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 8—*Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21*, dated 18 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the Tenth Assembly. During its inquiry, the public accounts committee was required to examine all or part of nine annual and financial reports for 2020-21. The committee held three public hearings via videoconference and a total of 52 questions were taken and placed on notice during the inquiry.

The committee's report made nine recommendations relating to the ACT government, Icon Water, the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, Major Projects Canberra and the Office of the Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank those who participated in or otherwise assisted this inquiry. This includes the ACT government, ministers, directorate officials and statutory officers. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Federal election 2022—impact on the ACT Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.23): Last month's federal election represents a once-in-a-generation shift in Australia's political landscape. Although the final results in the Senate are not yet finalised, it is clear from the house results that the change of government opens up a significant opportunity for a better long-term future for Canberra.

For the best part of a decade the ACT was overlooked or treated as a second-class jurisdiction. The Australian public service was cut back, demoralised, decentralised and contracted out. Our jurisdiction did not receive its fair share of funding to invest in infrastructure and services that our growing city needs, all too often leaving the territory government to do the heavy lifting without a federal partner. Efforts to restore territory rights were consistently blocked.

Something had to give and, thankfully, the election has delivered that change—a new Labor government that values the things Canberrans care about, including supporting public health care and public education, real action on climate change and an end to the climate wars, and support for our most vulnerable.

Across Australia we saw federal electorates shift to more socially progressive and integrity-driven parties and candidates, and a rejection of the ultra-conservative politics of division and fear. There could not have been a more resounding rejection of that division and fear—most egregiously whipped up during the federal campaign in the form of attacking marginalised and vulnerable trans kids, a campaign that has brought long-term shame to the party involved.

At a local level, Canberrans have again shown their support for Labor candidates, with the re-election of Alicia Payne, Andrew Leigh and David Smith to the House of Representatives, with each receiving a primary and two-party preferred swing towards them. Katy Gallagher was comfortably returned to the Senate and, in a political first for the territories, independent David Pocock is poised to take the second ACT senate spot. The Canberra Liberals become the first major party in 50 years to fail to return a territory senator.

In the house, ACT Labor recorded a 45 per cent primary vote. I note—and I have made this point to the Prime Minister—that it is the highest Labor vote of all jurisdictions and, indeed, the strongest vote for any party in any state or territory across Australia. This result is due to hard work at both the federal and territory level to stand up for this city and to support this community.

The change of government, the election of a federal Labor government, is a significant opportunity for the ACT to achieve progress on a number of reforms and projects that had been blocked or stalled under the previous government. As Chief Minister, I intend to grasp these opportunities, and work has already started.

Since the election I have had the opportunity to engage with the Prime Minister, and subsequently outlined our commitments and joint priorities in writing. I have spoken with federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers, finance minister Katy Gallagher, and energy and climate change minister Chris Bowen, and met yesterday with senator-elect Pocock. I look forward to continuing to engage with our federal counterparts to ensure that our city, our jurisdiction, is no longer relegated to an afterthought by the federal government.

The Australian Labor Party's policy platform for a better future will improve the lives of all Australians. Particularly, its agenda will complement the ACT's progressive legislative agenda and our commitments. Canberrans stand to gain greatly. This includes in areas such as strengthening Medicare, so that it is easier to see a doctor, and improving the aged-care sector to ensure that older Australians are treated with dignity and receive the care they need in the latter stages of their lives.

I have already conveyed to the Prime Minister the territory government's strong support for his commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The ACT looks forward to working collaboratively with the commonwealth and its special envoy, Pat Dodson, to deliver this overdue recognition of, and voice for, Australia's First Nations people.

Federal Labor's platform also includes making child care cheaper, to take pressure off families, and to give parents, particularly women, more choice about their employment. We know that childcare costs are too often the main hurdle to preventing a return to work. This policy is not only good for families and for women; it is good for the broader economy.

Canberrans will clearly benefit from a federal government that does not hold the Australian public service in contempt—a government that will put a stop to inefficient

cuts and outsourcing which has shifted much work outside Canberra. I note that, right up to the bitter end, former Prime Minister Morrison was blaming public servants for policy and delivery failings, and planned to cut another \$2.7 billion out of the public service to pay for election pork-barrelling elsewhere in Australia.

It is now, frankly, a relief to have a federal government that respects the role of the Australian public service in serving our nation, a government that understands the need for the public service to be primarily based in the national capital, and a government that values the hard work and dedication of public servants.

Like the territory government, the federal government understands that a secure job is about more than paying off a mortgage, paying the rent or putting dinner on the table; it is about giving people meaning and purpose in their lives. That is why the federal Labor Party went to the election with a commitment to create more secure local jobs, by investing in fee-free TAFE and more university places—something that the ACT will benefit from, perhaps more, on a per capita basis. than most other jurisdictions—and by introducing and arguing for better pay and conditions for workers. That episode towards the end of the campaign, with the argument over a wage rise for those on the minimum wage, truly typified the difference between the two parties.

Locally, it is why federal Labor committed to contribute to our new major CIT campus at Woden. This is a practical example of the sort of cooperation that we will see in the years ahead. They specifically targeted their support to help at-risk students to have secure accommodation, complete their training and get a good job in our labour market. That is, again, a strong values statement that we warmly welcome.

The federal government will also work with businesses to invest in manufacturing and renewables. For the jurisdiction that has the highest per capita uptake of electric vehicles, we are delighted that they will introduce Australia's first national electric vehicle strategy—something that has been stalled for a decade under the previous government.

Like the territory government, the federal government sees real climate action not only as an essential step to protect this planet, but also as an opportunity to support the growth of new sectors of the economy and the creation of new jobs—importantly, whilst ensuring that no-one is left behind.

The ACT government supports a strong job creation program in Canberra by investing in the infrastructure that our growing city needs. As we are all familiar with in this place, and as we debate regularly, we have invested in important projects across health, education and sustainable transport. This includes the expansion of the Canberra Hospital, the building and upgrading of local schools and TAFE, and extending our city's sustainable transport network.

Of course, these projects are not only creating jobs during their construction phase; they are also allowing us to hire more healthcare professionals and teachers as we work to achieve our target of 250,000 local jobs by 2025. We are well on track to reach that goal.

Over the past decade it has been very clear that the ACT government has been doing the heavy lifting as we deliver the territory's largest-ever infrastructure program. It is worth noting that commonwealth infrastructure spending in the ACT was the lowest of any state or territory under the former Liberal-National government. It is simply a fact.

Our jurisdiction has around 1.7 per cent of Australia's population; so, yes, we are a small jurisdiction. But we should still receive our fair share of national infrastructure spending. Yet our 1.7 per cent of the population received only 0.28 per cent of federal infrastructure funding in the Morrison government's last budget. That was a pattern that was reflected through the course of the last federal government. We did not think it was good enough and, clearly, the people of Canberra did not think it was good enough. It was clear why we were being overlooked, but the electoral implications of that might finally have hit home to the Liberal Party after the vote on 21 May.

From here, the territory now has an important opportunity to work productively with a new federal government. I have made no secret of the fact that we will be seeking a larger and fairer share of the national infrastructure investment pipeline to ensure that we can continue to deliver the services Canberra needs, mainly as the national capital but also as a growing city in its own right, and a major regional hub for around 800,000 Australians.

My federal colleagues have committed to a range of important projects in the ACT, including delivering an urgent-care clinic in Canberra's south that will, similar to our nurse-led walk-in centres, make it easier for Canberrans to seek medical care when and where they need it, whilst taking pressure off our hospitals. As I have touched on earlier, the new federal government seeks to build on and strengthen our Medicare system, through these centres and other initiatives, and does not seek to tear it down or scale it back.

The new federal government will also fund upgrades at nine schools across the city, and deliver three community batteries that will complement our work that is underway at a territory level with the Big Canberra Battery project, helping to reduce emissions, lower power costs for households and create jobs.

There have been further infrastructure commitments: as I discussed earlier, partnering with the territory government to invest in a youth foyer to provide student accommodation for at-risk young people, as part of the CIT Woden project; commitments to partner with the territory government to upgrade the Gorman House arts precinct and the Weston Creek Tennis Club; partnering with the territory government on the construction of the garden city cycle route through Canberra's inner north; and funding design work for a permanent sports arena on the University of Canberra campus.

Of course, one of the most talked-about issues in the lead-up to the federal election was the future of the Australian Institute of Sport, and particularly the short-term future of the AIS Arena. As members are aware, for close to two years now, the arena has not been available for major sporting or entertainment events due to the former

government's refusal to accept responsibility for maintaining its own asset. That left the Canberra Capitals without a permanent home and the city without a venue for major indoor entertainment activities.

During the early stages of the pandemic, the territory government spent close to \$400,000 to enable the site to be fit for use as a COVID-19 mass vaccination hub. That hub closed yesterday, after providing nearly 300,000 vaccinations. It is now time for the federal government to invest in restoring that facility, so we welcome the federal Labor government's commitment to invest \$15 million to appropriately upgrade the arena and to go beyond ensuring that it is just safe but to provide a higher quality audience and player experience.

One suggestion I put forward is that I do not believe the arena has ever been climate controlled, so it gets very cold in winter and very hot in summer. My suggestion to my federal colleagues, as part of that \$15 million upgrade, is to also look at climate control in the venue.

This important investment will not only significantly extend the life span of the arena, but also enables us to have a broader conversation about the future of the AIS precinct, its potential renewal, and the opportunity to better utilise the land in that precinct to support improved sporting infrastructure and improved community amenity. I look forward to further engaging with the federal government on this matter, and note its willingness to invest in its own assets, as opposed to the last 10 years when the federal government shirked that responsibility.

There are, of course, many issues that require constructive cross-government collaboration, including some of the big issues that we know Canberrans care about. The last few years have been challenging for everyone, as we have responded to the pandemic and focused on our economic recovery.

As requested by Prime Minister Albanese, the first meeting between the Prime Minister, premiers and chief ministers will take place in a few weeks time. There is clearly a lot to discuss and coordinate, including the ongoing management of the pandemic as we head into the winter months. Of course, national health reform, schools reform and a new national skills agreement will be significant agenda items in the months and years ahead.

The response to climate change will also dominate public policy in the next few years. May's federal election result, thankfully, should signal the end of the "climate wars". It is fair to say that, for the past decade, the states and territories have been left to do the heavy lifting on real climate action. For a decade the federal coalition government coasted on the coat-tails of the states and territories, and throughout they were brandishing lumps of coal in parliament—sometimes even auctioning them off, I understand, at Liberal Party fundraisers. That era is over, and many Canberrans and an overwhelming majority of Australians are pleased that that is the case.

Locally, as you are all aware, we have led the nation as the first jurisdiction to reach 100 per cent renewable electricity in 2020, and we continue diligently to work towards our target of net zero emissions by 2045 at the latest. This jurisdiction, one of

the smallest in the nation, is doing more than our bit, both because we recognise how essential the rapid transition is and because we want to grasp the “first mover” advantages that come from establishing new sectors of our economy in the territory. We can now look forward to working with a federal government that is equally committed to addressing climate change through an investment in renewable technologies that reduce emissions, that strengthen the economy and that create jobs.

Addressing racism is another important issue nationally. The ACT government supports the National Anti-Racism Framework. That is why I am so pleased that the new federal government has committed funding, \$7½ million, to the Australian Human Rights Commission to complete the development of this framework and implement a comprehensive national anti-racism plan. I can say that the ACT will do its part locally, and we will work with other jurisdictions to tackle racism and foster a more inclusive community.

As I mentioned earlier, we know that the territory has not been receiving its fair share of infrastructure investment. However, this is not the only area of commonwealth, state and territory financial relations. As Chief Minister and Treasurer of a small jurisdiction, I also have a strong interest in seeing a fit-for-purpose GST distribution system that is fair and equitable, and that ensures we can continue to invest in our local community and deliver important job-creating projects.

One of our most significant infrastructure projects is the extension of the light rail network through the parliamentary triangle and onwards to Woden. This has already required, and will continue to require, engagement between agencies and between levels of government to progress the design, construction and operation of the network’s second stage, particularly the complexities that come with National Capital Authority controlled land. We look forward to a higher level of collaboration and cooperation in the next stages of delivery for this project.

As I touched on earlier, we know that our city plays a very significant role in the nation, as the national capital and the home of the Australian public service. However, it is also important to recognise that our city is a significant regional hub for a significant portion of south-east New South Wales. The investment and services that we are delivering inside the territory borders in areas like health care are used not only by Canberrans but by communities across our region. It is important that this is acknowledged and considered in federal financial relations, in relations with the New South Wales government and, more broadly, by the Canberra community in recognising both the benefits and challenges that come from that regional service delivery responsibility.

Naturally, we have shared interests with our New South Wales neighbours. These include a faster rail service between Canberra and Sydney, better freight access to Canberra airport, and improvements to the Monaro and Barton highways. In that light, I am particularly looking forward to working with the re-elected, and highly effective, member for Eden-Monaro, and now Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, Kristy McBain, to continue to strengthen the Canberra region. We go from having a territories minister based in Western Australia to having a territories minister representing the electorate that entirely surrounds the ACT.

I think we are better placed than ever to be able to work with a commonwealth territories minister who understands the ACT. I warmly welcome Kristy McBain's re-election, with a massive swing in her favour, and her appointment as Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories.

Of course, the ACT government has long been opposed to what can only be described as an ideologically and politically motivated decentralisation of the Australian public service from Canberra. To put it frankly, public servants who want to live here, who have their children in school here and who have local community ties with Canberra were sick of the constant uncertainty applied by the likes of Barnaby Joyce and Bridget McKenzie to their employment future and the future of their lives. It is a significant relief for those people that they, and indeed the many businesses and workers who rely on them, will now be treated with respect and granted greater certainty over their working lives.

Perhaps the matter that best surmises the former coalition government's disdain for the ACT is the issue of territory rights. Of course, back in the 90s the Andrews bill was enacted to prevent the Northern Territory and the ACT parliaments from ever debating voluntary assisted dying legislation. In the time since that bill has passed, all Australian states have now enacted legislation in this area, and the territories are now the only places in Australia not able to introduce such schemes.

Every state across Australia has now passed laws enabling voluntary assisted dying in specific circumstances, with New South Wales the final state to pass its own legislation less than a fortnight ago. In doing so, I noted at the press conference that that group of politicians representing all political parties then passed the mantle to the territories to continue this important national reform. But before we can do that, we need the federal parliament to treat us with some respect. There are 700,000 Australians who live in the territories, and their parliaments cannot debate this issue because of an outdated act of the federal parliament.

Of course, with the passing of the New South Wales legislation, this became a federal election issue, so it was no surprise that, when asked, Mr Morrison said that he would not have changed the current situation if he had continued as Prime Minister. Let us not forget, of course, that when this issue came up for a vote in the federal Senate in 2018, one of our own senators voted against restoring territory rights, despite knowing that this was something that the overwhelming majority of his constituency wanted. We saw the result a week and a half ago—the build-up of annoyance at votes being cast by that senator against territory rights.

I think we can say conclusively now that Canberrans are sick of being treated like second-class citizens. We know that Canberrans, like so many Australians, care deeply about this issue, and they have every right to feel frustrated and disappointed by the political inaction over the past decade. They voted overwhelmingly a week and a half ago to change that, and we look forward to seeing that happen.

I am delighted that the Prime Minister has indicated his support—well before the election—for territory rights. The election of a more socially progressive parliament, in the house and the Senate, and having two ACT senators, both of them—our very

limited Senate representation—actually respecting the ACT’s right to make its own laws, puts us in a much stronger position to see the Andrews bill scrapped. This is long overdue.

In anticipation of having our rights restored in this federal parliamentary term, I am pleased to announce that work will commence on the preparation of a consultation document and draft legislation to enable voluntary assisted dying in the territory. This will begin with a comparative examination of the laws passed in all of the states in recent years, and it will draw from the evidence and community views heard during the end of life choices inquiry held in the last term of this place.

The federal election result is cause for optimism. It signals a new approach to territory-commonwealth relations that will be more productive and more collaborative. So many roadblocks to reform have been removed. I am confident that this will result in better outcomes for our community and movement on issues that have frustrated Canberrans for years.

I look forward to working with my federal colleagues to deliver the infrastructure and services that this growing city needs, whilst progressing all of the social and legislative reforms that matter for our community. I present the following paper:

Federal Election—Impact on the ACT—Ministerial statement, 1 June 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

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

COVID-19 pandemic—update Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (10.53): I rise today to provide the Assembly with my fifth update of 2022 on the COVID-19 situation in the ACT and the actions taken by the government to protect the health and wellbeing of Canberrans.

I would like to start by once again thanking Canberrans for their continuing efforts to adhere to the public health advice and protect the community from COVID-19. Since my last update on 3 May, the COVID-19 situation in the ACT has again remained relatively consistent. However, our health system and many other parts of the community have faced additional pressures due to workforce shortages.

As we move through the current winter period, I encourage all Canberrans to continue practising COVID smart behaviours, including getting tested if any respiratory symptoms develop, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory viruses.

Over the past month the COVID-19 situation across Australia has again remained relatively stable. The ACT government continues to engage with other jurisdictions to monitor the public health response and health system capacity across the country.

Importantly, since my last update there has been a change in federal government. We look forward, as the Chief Minister has said, to working with the new Albanese Labor government—a government that truly cares about people, that will not shirk its responsibilities, and that will engage with the states and territories constructively and supportively as we continue to manage the pandemic.

In the ACT, as at 8 pm on 30 May, there has been a total of 131,938 cases since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. There are 4,509 active cases, with 93 COVID patients admitted to hospital, four of whom are in intensive care. I am pleased to say that the number in hospital has come down today. Sadly, there have been 63 deaths since the start of the pandemic, and the ACT government expresses its sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of these people. As at 9 am on 31 May, the ACT had conducted more than one million negative tests, and there are 1,331 individuals who have declared as household contacts in the ACT.

The COVID Care@Home program provided by Canberra Health Services has had more than 85,000 patients referred to the program since August 2021, with more than 6½ thousand patients having direct phone contact and subsequent medical assessment. Of all patients referred, more than 39,000 have accessed the optional MyChart phone app for home communication and care.

Supply of oximeters and thermometers to those deemed moderate to high risk continues, as does antiviral therapy for COVID. This is in line with the COVID-19 national task force guidelines. These medications include Paxlovid, Molnupiravir and, where necessary, intravenous Remdesivir.

The listing of these oral antiviral agents on the PBS has allowed general practice prescribing in the community. These medications have been generally well embraced by GPs and community pharmacies. I thank them from both a personal and professional perspective for supporting our continued strong response to COVID here in the ACT.

Between August 2021 and May 2022 there have been more than 120,000 infections documented, with a hospitalisation rate of between 0.2 and 0.3 per cent, which is much lower than many other developed nations. This reflects the great work that the people of the ACT have done in embracing vaccination and public health advice.

The ACT's world-leading COVID-19 vaccination program continues to provide Canberrans with strong protection from the risks of COVID-19. I am pleased to report that in the ACT 80.6 per cent of five- to 11-year-olds have been vaccinated with a first dose of the vaccine, and 68.1 per cent are up to date with their vaccination, having received a second dose. 97.3 per cent of all Canberrans aged five years and older have now completed their primary vaccination course, and 76.6 per cent of eligible Canberrans, those aged 16 and older, have now received a booster or third dose.

We have also been providing winter booster doses to eligible Canberrans. These additional booster doses will ensure that people at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are as protected as possible as we head into the winter season.

Last week the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, ATAGI, updated its advice on eligibility for winter doses. Canberrans can now receive a second booster dose if they are aged 65 and over; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and aged 50 years and over; a resident of aged or disability care settings; a person with an immunocompromising condition; a person with a disability who has significant health needs or multiple comorbidities; or a person with severe obesity or who is severely underweight. As of 30 May, 32,308 eligible Canberrans have received their winter booster. I strongly encourage everyone who is eligible to receive a first or second booster dose to come forward to boost their protection.

COVID-19 has persisted in the Canberra community and our hospitals are experiencing a high demand for healthcare services. The ACT's high vaccination coverage and lower demand for vaccination mean that our vaccination staff can now be redeployed to provide support to other areas of the health system. After administering more than 288,000 vaccine doses since September 2021, the AIS Arena mass vaccination clinic closed its doors yesterday, 31 May. Other ACT government COVID-19 vaccine clinics, including the access and sensory clinic and Equity to Access program, will continue to operate for people who require these specialised services.

I was sorry not to be able to make it out to the AIS clinic yesterday to thank the amazing staff in person. I would like to take the opportunity now to express my deep gratitude to the nurses, pharmacists, students, support staff, and infrastructure and ICT teams who made our mass vaccination effort such a success. Your innovation, compassion and dedication have been outstanding. The government cannot thank you enough for your contribution to the Canberra community.

Indeed, I am sure the Assembly will join me in expressing sincere thanks to all of the health professionals and staff in government vaccination clinics, general practices and pharmacies who have worked, and continue to work, to provide Canberrans with the invaluable protection of a COVID-19 vaccine and help the territory to achieve and maintain our world-leading vaccination rates.

Influenza vaccines are particularly important this year. Fewer COVID-19 public health restrictions and the return of international travel had been expected to drive an increase in influenza and other respiratory illnesses this winter, and we are already seeing this impact. So far, the ACT has received more than 600 confirmed reports of influenza in the community this year.

The uptake of flu vaccine in the ACT is very good in comparison to other parts of Australia—including more than half of those over 65 being vaccinated already—and there has been a large increase in uptake across the community over the last two weeks. We will continue to monitor this, with a focus on supporting vaccination for those who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes from influenza infection. Of course,

we also continue to encourage Canberrans to come forward to receive their flu vaccination, and we thank the many employers who provide vaccination programs for their staff.

Free flu vaccinations are available for priority groups through the commonwealth's National Immunisation Program, noting that a consultation fee may be charged in some settings. Many people will get a flu vaccination at their GP at the same time they are receiving other health care. We would encourage GPs to bulk-bill when people attend for a flu vaccination, particularly for those priority groups where the vaccine itself is free, and acknowledge that many GPs already do so.

The priority groups for flu vaccination include children aged six months to less than five years; pregnant women; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged six months and over; people aged 65 years and over; and people with certain medical conditions.

The ACT government provides free flu vaccinations to young children through its early childhood immunisation clinics and for pregnant women at antenatal clinics. We are also offering free flu vaccinations at the COVID-19 access and sensory immunisation clinic for people with disability or living with a mental illness and their families, support staff, volunteers and carers. Eligible people can contact the bookings team on 5124 7700 to arrange an appointment.

In addition, we are ensuring that flu vaccine is available to health providers that support hard to reach or vulnerable client groups, including Directions, Interchange General Practice and Companion House. Canberra Health Services is also offering some people a flu vaccination when they present for other health care, where they are identified as being in a priority group and it is appropriate in the setting. We will continue to consider options for further provision of free flu vaccination, should that be required in the local context.

The ACT government's Equity to Access program also continues to make a vital contribution to our COVID-19 vaccination program. The program ensures that every member of our community can be vaccinated and protected against COVID-19, regardless of their personal circumstances. The Equity to Access program was scheduled to wind-up at the end of April but, due to an increase in eligibility for second boosters, we are now looking at extending this important vaccine service to 30 June.

In 2022, the Equity to Access program has administered a total of 947 COVID-19 vaccine doses through a combination of in-reach vaccinations to homebound individuals and pop-up clinics arranged through non-government partner organisations. Of these, 95 have been winter booster doses and 564 have been first booster doses. In the past month, suburban pop-up clinics have taken place in dispersed locations throughout Canberra, including Kambah, Kaleen, Monash, Braddon, O'Malley and Florey. A pop-up clinic was also available at the Reconciliation Day event at the National Arboretum to enable opportunistic vaccination of eligible people five years and older. About 50 people took the opportunity to get boosters at the pop-up clinic, along with a number of paediatric doses being given.

The Equity to Access program also continues to offer opportunistic vaccinations across the ACT's public and private hospital network to inpatients who are not up to date with their vaccinations. Canberra Health Services also collaborates internally with services such as mental health teams to provide home visits to some community members for a COVID-19 vaccination. In addition, the program has provided in-reach vaccinations to detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, and Canberra Health Services has partnered with Calvary Public Hospital Bruce to deliver a needle phobia clinic for community members who are unable to receive a vaccination through mainstream clinics or primary care.

The clinic also provides an avenue for patients to receive other vaccinations or blood tests to monitor their health while they are under sedation for their COVID-19 vaccinations that they would otherwise be unable to access. Many of the people accessing this clinic have had traumatic experiences during previous vaccination attempts. The feedback we have received tells us that being able to access this dedicated service has had an enormous impact on these individuals' health and wellbeing.

At 11.59 pm on Friday 13 May, the public health directions mandating COVID-19 vaccines for staff working in health care, certain schools and early childhood education and care facilities were revoked by the Chief Health Officer. The requirements for workers in the healthcare and education sectors to be vaccinated has been an important part of the ACT's COVID-19 outbreak response. However, the situation has now evolved, and our high level of vaccination coverage across the eligible population has reduced the risk of outbreaks and adverse impacts on health outcomes. The removal of these mandates is consistent with the ACT government's commitment to ensuring that our public health response to COVID-19 is proportionate and guided by the expert advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, or AHPPC.

It is important to note that the removal of the public health vaccination mandates does not remove the need for employers to take a responsible risk management approach to staff vaccination. Indeed, Canberra Health Services has already moved to ensure that staff working in patient-facing settings are appropriately vaccinated as part of their work health and safety responsibilities. Vaccine mandates for workers delivering aged and disability care services remain in place. This is consistent with the recommendations of AHPPC, as the risk of outbreaks and severe illness among the people these workers care for is still high. The Chief Health Officer will continue to monitor the situation for these workers to ensure that public health directions continue to remain proportionate.

On 12 May the ACT government announced that the use of the Check In CBR app would no longer be mandatory. The Chief Health Officer advised the government that the requirement to register for, and use, the Check In CBR app in the remaining settings could be removed at this point in our COVID-19 response, with public health officials focused on reducing transmission in high-risk settings. With effect from 11.59 pm on 13 May, licensed venues, registered clubs, night clubs, strip clubs, brothels and non-ticketed events are no longer required to use the Check In CBR app.

However, the Check In CBR app has undergone an update to include a new health screening tool which can be used on a voluntary basis by high-risk facilities where the screening of visitors and staff remains important. The health screening tool became available for high-risk facilities from 20 May.

The new health screening tool will allow high-risk facilities such as hospitals, residential aged care facilities, disability services and correctional facilities that often have separate screening and check-in methods, to use one tool to screen and automatically check-in visitors and staff. Both the existing business profile function and check-in patron cards remain compatible with the screening tool. The screening tool includes a number of generic questions, and it is intended that the same questions will now be used by all high-risk settings to ensure a level of consistency, wherever possible. It is important to note that the screening tool will not be mandatory for use by operators of high-risk settings but provides an optional resource for individual facilities. The Check In CBR app now also provides a direct link to the online form to record positive RAT results, which I can attest works well.

On 12 May 2022 the government also announced that the public health emergency declaration would be extended for a further period of 90 days, through to 11 August. In the Chief Health Officer's 26th report on the status of the public health emergency due to COVID-19, dated 2 May, it was recommended that the public health emergency be extended for a period of 60 days due to the ongoing public health risk posed by COVID-19. However, the legislation currently before the Assembly to establish a new regulatory framework for the management of COVID-19 was not then debated in the last sitting period.

It is therefore important to ensure that there is sufficient time for the implementation of a COVID-19 management declaration, should the Public Health Amendment Bill (No 2) pass the Assembly. It is also important to ensure that risks associated with this transition are carefully managed as we respond to COVID-19 and influenza. In this context, the Chief Health Officer provided further advice to government that recommended a 90-day extension, rather than the original 60 days proposed in the 2 May report.

As always, the health and wellbeing of our community remains of the utmost importance. The ACT government will continue to monitor the situation in the ACT, and Australia more broadly, to ensure that we are well prepared for the coming months. I present a copy of the statement:

Coronavirus (COVID-19)—ACT Government response—Update—Ministerial statement, 1 June 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Reconciliation Week Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (11.09): As members would be aware, we are sitting today during National Reconciliation Week, which this year has the theme, “Be Brave, Make Change”. I take this opportunity to speak about the importance of reconciliation for all Canberrans and all Australians.

Reconciliation Week is held each year between 27 May and 3 June. Each of these dates commemorates a milestone in the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ rights in post-colonial Australia. The date 27 May marks the anniversary of the 1967 referendum, which was successful in amending the Constitution to remove clauses that were actively exclusionary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is especially timely for us to reflect on the 1967 referendum during this year’s Reconciliation Week, given the commitment from the incoming federal Labor government to advance further constitutional reform.

The Constitution is the formative document of our nation. It has profound legal and symbolic significance to our democracy and national identity. The 1967 referendum, one of only eight to succeed since federation, was a victory for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activists and their allies. The successful constitutional amendment removed clauses which, in effect, allowed discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples under state law, and which prevented them from being counted in the population. While this remains worthy of celebration and reflection, the 1967 amendments to the Constitution do not go far enough in actively recognising the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures in the conception of our nation.

Indeed, conversations about further constitutional reform have been ongoing in the decades since the 1967 referendum. In 2011, the Gillard government convened an expert panel to explore options for constitutional change and approaches to a referendum that would be likely to obtain widespread support from the Australian community. In 2013, on the five-year anniversary of the historic national apology to the stolen generations, the Gillard government passed an Act of Recognition in the House of Representatives.

This act acknowledged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first inhabitants of this continent and sought to capture momentum towards a referendum on constitutional recognition within a two-year time frame. Tony Abbott, then opposition leader, committed to an even more ambitious 12-month time frame. But, of course, this never eventuated when Mr Abbott was Prime Minister. In 2015, the then Turnbull federal government, with bipartisan support from the Labor opposition, appointed the Referendum Council to further explore the question of constitutional recognition.

The Referendum Council undertook First Nations regional dialogues with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia, and in May 2017 this culminated

in more than 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders coming together at Uluru for the National Constitutional Convention. The result of that historic convention was the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. The statement calls for voice, treaty and truth—in concrete terms, a constitutionally enshrined voice to parliament and a Makarrata Commission with responsibility for truth-telling and treaty advancement. Five months later, the Turnbull government tabled its response to the Uluru statement. To summarise that response with reference to the proposal for a constitutionally enshrined voice, the Turnbull government said:

The government does not believe such an addition to our national representative institutions is either desirable or capable of winning acceptance in a referendum.

I am pleased to say that Labor has a different view. The incoming federal Labor government has been clear that it will take forward a referendum to constitutionally enshrine a voice to parliament as a matter of priority. This will be a significant challenge, and we can never be certain that any referendum will pass, but unless we have leaders who are willing to be brave, we will never be able to make real change.

The other significant date that bookends Reconciliation Week is Mabo Day, on 3 June. This day marks the legacy of Eddie Koiki Mabo, a Meriam man from the Torres Strait, who took his people's case to the Australian High Court, challenging the concept of terra nullius. The High Court's judgement in the Mabo case resulted in the introduction of native title into Australian law, removing the myth of terra nullius and establishing a legal framework for native title claims by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of this historic Mabo decision. Where the conversations about constitutional recognition and a voice to parliament reflect the importance of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the institutions of post-colonial Australia, the legacy of the Mabo decision invites us to reflect on that which came before colonisation, the sovereignty of the first nations of this continent, which was never ceded, and the continuation of the most ancient culture on Earth.

This aligns with the other key element of the Uluru statement, a Makarrata Commission to support truth-telling and treaty- or agreement-making between governments and First Nations. I am pleased that our new federal Labor government supports the Uluru statement in full, a voice to parliament and a Makarrata Commission. I look forward to working with colleagues in the new federal government and across the states and territories in supporting this work. I welcome the appointment of Linda Burney to lead this work, the first Aboriginal woman to sit in cabinet, and a genuine force of nature.

As we know, Linda Burney is joined in our national parliament by the largest number of First Nations members and senators ever elected. This can only be a good thing. I also want to acknowledge the appointment of Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, the new and fabulous Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health, and Senator Uncle Pat Dodson, the special envoy for reconciliation and the implementation of the Uluru statement, and I look forward to working with both of them as well.

Speaking with *The Guardian* a couple of days ago, Linda Burney said, in relation to the Makarrata and treaty process:

Imagine what this country will be at the end of a national truth telling process.

She went on:

It will be a different country. It will be a country that knows its story. It's not about blame, it's not about guilt. It's just about understanding that this is the real story of this country.

As members are aware, this sentiment is exactly what drove the ACT government's decision to recognise reconciliation with a public holiday during Reconciliation Week, creating an opportunity to reflect on Australia's true history and its ongoing impacts. Reconciliation Day is an opportunity to take a break from our usual responsibilities and focus our attention on the task of reconciliation. This focus is facilitated through the ACT government's free public event held each year to mark Reconciliation Day.

This year's event was held at the National Arboretum, repeating the successful utilisation of this wonderful venue from last year's event. The day opened with a smoking ceremony by Uncle Warren Daley and a gracious welcome to Ngunnawal Country from Aunty Violet Sheridan. The event progressed with a range of activities designed to promote conversations and share stories. These included three panel discussions, facilitated by members of the ACT Reconciliation Council; a portrait exhibition highlighting the champions of reconciliation in the Canberra community—building on the exhibition from last year, this now tells the stories of 25 Canberrans, including elders and advocates; storytelling at Mununja the Butterfly Garden; basket weaving and bush animal making in the terrace room; art and craft workshops in the Discovery Garden; and much more.

Unfortunately, this year was the first time I have been unable to attend the Reconciliation Day event, due to being in isolation after contracting COVID-19. I would like to thank the Deputy Chief Minister for representing the ACT government in the formalities on the day, and for demonstrating our commitment, as a government, to the journey of reconciliation.

Finally, I would like to thank the ACT Reconciliation Council for its work in planning and promoting Reconciliation Day. The continued success and growing participation in Reconciliation Day activities reflect the council's considered and diligent work. I thank all members for the time and effort they have dedicated to making Reconciliation Day 2022 a success. I would particularly like to thank Dr Chris Bourke. Dr Bourke was, of course, my predecessor as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and conceived of the Reconciliation Day public holiday while in this position. He has served as one of the co-chairs of the Reconciliation Council since its formation, and, through that role, has continued to shape the success of Australia's first public holiday that recognises the importance of reconciliation.

Expressions of interest are currently open for Canberrans who may wish to join the Reconciliation Council and help continue its fantastic work promoting reconciliation

in the ACT—not just on Reconciliation Day but throughout the year. I would encourage all members to promote this process among their networks, and I hope all members here today, all Canberrans and all Australians, can consider how the theme of this year’s Reconciliation Week can be reflected in their work, family and community lives. As we look set to embark on a new stage of the reconciliation journey as a nation, now is a time for all of us, particularly those of us in positions of power, to consider how we can “be brave, make change”. I present the following paper:

Reconciliation Week—Ministerial statement, 1 June 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.19): I welcome Minister Stephen-Smith making this statement today and providing an opportunity for us to comment during Reconciliation Week, because it is an important time to acknowledge Reconciliation Week and an important moment for each member of our community to stop and think, or learn more about, why we need reconciliation and what that really means.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations people of this country were the first sovereign nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possess it under their own laws and customs. We must acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and that British colonisation of Australia has caused much pain and anguish to First Nations people of this land, including dispossession of their lands and culture, death and destruction through the frontier wars, and intergenerational trauma through forced child removal and decimation of language.

Today we have still, ashamedly, disproportionately high numbers of incarceration of First Nations men and women, and we are continuing to remove First Nations children at high rates. This is the unfinished business on which we have much work left to do. As Minister Stephen-Smith touched on, the ACT has created Reconciliation Day here in the territory, and while some may say that having a public holiday for reconciliation is tokenism, for many it does open up the doors to have conversations and foster a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Things like trying bush tucker, learning a few words in Ngunnawal language or watching traditional dance, all increase our understanding and respect.

This year’s theme for Reconciliation Week is “Be Brave, Make Change”, and we all know that change begins with our own first steps. We need to have the conversations; we need to open our eyes, our ears and our hearts; we need to ask questions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences; and we need to be open to learning more about what can be done to ensure that we do no more harm and that we move towards true reconciliation for this country.

I am pleased that the new Labor government is committed to the Uluru statement and that Mr Albanese made a point of reinforcing that promise in his very first speech as

Prime Minister elect on election night. He has given many First Nations people an increased sense of optimism for the future. Whilst I am sure that there will be differences of opinion about which aspect should come first, we must adopt all three of the main pillars of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. We need truth, treaty and voice. We need to work hard, and we need to work hand in hand with the community to get this done.

Each of us has an individual responsibility to make efforts to progress reconciliation. Each of us has a responsibility to educate ourselves about the level of damage and subsequent disadvantage that colonisation has caused. Each of us must approach these issues with a willingness to accept that the actions of our forefathers and of some current government practices have caused, and continue to cause, harm.

We must all do our best and we must approach it with “yindumara”, the Ngunnawal word for “respect”, because we should all acknowledge this week, and of course in every other week, that reconciliation is more than a word and that reconciliation will make a better future not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians but for all Australians. I thank the minister for her statement, and I invite us all to reflect on the importance and the meaning of Reconciliation Week.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (11.23): I wish to briefly respond to Minister Stephen-Smith’s ministerial statement. The minister has just spoken at some length about various federal governments, including the new one. She also spoke about the importance of leaders who are willing to be brave when it comes to taking real action in relation to requests from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I stand today to remind the minister that respecting the voices of Indigenous Australians is important at the territorial level as well. Here in the ACT the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have, for nearly a year and a half, unitedly called on Minister Stephen-Smith and her cabinet colleagues to support a commission of inquiry into the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the ACT justice system. That request was publicly repeated as recently as eight days ago, but this Labor-Greens government continues to deny this entreaty.

I also note that within Minister Stephen-Smith’s portfolio as Minister for Families and Community Services, it has been almost four years since the Our Booris, Our Way review into the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system handed down its first interim recommendations, yet not one of those recommendations has been fully implemented. I will share just two examples. Recommendation 4 is that there be universal access to family group conferencing. The ACT government accepted this recommendation, and on paper it is now a policy in the child protection system; but, as was clearly revealed during the annual reports hearings at the beginning of the year, and in answers to questions arising from that hearing, this simply is not happening. The policy exists on paper, but the evidence is clear: many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families that come into contact with the child protection system are simply not being referred for family group conferencing. This is not universal access, at all.

Further, recommendation 7 calls for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's commissioner, with the capacity to specifically intervene and engage in child protection processes. We still do not have this commissioner either. Instead, Labor and the Greens have, for the time being, determined to employ an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families advocate, who will not have the capacity to intervene and engage in child protection processes. Even then, the listing for this position appears to have opened only three weeks ago.

A policy that exists on paper but not in reality is not what reconciliation looks like; neither is a toothless advocate in place of a commissioner with actual powers. Minister Stephen-Smith has this morning expressed her disappointment with past federal governments. On behalf of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans, I express my disappointment in the current ACT government in general, and specifically in Ms Stephen-Smith in her role as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. She should stop pointing her finger at other people and look at herself and what she can do as a minister. I encourage her to follow her own advice: be brave, make change. She should stop giving us a word salad, and act. Anything less than this is a waste of space and time for someone in a position of power. Thank you.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (11.28): “Be Brave, Make Change” is a very fitting theme for this year’s Reconciliation Week, and I thank Minister Stephen-Smith for her statement. We need to be brave to listen to hard truths about where we could have done better. This includes the impact of bias and discrimination, putting up barriers to accessing the services people need, or making it harder for people to advocate for themselves or for our community understanding intergenerational trauma.

And once we have listened to those hard truths, making change requires action. This week the service provider for a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and aftercare program has been appointed. Thirrili is an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation with experience delivering these services in other parts of Australia. It will provide case support for individuals and families and build community resilience. Thirrili has been a leading national provider of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postvention support services since 2017. It will engage with the ACT’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build a service development plan that fits our local needs.

I am very pleased that Thirrili will work with local aftercare service The Way Back Support Service, delivered by Woden Community Services. This partnership between an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation and a local service provider will provide referral pathways so that people can access the service that best meets their needs and supports greater understanding of the ways these services can be provided across our community. Having a service that is culturally safe and designed and led by Aboriginal people whose professional expertise is recognised and respected would not have been possible without the work of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Working Group and the participation of our local First Nations community. I thank everyone who has contributed to helping us reach this point.

This adds to increased support for Winnunga, including psychologist and nursing staff at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, in the last ACT budget. Winnunga provides a unique service to people in the AMC, as well as providing care through their community clinic so that people have continuity and can access holistic care, not just for the individual but also for their family. Additional resources were also made available to Justice Health Services during the public health restrictions in 2021 to support the mental wellbeing of people in the AMC. In March of this year the ACT government announced funding of \$9.5 million through the bilateral agreement between the ACT and the commonwealth on mental health and suicide prevention services for a multidisciplinary youth mental health service in the ACT.

The ACT government's Youth at Risk program will deliver coordinated responses for young people at risk of developing enduring mental illness. A key element of the program is an evidence-guided therapeutic approach and an adolescent trauma service. With the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who have experienced challenges and complexities in their lives, this is an important service for young people and their families. But we know that there is still more that we need to do to provide the right services at the right time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. This starts with listening to, and understanding, what our First Nations community is telling us about what mental health services are needed and how they should be delivered, through a needs analysis led by the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Working Group.

We also know that, despite the high rates of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, they are less likely to have NDIS plans, and that those with plans often have lower levels of resourcing in their plans. With the recent change in federal government, I am hopeful that we will be able to work with Minister Bill Shorten to address inequities in the system and make accessing NDIS an easier process that is true to its intention of providing choice and control for people with disability.

Part of the process of supporting people with disability is identifying when someone needs support. Screening for disability at Bimberi Youth Detention Centre is helping the youth, education and health workers there to better identify who might need support and what kind of adjustments need to be made to provide care for young people who may have complex circumstances. Recognising that too many Aboriginal young people end up in the justice system, we are working to put in place better and earlier supports for children and their families to reduce young people engaging in harmful behaviour. These include a trial of functional family therapy delivered by OzChild and establishing Narrabundah House as a safe place for young people to call home while they are undergoing community corrections orders.

As part of ongoing work towards raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, I will continue to support plans for more services to support young people and

families, including safe places to stay; alcohol and drug support; mental health programs; family support; and multidisciplinary therapeutic complex case support. At every step of the way as we continue this journey towards reconciliation, we must continue to listen to and understand what our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are telling us about where and how we can do better. Sometimes it is hard to hear that, despite good intentions, things are not working; but I am determined that we will keep listening and keep working to improve what we do so that we can be an inclusive, strong, supportive community together.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (11.33): I rise to support the comments made in this chamber this morning and to reflect on the importance of Reconciliation Week and Reconciliation Day. I would also like to extend my thanks to our former colleague Chris Bourke, the previous Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, for the initiative of us having a day to reflect, learn and celebrate how much richer our journey is together as we live on this beautiful Ngunnawal land. With us now into the fifth year of this initiative, I am personally so thankful for the opportunity to take the time to engage with the history that I am still learning so much about and reflect on how I can make the concept of reconciliation an action in my personal life and professional life.

A key element of reconciliation is dealing with the issue that this is stolen land. This was, is and always will be Aboriginal land. This provides us with an opportunity to see how we can do better in reflecting on some of these issues. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the important work that is occurring within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to embed First Nations knowledge into practice in the ACT, particularly around how we care for Country and the environment.

I note that this work is shared across a number of ministerial portfolios. I recognise the shared commitment of my ministerial colleagues, particularly Minister Gentleman, with responsibilities around land management and parks and conservation, and Minister Rattenbury around water management. I would like to particularly recognise the work and significant contribution made by the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee that is working with us to improve our understanding and incorporate First Nations knowledge in how we plan for and care for our Country.

A recent and highly successful example of how this can enrich us all is one of our newest reserves, the Namarag reserve, situated in Molonglo. Named after the Ngunnawal word for “wattle”, this project is a living demonstration of what can occur when there is deep and genuine engagement, and a commitment to co-design and to listening to First Nations knowledge holders. It is a taste of what we can achieve. I have been lucky to be received on Country in this beautiful place. I have learned about how the artwork reflects local First Nations stories and history and I have learned to dance. Many other Canberrans at this year’s Heritage Festival have had the chance to visit, listen and learn too.

But there is a lot more to do. We have a vision of achieving joint management of Country. Although there are legal issues to work through, we want to build shared responsibility. This includes working towards joint plans of management, co-management agreements and looking at where we should consider the reclamation of First Nations naming of significant places, as well as employment and land outcomes, and work to ensure that decision-making rights are articulated in our legislation, our policy and our processes.

We have important work to do to more appropriately protect and celebrate First Nations cultural heritage. This work occurs in the context of great trauma and damage that has been the result of colonisation dispossession. It comes in the context of First Nations knowledge and wisdom on how to care for this Country being ignored for at least two centuries. It comes in the context of us now needing to manage the impacts of crises, including the climate crisis and extinction crisis, that the First Nations knowledge would be able to protect us against.

I continue to be humbled by the generosity, the humility and the grace of First Nations teachers, who I am lucky enough to spend time with and who continue to generously share their time, their knowledge and their talents. Thank you for this and for your continued commitment to helping me in my reconciliation journey. I make the pledge to walk with you and make reconciliation an action in my everyday life. I will aim to be brave and be part of the change that we want to see.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.38): In saying a few words about Reconciliation Week, I will not mimic the comments we have heard today. We have had a really good conversation, I think, by ministers and members. It is a really good time to pause and reflect and learn how to be a better ally. I really liked the theme this year—“Be Brave, Make a Change”. I liked how simply it was put to those of us who are a bit earlier in the journey.

The event at the Arboretum had a lot of easy to understand information about what that actually means at a personal level. We were asked to make pledges—personal pledges, workplace pledges and family pledges—and that was a really good conversation prompt for me with my daughter. I have an eight-year-old and she is often a lot better at talking about these sorts of issues than I am. So it was really good to be able to have that family conversation and to have a good personal conversation about what reconciliation means, what it means to be an ally, what sorts of things have happened in Australia’s past and what things are still happening, and what are some of the simple things and some of the bigger things we can do to make change.

I am grateful that I have the opportunity to reflect on these things as part of my job. It is an amazing thing to have that reflection as part of your working role. It is a real honour to do these sorts of things. It is so important to stop and listen and reflect on our history as a nation and what we can do as individuals in our community. I am really looking forward to the opportunities we have with our new federal government to maybe make some of those bigger changes. I thank all the people who have been working so hard on this. I know that we will do better on this than we have.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Roads—emissions reductions

Ministerial statement

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (11.40): I rise today to talk about some of the ways that the ACT government is driving the transition to cheaper, cleaner vehicles for Australia as part of our journey towards net zero emissions by 2045.

We all know that transport is a key contributor of carbon dioxide emissions. Pre-COVID, around 18 per cent of Australia's total CO₂ emissions were created through the burning of petrol and diesel in internal combustion engines. In the ACT, transport makes up 60 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions as our jurisdiction has already fully reduced emissions from electricity by transitioning to 100 per cent renewables. Cutting transport emissions is a crucial part of reducing our contribution to overall emissions and putting a halt to harmful global warming.

I am proud that the ACT has shown leadership in reducing our transport emissions. Not only are we leading the way in transitioning the government's own vehicle fleets, but also we are supporting the community to transition to cleaner types of vehicles. We need to work together to get to a place where our vehicles, across the board, produce neither greenhouse gas emissions nor other pollutants that are bad for our community's health and for the environment.

One way the ACT government has shown leadership is through our zero emissions plan for Transport Canberra and our zero emissions vehicle action plan. Under these plans, Canberra's light rail runs on 100 per cent renewable electricity. Our first 12 zero emissions buses will hit the streets this year, and we are progressing work to deliver another 90 zero emissions buses by 2024. This will see us transition just under a quarter of our public transport fleet within the next two years. We already have 20 hydrogen powered vehicles operating in the ACT government fleet and have been progressing the transition across directorates with a clear policy for choosing zero emissions passenger vehicles, where fit for purpose.

We are also making progress in some important areas that might not be front of mind when people think about zero emissions vehicles, like the hybrid electric firefighting vehicle, appliance, that is currently being used by the ACT Emergency Services Agency. Transport Canberra and City Services has recently been undertaking trials of a zero emissions waste truck and mower, and we have also introduced a rideshare system of electric scooters in the city. The shared e-scooter scheme has recently expanded with the linking up of the Belconnen and central Canberra pilot zones. We are actively working with providers on increasing the footprint covered by e-scooters city-wide, to offer more zero emissions transport options to Canberrans.

When it comes to private vehicles, we are supporting the community to also make the transition to low and zero emissions options. According to the Electric Vehicle Council of Australia, the ACT offers the most generous package of supports and incentives for the uptake of zero emissions vehicles, which my colleague Minister Rattenbury has been a huge advocate for. We provide two years free registration to

newly registered battery electric and hydrogen powered fuel cell vehicles registered between 24 May this year and 30 June 2024. We also provide an ongoing 20 per cent registration concession for battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric and gas and hydrogen powered vehicles. Canberrans looking to buy a zero emissions vehicle will pay no stamp duty and are also eligible for a zero interest loan of up to \$15,000 through our Sustainable Household Scheme to support the purchase. Minister Rattenbury is currently leading the government's work on our next zero emissions vehicle action plan, and I am excited about some of the further big steps that we are going to be taking in driving the transition through that plan.

But, Madam Speaker, to make meaningful progress towards net zero emissions transport, we need to use every policy lever at governments' disposal. State and territory governments have shown strong leadership in driving the uptake of low and zero emissions vehicles through incentive schemes, investment in charging infrastructure and road user charging proposals. This same degree of leadership was notably lacking from the now former Morrison government in relation to the policy levers within the commonwealth's control, including a refusal to implement new emissions standards for new vehicles.

With a change of government, we would like to see a new approach. Australia needs proper vehicle emissions standards that can drive a big cut in pollution produced by our private vehicle fleet, to get more affordable clean vehicles into our market, more quickly.

At the moment the average carbon dioxide emissions intensity for new passenger vehicles sold in Australia is 45 per cent higher than it is in Europe. One key factor behind this is that vehicles sold in Europe must adhere to relatively stringent emissions standards which cap the levels of CO₂, particulate matter and other harmful pollutants that can be emitted.

Currently in Australia vehicles imported only need to meet the older Euro 5 standards. This is despite the more stringent Euro 6, or equivalent, emissions standards having been adopted in the United States, Canada, the EU, the United Kingdom, Japan, China, Korea and India. These countries account for over 80 per cent of global new vehicle sales and supply the majority of passenger vehicles sold in Australia.

We are not just slightly behind the curve here; the Euro 6 standards have been in place since 2014 and European countries are actually about to adopt the next, much more stringent, Euro 7 standards. This is something that I intend to raise with the incoming federal government so that we can make meaningful progress on delivering cheaper, cleaner vehicles for Australia, and of course the ACT.

Transport emissions are obviously a big contributor to climate change, but they have other negative impacts too, which I have spoken about before. Pollution from petrol and diesel powered internal combustion engines releases a significant number of pollutants into our air such as nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Some of these pollutants have a direct impact on public health. There are estimates that around 5,000 Australian deaths occur annually from air pollution. Air pollution also causes a significant number of other health issues such as ischaemic heart disease,

lung cancer, pneumonia, asthma and acute respiratory issues. These are consequences of transport pollution that we can no longer tolerate.

Reducing transport emissions is critical to reducing pollution and alleviating some of the health impacts caused by it. In fact, a regulatory impact statement prepared by the commonwealth, under the former government, which they then refused to implement, highlighted that introducing the Euro 6 standards, or equivalent, in Australia would deliver benefits of \$6.4 billion in avoided health costs. It also noted that, by improving access to more advanced vehicle models, fitted with the latest technologies, mandating Euro 6d for all new light vehicles sold in Australia, it would indirectly improve the safety and fuel efficiency of the Australian light vehicle fleet. This would mean that there would be less road trauma at the same time as delivering improvements to CO2 emissions which impact our health.

Stronger vehicle emissions standards will also benefit consumers by making more low and zero emissions vehicles available in the Australian market. We see major manufacturers like Volvo and Ford Europe planning to offer only electric cars from 2030, General Motors following in 2035, and Volkswagen aiming to have 70 per cent of European sales being electric vehicles by 2030. But while these companies are ramping up production of zero emissions vehicles, they must make choices about which markets to service around the world. At the moment, Australia is the bottom of the priority list because older, dirtier and cheaper-to-produce models can still be sold here when they cannot be in many other markets. Our lack of strong national policy settings directly works against the need to see more low and zero emissions vehicles for sale in Australia at prices that everyone can afford.

On the basis that strong vehicle emissions standards represent global best practice in emissions reduction, we encourage the new government to explore this as a priority at the federal level. Australia needs appropriate vehicle emissions and CO2 standards which can work in tandem with, and bolster, the efforts of governments like ours to drive the zero emissions transition. In recent months I have been speaking with my state and territory counterparts, both transport ministers and some energy ministers, both Labor and Liberal, about this issue and there is strong support across the country for action on it. We all recognise that a consistent, national approach to vehicle emissions standards is preferable to a patchwork of different rules and schemes around Australia, with the commonwealth government being best placed to deliver this.

I am really optimistic about the potential for action here, because we know that the new Albanese Labor government believes that climate change is real and recognises that there is an urgent need to act. What a huge and refreshing change it is from the disgraceful obstruction, climate denialism and wedge politics of the Liberal-Nationals over the past nine years. The new Labor government has a real plan to reach net zero emissions by 2050, supported by realistic 2030 reduction targets and, importantly, a strong agenda to support people and communities through this change.

The government's commitments to exempt electric vehicles from some taxes, at the federal level, to make them more affordable; invest in the rewiring Australia plan; deliver more solar power and batteries into communities; invest in augmenting our

transmission and distribution network; and support industry to invest in new and clean technologies will mean that Australia can take great strides towards a zero emissions transition more quickly after years of irresponsible inaction and delay from the previous Liberal government.

Our government, like the Albanese Labor government, recognises that all levels of government need to be working in the same direction to drive the transition to cheaper, cleaner vehicles for Australians. I look forward to continuing our strong advocacy in this space and working with the incoming government to make meaningful progress on this in the weeks and months ahead. I present the following paper:

Driving cheaper, cleaner vehicles for Australia—Ministerial statement, 1 June 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.52): It is really nice to be talking about climate change with a bit of hope today. I am really enjoying that. As we are meeting here, there are a bunch of locals at Parliament House welcoming in the new federal ministers. I imagine they will be amplifying the transport minister's message, so maybe that will help a little. It is really good to hear about some of these national issues that we can now tackle in a cohesive way. I understand the transport minister's frustration about our terrible emissions standards over such a long period. He is genuinely committed to climate change.

Some of these issues that have simply not been led nationally would have been so easy to coordinate. Many other countries have jumped ahead and done things that actually make our lives better. They deal with climate change. They also save us money. They mean that we spend less money on petrol and diesel. They mean that fewer of us are getting asthma and respiratory illness. There are so many reasons to do it. It has been really frustrating for so long to see such poor leadership. So it is great to hear this statement. We now have a chance to do things a bit differently. I am wondering how the conversations will go. I am half-hoping that we have actually missed the window for better emissions standards and that it might be time to skip straight to electrifying everything, which is where we are moving now for climate change.

We have got 100 per cent renewables here. Hopefully, soon all around Australia we will have 100 per cent renewables. We have got really good electric vehicles and we have lots of other options for zero emissions vehicles. If we can get those emissions standards for petrol and diesel cars—if we can get much better standards so that we are emitting less from those petrol and diesel cars—that would be fantastic. It may well be that industry tells us that it is time to skip ahead to the next step; let us just go for zero emissions vehicles. Maybe we are ready and maybe we can just do that with a really good, strong plan. With a committed federal government, instead of telling us that EVs will ruin the weekend—which they do not by the way; I have one and we go to the beach all the time and it is great—it might say, “Let's electrify everything. Let's

go to zero emissions. Here are our time lines and here's how we are going to get there.”

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022—consultation draft Ministerial statement

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra-Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.55): I am pleased this morning to table a consultation draft of the Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022.

As part of the implementation of the capital of equality strategy 2019-2023 and reflected in the parliamentary and governing agreement, the government committed to reviewing the Discrimination Act. Our Discrimination Act is a cornerstone of our human rights framework. It is important that the act is modern and best promotes equal opportunity, respect and inclusion.

The ACT government has been progressing recommendations from the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council's 2015 final report into the review of the Discrimination Act 1991 over the past several years. Members will know that many of the recommendations from LRAC's report have been implemented.

This consultation bill progresses some of the outstanding recommendations to expand the coverage of the Discrimination Act, refine the existing exceptions and introduce a positive duty to prevent discrimination.

In October 2021, a public consultation was launched via the YourSay website together with a discussion paper and eight short consultation guides. The government listened to feedback about how to make the submission process as accessible as possible, and individuals and organisations were able to make submissions by sending an email, leaving a voice message or completing a short survey.

There was a good level of response from the community about these proposals and government received 25 submissions and 17 survey responses. Officials facilitated three community roundtables, including one with religious bodies, and provided 14 tailored briefings to government and non-government organisations.

The feedback was from a diverse range of individuals and organisations, including people from peak bodies, government advisory groups, community legal centres, academics, advocacy groups and members of the community.

On 7 April this year I presented a listening report to the Assembly that summarised the feedback we received during the consultation. This included real-life examples of how discrimination continues to affect the community, practical suggestions for how to improve protections against discrimination and some creative ideas for reform.

We heard that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the LGBTIQ+ community and people with disability are particularly affected by discrimination and that the protections afforded by the Discrimination Act are as important as ever.

A consultation draft Discrimination Amendment Bill has been prepared that takes into account all the ideas and perspectives we received during the consultation. It is now available to read on the ACT legislation register and the YourSay website, and I welcome the community's feedback on it.

The consultation draft bill proposes to make the protections in the Discrimination Act broader, easier to understand and more compatible with our Human Rights Act 2004. It does this, Madam Speaker, in three main ways.

Firstly, the consultation draft bill expands the scope of the act to include functions of a public nature and clarifies that certain areas of public life, like competitions and sports, are covered by discrimination law. At the moment, it is not entirely clear whether someone could make a complaint about either area of public life and the proposed amendments seek to bring certainty about what is and what is not covered.

For example, a woman with Chinese heritage may enter a competition singing a well-known song in Mandarin and be told that she did not win because she performed a song in a language other than English. The amendments will now make it clear that she can make a racial discrimination complaint because competitions will be captured under the Discrimination Act.

These amendments will also make it clear that discrimination law covers people providing and receiving goods, services and facilities. The draft bill also better aligns the Discrimination Act with the obligations on public authorities under the Human Rights Act.

This consultation bill refines the exceptions across six categories. These relate to religious bodies, voluntary bodies and licensed clubs, sport, work, domestic duties, and insurance and superannuation.

In discrimination law, exceptions represent situations where there is a good reason for otherwise discriminatory conduct to be lawful. For example, this could be because discrimination is necessary to protect another human right.

However, the Discrimination Act currently has over 50 exceptions and many of them have not been reviewed since the Discrimination Act commenced in 1991. To make the Discrimination Act more user friendly, consistent and human rights compatible, the consultation draft bill proposes to streamline exceptions and to build in human rights considerations when applying them. Many exceptions will now require the consideration of whether the discrimination is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in the circumstances.

These reforms are nuanced and so it is worth taking some time to explain what the consultation draft bill proposes and to provide a few examples.

There are a few refinements for exceptions for religious bodies. We are seeking to have a clearer link between the doctrines of a particular religion and a circumstance where discrimination is permitted. One change to the exceptions would mean, for example, the Catholic Church can require that priests be male as per their doctrines but they cannot discriminate on irrelevant grounds such as race or disability.

Religious bodies will also only be able to discriminate—for example, excluding a same-sex couple from worship services—as long as their actions conform to the teachings of the religion, are necessary to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of people adhering to that religion and are reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in the circumstances.

Religious bodies will not be able to discriminate in providing goods and services except on the grounds of religious conviction and where it is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable. Similarly, religious bodies would only be able to discriminate in employment on the grounds of religious conviction where it is a genuine occupational qualification or requirement in relation to that employment and, again, where it is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in the circumstances. For example, a Christian disability support service cannot preference a Christian cleaner but could preference a Christian for a pastoral care role.

These exceptions will not apply—that is, discrimination will not be permitted—where the organisation’s sole or main purpose is commercial or where the religious body exercises functions of a public nature. The existing exceptions for religious educational institutions remain.

The draft bill proposes combining the exceptions for voluntary bodies and licensed clubs and expanding it to all protected attributes. Voluntary bodies and licensed clubs will only be permitted to discriminate in providing membership or services to groups protected by discrimination law for whose benefit the organisation was established. For example, the Spanish club may preference people with Spanish heritage in providing membership and funding for projects. This change will make it simpler for those organisations.

With the bill proposing to cover sport, a new exception will be introduced. Discrimination will be permitted on the basis of sex, disability or age where it is necessary for fair, safe and effective competition and where the outcome of the proposed discrimination is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in all the circumstances.

Sport exceptions apply only to children aged 12 years and over, except for age-segregated teams. Limiting it in these ways intends to narrow the circumstances where a person can be discriminated and prevent a person being excluded from sport due to irrelevant protected attributes, such as race.

In this case, for example, a female-only football team may be required to allow a female-identifying person who is of male sex to play, provided that their participation would not limit the fairness, safety or effectiveness of the competition. Alternatively, having undertaken the human rights analysis, a basketball team might conclude that they need to exclude a person with disability if their participation in the league would be a safety risk.

However, the exceptions for sport do not extend to the grounds of gender identity, so organisers of a marathon race could not discriminate against a gender non-binary athlete where their sex has no bearing on the fairness, safety or effectiveness of the competition.

These proposed amendments provide a framework to assist organisers and athletes to navigate how to make a decision with regard to the particular circumstances, the nature of the sport and the individual athlete. Our intention, as contained in provisions throughout the bill, is to limit permissible discrimination to where it is reasonable, proportionate and justified.

This consultation draft bill changes where discrimination is permitted at work. The bill proposes requiring employers who seek to discriminate on the basis of genuine occupational qualification to demonstrate that the conduct is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in all the circumstances. This exception will be expanded to cover all protected attributes.

For example, having considered the human rights implications, an employer could preference a job applicant with lived experience of drug use as a peer support worker. Discrimination will be permitted on the basis of inherent requirements where the conduct is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in all the circumstances and cannot be mitigated by reasonable adjustments. It will also expand to all protected attributes. Importantly, there will be a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with any protected attributes. For example, an employee may get time off work for Sorry Business.

The final work-related exception is for workers in private homes. Discrimination will be permitted where it is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in all the circumstances. This might mean that a female personal carer is preferred due to modesty concerns.

The last exception to be amended is for insurance and superannuation companies. They will only be able to discriminate where their decisions are based on actuarial or statistical data and relying on that data is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in the circumstances.

Consumers, however, will be entitled to get the data on which decisions about them are based, or a meaningful explanation of that data. For example, motor insurance companies could charge young men higher premiums due to the increased rate of car accidents.

These amendments will streamline the exceptions in the Discrimination Act and build in human rights considerations.

The final and significant change the consultation draft bill proposes is to introduce a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and unlawful vilification. Earlier this year, the Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety spoke in this place about the risks of psychosocial hazards in the workplace. We know that those hazards, including discrimination, have a substantial impact on the health, wellbeing and financial security of workers and their families.

Similarly, having undertaken her national inquiry, the Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner recommended in the *Respect@Work* report that the federal Sex Discrimination Act introduce a positive duty on all employers to eliminate sexual harassment and victimisation. The ACT government's draft bill goes further and extends this to all public authorities and organisations with obligations under the act.

A positive duty will encourage a proactive approach to preventing discrimination. By requiring organisations to take steps to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment or vilification before it happens, it will shift the responsibility away from individual complainants, it will help tackle systemic discrimination and it will reduce the risk of psychosocial hazards at work and in the community.

Complainants will be able to raise concerns about a breach of positive duty as part of their discrimination complaint, and the Human Rights Commission will be able to ask for information about what steps have been taken to meet the positive duty. The bill proposes that this new duty applies to public authorities initially and to other organisations after three years to ensure that there is enough time to provide education and support.

We are seeking further community feedback on this consultation draft bill and how our proposals can be further refined to better protect Canberrans against discrimination. This feedback will inform a bill that I will present to the Assembly later this year.

My sincere thanks go to everyone in the community who has shared their expertise, knowledge and lived experience so far and to the team in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate who have worked incredibly hard, and incredibly sensitively, in bringing forward these significant reforms for consideration by the community.

I encourage the community to make a submission via the YourSay website. I look forward to receiving further feedback about the government's proposed reforms to discrimination law so that we can make Canberra an even more inclusive, equitable and respectful community. I present the following papers:

Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022—

Exposure draft.

Consultation draft—Ministerial statement, 1 June 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 12.10 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): Minister Vassarotti has had to leave the Assembly so is not present for question time. Minister Berry will take questions in relation to homelessness and housing services, and Minister Gentleman will assist members in relation to the environment, heritage, sustainable building and construction.

Questions without notice

Building—combustible cladding

MS LEE: Madam Speaker, my question is to Minister Gentleman, acting on behalf of Minister Vassarotti, Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction. Minister, your government has known about the extremely hazardous combustible cladding issue in Canberra for over five years now. Why is it taking your government so long to help Canberrans with this issue?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lee for the question. We did take action quite early, when we found out about the impacts of combustible cladding.

Ms Lee: What was that?

MR GENTLEMAN: I was the building minister at the time. We worked with ministers in other jurisdictions at the building ministers' forum—

Ms Lee interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lee.

MR GENTLEMAN: to ensure that we could bring about a safe recommendation for Canberra residents and took action immediately.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, to the question. No commentary.

MS LEE: Sorry, Madam Speaker. I just have to get my head around that. Minister, why won't you finalise the details of the combustible cladding remediation loan scheme? You announced it in July.

MR GENTLEMAN: I understand that Minister Vassarotti is working through that at the moment, so I will take the detail on notice.

MR CAIN: Minister, why won't your government agree to waive development application fees for remediation works?

MR GENTLEMAN: The work that we are doing to facilitate the removal of combustible cladding is around the loan scheme that Minister Vassarotti has announced already. That is the detail of the work that she is doing.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members!

Calwell High School—safety

MR HANSON: My question is to the minister for education. Following the forced closure of Calwell High School due to safety concerns, it has been revealed that the school will face a special purpose review. The special purpose review will examine student learning and engagement, teaching practices, leadership practices and organisational practices. Minister, who is conducting the review, what are the terms of reference and what is the time frame for reporting?

MS BERRY: Yes, Mr Hanson is correct; a review into Calwell High School has begun, and a number of expert education members across the country have been engaged in that review. The review has already begun—it started yesterday, I believe—and will be completed next week. I do not have the actual names of the people on the review, but I can get that information for Mr Hanson before the end of question time today.

MR HANSON: Minister, could you perhaps provide the terms of reference as well, if you do not have that to hand. Minister, will you commit to making the findings of that review public as soon as they are provided to the government?

MS BERRY: I will, if it is appropriate to do so, but it is an internal review for the school to be able to utilise. If there are aspects of that review that are appropriate for public release, then I will do that.

MS LEE: Minister, why won't you conduct a system-wide review across all schools?

MS BERRY: Our schools are great schools, and we have been working very hard with our school communities in our public school system to understand some of the concerns that have been happening over the last couple of years, particularly regarding the teaching workforce crisis. We have set up a task force, and engaged with and listened to the expertise within our school communities about the kinds of things we can do as a community, as a government and as a school system to support our schools through what has been a very difficult time; and to overcome a teaching shortage that is existing across the country, and from which the ACT government is not immune.

Sport—community wellbeing

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Minister, one element of my resolution that this Assembly passed in April last year which I am most excited to see come to fruition is the development of a new 10-year strategic plan for sports and recreation, which is due mid year. Could the minister please update us on the consultation process for that strategic plan?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Davis for the question. Members will know that in the ACT there was a 10-year strategic plan for sport, which finished in 2020. Unfortunately, there were a number of factors—environmental factors and the international health pandemic—that impacted on the development of a strategic plan. However, when I met with the sporting organisations at the end of the 2019-20 year, when we were in the middle of a bushfire season, it was our commitment together to work on a strategic plan. Of course, COVID-19 did put a pause on that.

We were able to begin the work on the development of a sports strategic plan. The consultation has continued with the development of that. Kinetica Group was engaged to develop a strategy in consultation with sports communities and a range of other stakeholders—the ACT Youth Advisory Council, the LGBTIQ community representatives, Outdoors NSW & ACT and disability organisations, to name a few. It is intended that the sports strategic plan will be released in the second half of this year.

MR DAVIS: Minister there were a few groups that you outlined that you are consulting with. Would you be willing to table a full list of the community groups and sporting groups that the government intends to consult with?

MS BERRY: Yes, of course I can do that.

MR BRADDOCK: I have a supplementary question. Minister, how closely does the ACT government's upcoming strategic plan refer to the strategic plans for individual sports?

MS BERRY: Each sport generally has its own strategic plan and the advice from the Kinetica Group is about making sure that the strategic plan is an overview of sport and recreation across the ACT rather than the individual plans of each sporting organisation.

Influenza—vaccination

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the health minister. Minister, you have ruled out free flu vaccinations for Canberrans, apart from some priority groups like older people, in contrast to free flu shots being offered in every other jurisdiction. You have said that it is fine for Canberrans to cross the border to New South Wales to get free flu shots and that cost is not a barrier for most Canberrans. Minister, did you check with the New South Wales health minister that it was fine for Canberrans to get free flu shots in their state?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Castley for the question. Just to clarify, I was on radio and somebody texted in saying, “I understand that New South Wales is not requiring any check of residence or identity check in order to get the free flu vaccination. Does this mean people from Canberra can go to Queanbeyan and get their flu shot for free?” I responded: “Well, I imagine if there is no requirement for a residential check then yes, this does.” I was not encouraging Canberrans to do this. I was simply responding in a common-sense way to information that had been provided with a text.

At no time have I encouraged Canberrans to go across the border to get a free flu vaccination. I have had a conversation with the New South Wales health minister. They are obviously considering their position in relation to this matter. I have been very clear about the ACT government’s position on this at this time. I have also been clear that we continue to consider how we can support those who are most vulnerable to the worst outcomes of influenza and those who may face financial barriers to accessing flu vaccination to get a flu shot.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, for the sake of the Assembly understanding, why will you not provide the free flu shot to all Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I did go through this in some detail in my ministerial statement this morning. One of the reasons—as Ms Castley alluded to in her first question—is that the uptake of flu vaccination in the ACT is very good in comparison to other parts of Australia, including more than half of those over 65 already having been vaccinated, and the very large increase in uptake that we have seen over the last two weeks. We have seen a 20 per cent increase in uptake in the space of the last two weeks.

We will continue to monitor it, as I have said, with a focus on supporting vaccination for those who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes from influenza. Of course, we will continue to encourage Canberrans to come forward and receive their flu vaccination. We thank those many employers who are providing vaccination programs for their staff.

Free flu vaccinations are already available for priority groups through the commonwealth’s national immunisation program. I note that a consultation fee is applicable in some instances. We are encouraging, obviously, GPs to bulk-bill when people attend for a flu vaccination, particularly for those in the priority groups where the vaccine itself is free. I want to acknowledge that many GPs already do that.

Madam Speaker, the priority groups for a flu vaccination include children aged six months to less than five years, pregnant women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged six months and over, people aged 65 years and over and people with certain medical conditions.

The ACT government already provides free flu vaccinations to young children through its early childhood immunisation clinics and for pregnant women at antenatal clinics. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access flu vaccination

through Winnunga Nimmityjah, which is a really critical partner in delivering health services in the ACT. Indeed, more than 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50 here in the ACT have already accessed flu vaccination. We are also offering free flu vaccinations for people with disability or mental health issues through the COVID access and sensory clinic.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what about those Canberrans for whom cost is a barrier and who are not part of the priority group, like older people or those with a disability?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Lawder for the question. As I have just indicated, we are also offering free flu vaccinations for people with disability, people living with mental illness, their families, support staff, volunteers and carers through the access and sensory clinic at Weston Creek. We are looking at ways to expand to that. So far take-up has not been particularly significant in relation to that, but we have only just started to promote that opportunity. We are also ensuring that flu vaccine is available to health providers who support those who are hard to reach or the most vulnerable client groups, including Directions—

Ms Castley: On a point of order, the question was about those for whom cost is a barrier, not who can access it for free. What about those for whom there is a charge but they are too broke?

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister is within the policy area. It is in order.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thanks, Madam Speaker. Again, Ms Castley's understanding of this issue comes to the fore, because these groups are people who are not eligible under the national immunisation program but may have other barriers to access, including people from multicultural backgrounds and migrant and refugee backgrounds, through Companion House, through Directions and Interchange GP—those people who have other challenges in their lives that make it difficult for them to access mainstream health services but who are not eligible under the national immunisation program.

Canberra Health Services is also offering some people a flu vaccination when they present for other health care. That is primarily for people who are in a priority group and where it is appropriate in the setting. We are also considering other options to provide free flu vaccination should that be required in the local context, again, with an emphasis on those people who would have difficulty paying the relatively small cost of that flu vaccination, which I understand is about \$20 if you go to a pharmacist.

Labor Party—Labor Club donations

MR PARTON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Treasurer and Chief Minister. Chief Minister, I refer to an ABC study of 10 May, which states:

But nowhere in Australia is the flow of gambling losses to political parties more extreme than in the ACT.

In the decade to June 2020, gambling-related groups poured some \$6.5 million into party coffers.

Of this, over \$6.27 million was donated to the ALP from gambling-related groups owned by the Labor Party itself.

A further \$6.48 million was transferred between ALP-owned associated entities.

“Associated entity” means any organisation controlled by or acting for the benefit of a political party.

Chief Minister, how much poker machine revenue from the Labor Clubs has been provided to the ACT Labor Party since you have been Treasurer or Chief Minister?

MR BARR: I believe none. I do not think we have taken any donations from those sources since 2012. I will double-check that. Clearly, we moved out of receiving support in terms of cash donations from clubs. We receive in-kind donations. The Labor Party does have policy committee and sub-branch meetings in various licensed clubs, so they are declared as an in-kind donation. I note that the Liberal Party continues to receive money from licensed clubs as well, which, presumably, are gambling sources under your definition of them, Mr Parton.

Mr Hanson: Not \$6 million of them.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members!

MR BARR: But we made a conscious decision to move away from that. What I will say, Madam Speaker, is that all of the sources of our funding are declared and transparent, unlike the sort of money that flows to the Liberal Party.

Ms Lee: What? Don’t make unsubstantiated claims like that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lee, that is enough.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, how much poker machine revenue has been provided to the ACT Labor Party through associated entities, including the 1973 Foundation, since you have been Treasurer or Chief Minister?

MR BARR: The 1973 Foundation is indeed an investment vehicle. It invests in profit, principally.

Mr Parton: That’s not the way the ABC saw it.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Parton.

MR BARR: Not that different, as I understand it, from the funding sources received by the Canberra Liberals. We have moved away from money from the Canberra Labor Club. We now receive a portion of our funding through the 1973 Foundation, which has invested in non-gambling sources.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Hanson: Which was set up by pokie money.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members!

MR BARR: It has invested in non-gambling sources, Madam Speaker.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members! I won't come to you again, Mr Hanson. You will be warned next time.

MR BARR: What Mr Hanson is arguing is that the Labor Party should no longer receive any funding from any commercial source. Is that the argument?

Mr Parton: No.

Mr Hanson: No.

MR BARR: No, it is not. A decade ago, we moved away from this, but the agents of support for the gambling industry—

Mr Hanson: It was you, the Labor Clubs.

MR BARR: I remember the 2016 campaign.

Mr Hanson: It was your grubby little Labor Clubs.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson!

MR BARR: You, Mr Parton, and you, Mr Hanson, were arguing for more money and more policy leeway for the gambling industry to grow in this city. Since I have been Chief Minister it has gone the other way, and that is a good thing for this community.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, was the 1973 Foundation established from the proceeds of pokies? If so, how many millions of dollars have been put into the 1973 Foundation through the Labor Clubs which support you?

MR BARR: The 1973 Foundation is an investment vehicle that took proceeds from the Canberra Labor Club—that is very clear—to move the Labor Party away from receipt of funding from gambling into different sources.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: That is exactly what has happened. You can laugh all you want. That is very public and clear. We no longer receive funding in the way that we used to. That is clear. That is exactly the policy shift—

Mr Hanson: They laundered it.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, you are warned. You need to withdraw that.

MR BARR: Yes. That is an outrageous slur. You must withdraw that. You are accusing us of laundering money. You must withdraw that. That is outrageous.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes. Mr Barr, I will take that as a point of order. Mr Hanson, you will withdraw, and if I hear one more interjection from you, you will be named. Let's be very clear about that.

Mr Hanson: I withdraw.

MR BARR: That is about as grubby as it gets, Madam Speaker, and I am glad he has withdrawn. So he should. Disgraceful! Disgraceful behaviour. Using parliamentary privilege to suggest something like that is disgraceful and it is not worthy of this place.

Ms Lee: These double standards are just astounding.

MR BARR: And neither are your interjections, Ms Lee. Do better. Politics should be better than this.

Ms Lee: Hey! Don't lecture me, mate!

MR BARR: This sort of grubbiness. Politics should be better than this.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Barr, sit down, please. Ms Lee, you are now warned. The behaviour so far today, the interjections, has been well past the point of acceptability.

Ms Lee: I am not going to sit here and take lecturing from the minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: You are now warned. One more, Ms Lee, and both of you will be named and gone. My tolerance is exhausted.

Trees—urban canopy

MS CLAY: My question is to the minister for planning. The Greens have been campaigning for years to get 30 per cent tree canopy coverage, and variation 369 is a really important piece of reform that will help. Minister, you tabled draft variation 369 in the last sittings with some amendments. I have heard some concerns about where it will apply and what is exempted. Can you please tell me which blocks and areas will be covered by variation 369?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Clay for the question. Yes, the government is committed to cooling our city, and the provisions in Territory Plan variation 369 go a long way to providing shade and cooling through tree canopy requirements. So 369 will require single residential and multi-unit developments to have more planting

space and tree canopy cover, which will contribute to the increase in both permeable surfaces and tree canopy coverage across the city.

I listened to the concerns of the community and industry before making some amendments to the variation, which I explained in my tabling statement in the last sittings. We do not want to disadvantage people who have purchased house and land packages in good faith. Often these homes are pre-designed, and changes now could potentially mean costly redesign of houses. With homebuyers and industry alike facing some challenges regarding increased costs, we want to make sure that does not roll out to them.

The amendment will mean that the new blocks in greenfields areas will not be subject to variation 369 at this time. However, development and redevelopment in our established suburbs will need to comply with the requirements set out in the variation from 1 September this year. Commencement of the new Territory Plan in 2023 will mark the point at which this exemption finishes and all eligible blocks must comply with variation 369.

MS CLAY: Minister, when will we see the full package of reforms that will include new blocks in new estate development plans that are approved after 1 January 2020?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, at the completion of the Territory Plan in 2023, we will see that effect take place. We are also looking to expand requirements for living infrastructure in the Territory Plan, in the new one, so that our commercial zones can also be cooler and we can plan specifically for trees and green space when planning for new estates.

MR DAVIS: Minister, when can the community expect all of the legislative and reform work related to DV369 to be completed?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Davis for the question. As I said in the last two answers, it is a staged process. The variation takes effect on 1 September. There are some blocks, as explained, where it will not take effect until we have the new Territory Plan in 2023. There has been some discussion at community councils, I understand, about some confusion. To bring some clarity to that, I have asked the directorate to look at some technical amendments to ensure there is no confusion about which blocks are excluded from variation 369.

Economy—federal government

MR PETTERSSON: My question is for the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you please provide a brief update on ACT jobs and the economy, and how the ACT government will work with the new federal Labor government to create more jobs in Canberra.

MR BARR: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. I am delighted to see that today's national accounts figures show that the ACT economy again grew. Our state final demand increased by 1.7 per cent in the March quarter, principally driven by strong household consumption, which increased three per cent in the quarter. That is further

confirmation of the strength of the economic recovery in the territory. State final demand is now up 3.2 per cent over the year—one of the strongest rates of economic growth of any of the Australian states or territories.

Currently, we have 234,500 people in employment, with a participation rate of 70.7 per cent—one of the highest workforce participation rates in Australia. Unemployment is at 3.1 per cent. There are 11,500 job vacancies currently in the territory, and only 7,600 unemployed people. What this means is that we have one of the strongest labour markets in Australia, and we have pushed the boundaries of what constitutes full employment, thanks to a greatly diversified economy. So from here we need to commit to creating more good, secure, local jobs, further lowering that unemployment rate to increase the workforce participation rate and to finally see some real wage growth.

We need to invest more in TAFE and university places. It is great to see the federal government committing to that. We need to work with business to invest in renewables. It is great to see a federal government commitment to that. We need to invest more in the care economy—aged care and childcare, in particular. We need to make childcare cheaper. That will support workforce participation. And we need to support better pay and conditions for workers. Those were all policies that were front and centre of the last federal election campaign. These federal policies, combined with the ACT government's own actions will drive our economic recovery. *(Time expired.)*

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, how significant is the tertiary sector to Canberra's economy, and how does the election result impact the sector in the ACT?

MR BARR: Tertiary education is a very significant part of our economy. One of the things we can absolutely conclude from the federal election result is that the war on Australian universities is over. After a decade of treating universities as badly as the Australian Public Service was treated—sometimes, even worse: slashing funding and damaging Australia's brand internationally as a great destination for study and making it even harder to attract new students to our nation—the sweeping away of that rotten coalition government last month paves the way for a renaissance and recovery of the Australian university sector! It is a key economic priority for this jurisdiction and, indeed, international tertiary education is a major part of almost all state and territory economies. So I am delighted that the war on universities will end, and that the new federal government is committed to investing more in universities—more study opportunities for Australians, more certainty for universities, and a desire to work with them to grow our nation's research and development base and to lead to a smarter Australia.

What sort of federal government wants to divest from one of the biggest and most significant industries in Australia? The previous coalition government. Why would they not support a smarter Australia? I think we got a bit of an insight with the sort of federal campaign that was run by that coalition of parties. It is such an amazing thing for this nation now that the war on universities is over.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, given that the Australian Public Service is another major employer in Canberra, what does a change of government mean for the APS, and the flow-on effects for the ACT economy more broadly?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question. What it means, principally, is value and respect, which was completely absent from the treatment of the Australian Public Service by the former federal government. The APS sustained, over nearly a decade, outsourcing, decentralisation and a denuding of its core capacity—all for purely ideological reasons. The new federal government is committed to building a stronger and more efficient Australian Public Service that delivers better outcomes for the community and that can offer frank and fearless advice to the federal government. That means working constructively with the men and women who make up the Australian Public Service and the unions who strengthen the public sector, and includes fair and equitable conditions and genuine bargaining to achieve better outcomes across the public sector.

So, this is good news for Canberra and good news for the many public servants who work across the Australian government. A strengthened public sector is good for Canberra's economy. It is also good for the many non-government sectors that work in partnership with the Commonwealth, and indeed the small businesses and others who benefit from a strong ACT economy and a robust public sector. I think Canberrans are sick of the APS being used as a political football—decentralising it and using it as a space to find funds to fund pork-barrelling in other electorates. Hopefully, that era is over and behind us, and we can move forward with a stronger Australian Public Service that will mean a stronger nation.

ACT Health—elective surgery

MS LAWDER: My question is to the health minister. Last month, in May, you flagged suspending elective surgeries given the public health system is struggling with high demand and COVID cases. A question time brief prepared for you in late February revealed that, when you suspended non-essential elective surgeries in March 2020, that resulted in more than 1,500 patients becoming overdue for surgery just four months later—representing one quarter of the total waitlist. This year, how many patients have missed out on their surgery since you suspended the operations last month?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Lawder for the question. It is always a difficult choice to delay elective surgery. We know that that really means a difficult time for people. That is why we did everything we could to avoid having to make that decision. I want to be clear that the delays in elective surgery this time are not a full suspension of category 2 and 3 elective surgery. That did happen for Calvary Public Hospital earlier in the year in response to the beginning of the Omicron wave. It is now more of a case by case, we need to slow down elective surgery in order to be able to do all of the other things that our health system needs to do with the workforce challenges that our health system is facing and that every health system across the country is facing. I would refer members to this morning's *AM* story on ABC about the Victorian health system and what other areas of our economy are facing. This is a

reality that we have to deal with. It is not something that any of us want to do, to delay elective surgery.

I would also point out to Ms Lawder—she referenced the 2020 reduction in elective surgery—that the AIHW data that the *Canberra Times* reported on today indicated that the ACT had the biggest increase in hospital separations for any part of any jurisdiction in the country the following year, because we worked really hard to catch up. We got through that backlog and caught up. Unfortunately, the impact of the Delta wave and the impact of the Omicron wave have seen the number of people waiting increase again.

Ms Castley: A point of order, Madam Speaker. The question was how many patients have missed out on their surgery since operations were suspended or slowed down? How many patients?

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister was in the policy area. You have got two seconds left, Minister.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy to take on notice the detail of that.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what category are those patients and when will their surgeries take place?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Lawder for the supplementary. We try extremely hard not to delay category 1 elective surgery. That is an absolute last resort, but I cannot say that it never happens. Most of those people would be in the category 2 and category 3 elective surgeries. Of course, we will try to catch up on those as quickly as we can. That is why we have made arrangements—and we funded it in the budget review—to shift some elective surgery from the public system into the private system. We are continuing to work with our private hospital partners to ensure that we get through as much public surgery work as we possibly can, given the resource constraints that every health system—every jurisdiction—is facing across the country.

We put in specific additional resources to shift some of that activity into the private hospitals so that we could get through as much as possible. We will continue to monitor this. We will catch up as quickly as we can, but we know we are going to have some constraints next financial year as well. We are implementing the digital health record right across our public health and hospital system next financial year, in the second half of this year. That is a massive, massive effort that is going to require some reduction in elective surgery at Canberra Hospital. We are working through how we make up for that and how we work with our private hospital partners around that.

I can assure Ms Lawder that when we committed to doing 60,000 elective surgeries over this four years we meant that and we will do everything in our power to achieve that target.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, will the number of patients who have had their surgery suspended or delayed this time be more than 1,500, like it was in 2020?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I do not believe that it will. It does depend on what time frame you are looking at. Obviously, we had the initial delay in the suspension of category 2 and 3 elective surgeries at Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce. My understanding is that about 500 elective surgeries at that time were postponed as a result of that decision. If you include that, I still do not think we will get to 1,500 elective surgeries having been delayed, but that may be the case. My understanding is that we will definitely not meet our 14,800 target for this financial year. It may be that we do not even get to 14,000. We are still working through exactly what those numbers will look like. We are doing everything we can to get through as much activity as we can with the workforce challenges that every jurisdiction is facing.

Gungahlin—swimming pool

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Minister, can you please provide an update on the Gungahlin Leisure Centre 50-metre pool maintenance and repair?

MS BERRY: Thank you, Mr Braddock. I know that Mr Braddock and other members for Yerrabi are interested in the progress on the Gungahlin Leisure Centre pool. I can say that Kynetic Construction and Management Services, which is the contractor, has been working hard to continue its restoration of the 50-metre pool. The tiling of that pool has commenced and is almost complete.

As members will know, the program pool closed on 16 May for routine maintenance work. Initially, the program pool was scheduled for closure for regular maintenance at the end of 2022, but the decision was made to close that pool earlier so that it would not interfere with the repair and remediation of the 50-metre pool rectification works. There was some moisture ingress within the eastern wall of the 50-metre pool, which has been rectified. The advice that has been received was that completing the maintenance work on the program pool as I said, would minimise the disruption to the 50-metre pool. So we now anticipate that the 50-metre pool repairs will be complete by the middle of this year.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, is there any indication as to when the program pool will be reopened?

MS BERRY: I am assuming that it is around the same time as the 50-metre pool will be back on deck. But if it is different to that, I will let the Assembly know.

MR DAVIS: Minister, can you assure the people of Tuggeranong that the same issues will not beset the Lakeside Leisure Centre pool in Tuggeranong, particularly given the planned investment in the new hydrotherapy pool at that location?

MS BERRY: Pools are notoriously challenging and can form leaks for a variety of different reasons. What I can assure the Tuggeranong community is that, should any issues arise—I am not aware of any, and there has recently been repairs and maintenance done at the Tuggeranong pool—they will be rectified and the community will be made aware of them. As I said, the maintenance program at Tuggeranong has

been completed over the last couple of years and I understand that there are no issues at that pool.

ACT Health—nurses

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Health. Last month, on 17 May, the *Canberra Times* reported that, in March last year, there were 3,002 full-time nurses employed by Canberra Health Services. Twelve months later, in March this year, there were 3,280 employed, an increase of 278 nurses. However, 365 nursing staff either resigned or retired last year. Minister, if 278 extra nurses were employed, yet 365 nursing staff left, doesn't that mean Canberra is going backwards on nurse numbers?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Not surprisingly, it was a bit difficult to follow all of that math, so I will take the detail of the question on notice. But it is not true that Canberra is going backwards on nurse numbers.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, is this a long-term trend, with more nurses leaving the system than being employed?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: No.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, in the last 12 months, how many more nurses have we lost due to contracts ending or nurses being dismissed?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: A number of temporary contracts have come to an end over the COVID period. Again, I will take the detail of the question on notice, but I am not sure that it is getting to the point. I do have the workforce profile and headcount. This is for all of the workforce, but of course nurses are the most significant part of our health workforce. For the Canberra Health Services, we have seen an overall workforce increase between 2018-19 and 2021-22, to 16 February, of 15½ per cent. In FTE it is almost 12 per cent—an 11.9 per cent increase.

This tale that the Liberals are trying to spin, that somehow we are actually going backwards on workforce, backwards on the number of nurses, is absolutely untrue. It is another example of the Liberals being negative, negative, negative, and misusing numbers, trying to portray a story to Canberrans that is not true, and is not actually helpful for our nursing workforce.

Land—Macnamara

MR MILLIGAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Recently the land ballot for Macnamara opened with 51 blocks. By lunch time the same day, over 1,700 ballot entries were received. The demand for blocks of this land is extraordinary! Minister, will you release more land for detached housing to meet this level of demand?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Milligan for his question. Mr Milligan will know that the ACT government has been continuing with its development of land under the goals

and aims set under the indicative land release program, and that in the last program we met within one per cent of the development required under that indicative land release program, which is a significant effort given the challenges over the last couple of years in providing developable land for the ACT community, also reminding members of this place that the Suburban Land Agency and the ACT government provide two per cent of the land for housing and development in the ACT. I think that that is important to remember. However, the ACT government has not held back on its land development. In fact, it has increased its indicative land release program, and the Suburban Land Agency has not taken its foot off the accelerator, and has continued at the same pace, despite the challenges of COVID-19 over the last couple of years, and the bushfires before that.

That land development work will continue, with the development of land that the ACT government is responsible for. We have not held back like private developers can. We have continued to provide land to the ACT community, and we will continue to do that.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, what do you say to the thousands of Canberrans who will not be able to get a block of land from this ballot?

MS BERRY: Again, as members of the opposition will understand, there are levers that are within the ACT government's control with regard to land supply.

Ms Lee: Yes, land release!

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lee, I have warned you; I am naming you. I move:

That Ms Lee be suspended from the service of the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Ms Lee was suspended at 2.44 pm for three sitting hours in accordance with standing order 204, and she withdrew from the chamber.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Berry, you may continue. You have a minute to go.

MS BERRY: As I was saying, the ACT government is continuing on with the levers that it has in its control with regard to land release. There are a lot of other complex issues that are affecting the ACT community, as well as the rest of Australia, with regard to affordability of land, and they includes interest rates and the tax levers that the federal government has in its control. We are continuing on with our job here in the ACT in the provision and supply of developable land, and we will continue to do that.

MR HANSON: I have a supplementary question. Minister, are you choosing not to release more land for detached housing because the Greens want over 70 per cent of people in high-density housing?

MS BERRY: No.

Access Canberra—Dickson service centre

MR CAIN: My question is to the minister for regulatory services. Minister, I am aware of several constituents who have called the Canberra Liberals over the past few weeks concerned about how the Access Canberra storefront at Dickson is not open for general transactions.

Wait times are concerningly high across the ACT. Some residents have told me that, even post-lockdown, they have had to wait up to four hours in a storefront and some have not even managed to complete their transaction in that time. Minister, considering the extraordinarily long wait times, why is the Dickson storefront closed for general transactions?

MS CHEYNE: I would note, for members' benefit, that I am the minister for better regulation, not regulatory services. I thank Mr Cain for the question. It is true that the Dickson service centre does remain closed, except for land titles transactions as well as a new initiative that we have just started with COTA, which I will go to shortly. But it is worth noting, as we have discussed many times here, that Access Canberra is not immune from the effects of COVID-19 and that at any one time Access Canberra employees, including those who service our shopfronts, are in isolation, or have caring responsibilities or might have COVID themselves.

While Dickson has largely remained closed, I would note that all four of the other service centres remain open, that they are all easily accessible by public transport, and that the wait times there are much lower than Mr Cain would have this Assembly believe. Our wait times are published on the Access Canberra website. I pulled it up—that is how quickly I was able to do it; I pulled it up while Mr Cain was speaking—and all of the wait times at the moment are under half an hour, with Tuggeranong being the shortest. I would also note that Wednesdays are our busiest day.

Going briefly to the trial that we are undertaking with the Council on the Ageing, we have heard that there is feedback from older Canberrans that they would like an appointment-based system where they would have a more specific time in which to attend and have already discussed with an Access Canberra contact centre employee about what they needed to bring for that appointment. It is less efficient—(*Time expired.*)

MR CAIN: Minister, why is the Dickson service centre named “Access Canberra Service Centre Dickson”—the same generic name as the full service centres in Gungahlin, Belconnen, Woden and Tuggeranong—and yet, as you said, it is only providing services for land titles?

MS CHEYNE: We have heard some extraordinary things today, Madam Speaker.

Mr Cain: Please answer the question.

MS CHEYNE: This one might take the cake. I would note that I am seven seconds into the answer, Madam Speaker.

Mr Cain: The misleading name, Minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Cain, stop.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Ask a silly question; there you go.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. She has to be direct. I note that in her previous answer she complained that Mr Cain had called her the minister for regulation instead of the minister for better regulation. She seems to care about labels. She thinks that they are important when they come to her. Why are they not important when they come to Access Canberra? I think it is a reasonable question.

MADAM SPEAKER: There is no point of order, Mr Hanson.

MS CHEYNE: It is an important opportunity to talk about exactly what is happening at the Dickson service centre. Yes, it is a service centre; yes, it remains a service centre. When conditions allow, we are looking forward to the Dickson service centre coming back online and being returned to normal operations.

This is an important trial. It is one in which we are proud to have been partnering with COTA. It is one that older Canberrans have called for and we are looking forward to seeing the results of that trial. While Access Canberra does remain affected by the COVID-19 conditions that are affecting all workforces across the community, this is an appropriate opportunity to trial something different, to do something that is a bit innovative, and to see if it might be something that we could expand right across all of our service centres. Dickson is a service centre. It is still undertaking—

Mr Cain interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Cain, I do not have to come back to you again.

MS CHEYNE: transactions. It is doing so at the moment in a booked appointment model. As soon as we can return to normal operations, we will consider that.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you advice what date the Dickson service centre will return to normal operations?

MS CHEYNE: I think I have thoroughly addressed this in my previous two answers.

Mr Cain interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Cain, that is enough of the cross-interjections.

Government—infrastructure investment

MS ORR: My question is to the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister, how does a change of federal government impact investment in ACT infrastructure? How will the ACT government work with the federal Labor government to get a better deal for Canberra?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question, I think it is clear the only way is up when it comes to infrastructure investment in the ACT. It is a pretty low base on which to build, given what the previous federal government was up to—or, in fact, not up to—when it came to investment in the ACT.

So the election of a new federal government is an opportunity to work more productively and collaboratively with the federal government. I have, again, made no secret of the fact that we will be seeking a larger and fairer share of commonwealth infrastructure investment. I have already written to the Prime Minister in relation to this and we have been engaging with various portfolio ministers, ahead of their swearing in and indeed, since they have been sworn in. This includes better engagement on the extension of Canberra's light rail network through the parliamentary triangle, noting, of course, the complexities that come with traversing through commonwealth land under the control of the National Capital Authority.

I think it is important to note that the new government has already committed to funding a range of infrastructure projects in partnership with the territory government, right across the ACT and we look forward to seeing more of this over the next three years.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, how does federal government investment in infrastructure projects support the ACT government's infrastructure planning?

MR BARR: Thank you. Well greater and fairer infrastructure funding puts the ACT government in a better position to forward plan our infrastructure program and to better meet the needs of our growing city. So it is pleasing to see a commitment already to support a range of infrastructure projects across health, education, climate action, sustainable transport and sport and recreation that complement our existing infrastructure program.

We welcome the commitment to invest \$15 million in the upgrade of the AIS Arena, a commonwealth owned asset that it is great to see the commonwealth government now taking responsibility for, given the previous coalition government let it run down over 10 years.

The community battery program is a great example of where ACT policy and federal policy will align. The community's batteries part of the federal program will work well with the Big Canberra Battery distributed network and will help increase storage capacity, reduce emissions and lower energy prices in the territory.

The urgent care clinic in Canberra's south, like our nurse led walk in centres, will be an important addition to public health provision in the territory and support better access to quality health care when people need it and where they need it.

The other projects that I have touched on this morning include partnering with the ACT government on the CIT Woden campus, the Gorman House upgrades, the Canberra Garden city cycle route and working with the University of Canberra—how about that, working with a university?—to support a major new sports arena for the university, for the community, and indeed, for some of our elite sporting teams.

It is that sort of collaboration and partnership that will see things get done in the ACT and after nearly 10 years of missing out year, after year, after year, under the miserable previous government when it came to infrastructure investment, things have changed, Madam Speaker. *(Time expired.)*

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, what are some of the infrastructure priorities for the Canberra region more broadly?

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. It is fantastic to see that this region features strongly in the federal government infrastructure planning and priorities. And we are, of course, a major economic and services hub for a significant portion of South East New South Wales and the infrastructure and services inside the territory and surrounding the ACT are utilised by ACT and New South Wales residents.

So we have a shared interest in this, some of the priorities include a better rail service between Canberra and Sydney, upgrades to the Monaro and Barton Highways, better freight access into Canberra Airport. And so, the best news we have received on this front is that the member for Eden-Monaro, whose electorate entirely surrounds the ACT, re-elected with a massive swing in her favour, is the new Minister for Territories, Local Government and Regional Development. We could not have a better partner to support infrastructure in our part of Australia.

Again, another significant change, another significant change, from what we all had to suffer through over the last nine years! And those opposite are the only people in Canberra who are grumpy about this outcome.

I believe further questions can be placed on the notice paper, Madam Speaker.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice ACT Health—elective surgery

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I was asked some questions in question time about elective surgery. While I know I have taken some of the detail on notice, I draw members' attention to the fact that Mr Peffer, in his comments to the media, had confirmed that we are expecting about 11 elective surgeries a day to be postponed as part of this slowdown.

Calwell High School—safety

MS BERRY: Madam Speaker, I can provide some further information with regard to the special purpose review at Calwell High School. As I said, the review represents educational expertise from multiple Australian jurisdictions. Members of the review team include Kris Willis, who is the Director of School Improvement, ACT Education Directorate; Todd Macbeth, Acting Executive Director, School Support Division, Department of Education and Training, Victoria; Craig Edwards, Principal, Dickson College, ACT Education Directorate; Anne Gunmow, Director, Learning and Teaching, ACT Education Directorate; and Anne Reddie, Director, Child Wellbeing and Mental Health Services New South Wales Department of Education.

The special purpose review will be completed on 3 June. The reviewers will be conducting a range of activities which will include consulting with teachers, school leadership, students and others in the school community; and considering processes, procedures and documentation in place at the school. The review will provide a framework for activities to address any identified opportunities for school improvement. The ACT Education Directorate wrote to parents on 23 May to inform them of the review.

Building—combustible cladding

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, in relation to my answer to Mr Cain on combustible cladding, I can advise that no DA fees are applicable.

ACT Health—elective surgery

Ms Castley: A clarification, thank you, Madam Speaker. I note that the health minister took some questions on notice. I am just wondering what time frame a question taken on notice during question time has before it will come back.

MADAM SPEAKER: The standard rules apply. She has provided some information and the comprehensive answer will be within the standing orders time frame.

Ms Castley: Great; okay. Thank you.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Allocation of Statutory Functions to Assembly Committees (General) Nomination 2022 (No 2), dated 25 May 2022.

Bills referred to Committees, pursuant to resolution of the Assembly of 2 December 2020, as amended—Correspondence—Bills—

Inquired into—Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Amendment Bill 2022—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the Chair, Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, dated 11 May 2022.

Not inquired into—Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2022—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing, dated 10 May 2022.

Legislation Act—Assembly Committees for Consultation (Appointments to Statutory Provisions) Nomination 2022 (No 2), dated 16 May 2022.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Dr Paterson for 1 and 2 June due to personal reasons.

Papers

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Financial Management Act—

Pursuant to subsection 30F(3)—2021-22 Capital Works Program—Progress report—Year-to-date performance as at 31 March 2022.

Pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report—Financial quarter ending 31 March 2022.

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act and Financial Management Act—ACT Teacher Quality Institute Board Appointment 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-41 (LR, 28 April 2022).

Confiscation of Criminal Assets Act—Confiscation of Criminal Assets Amendment Regulation 2022 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2022-5 (LR, 2 May 2022).

Court Procedures Act—Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2022 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2022-6 (LR, 9 May 2022).

Electronic Conveyancing National Law (ACT)—Electronic Conveyancing National Law (ACT) Operating Requirements 2022—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-44 (LR, 18 May 2022).

Official Visitor Act—

Official Visitor (Children and Young People) Appointment 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-42 (LR, 28 April 2022).

Official Visitor (Children and Young People) Visit and Complaint Guidelines Revocation 2022—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-52 (LR, 16 May 2022).

Public Place Names Act—

Public Place Names (Kenny) Determination 2022—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-50 (LR, 16 May 2022).

Public Place Names (Taylor) Determination 2022—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-51 (LR, 16 May 2022).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Driver Licence and Related Fees Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-46 (LR, 12 May 2022).

Road Transport (General) Fees for Publications Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-49 (LR, 12 May 2022).

Road Transport (General) Numberplate Fees Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-47 (LR, 12 May 2022).

Road Transport (General) Refund and Dishonoured Payments Fees Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-48 (LR, 12 May 2022).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-45 (LR, 12 May 2022).

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act—Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Fees) Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-40 (LR, 26 April 2022).

University of Canberra Act—University of Canberra Council Appointment 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022—38 (LR, 7 April 2022).

Utilities Act—Utilities (Greenpower obligations) Exemption 2022—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-39 (LR, 26 April 2022).

Veterinary Practice Act—Veterinary Practice (Fees) Determination 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-43 (LR, 2 May 2022).

Financial Management Act—consolidated financial report

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:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report—Financial quarter ending 31 March 2022.

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

Capital works programs—progress report

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:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to subsection 30F(3)—2021-22 Capital Works Program—Progress report—Year-to-date performance as at 31 March 2022.

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 Ms Vassarotti for 2 June due to personal reasons.

Schools—teachers

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.02): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) for several years, critical staff shortages in the ACT school system have been noted by teachers, parents and the Australian Education Union;
- (b) in 2020, ACT Labor promised 400 new teachers to address the shortage, which had reached critical levels;
- (c) the Productivity Commission Report on Government Services shows the ACT Government has, in fact, cut real expenditure per full-time equivalent student in public schools by 3.3 percent during the period 2010-11 to 2019-20;
- (d) recent incidents of violence, bullying and assault, which have led to at least one school being closed by WorkSafe ACT and others investigated, have been reported as being “a direct result of the teacher shortage”; and
- (e) despite repeated questioning, the minister has been unwilling or unable to provide adequate or complete information on the current situation in the ACT or to clearly identify a plan to recruit and retain the teachers needed to address the crisis; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) provide to the Assembly and the community a detailed, comprehensive report that includes:
 - (i) the total number of full-time teachers required in the ACT to meet current needs, and projected future needs up to 2028;
 - (ii) the number of full-time teachers actually in the current system, and how that compares to the required number up to 2028;
 - (iii) how many teachers have left the ACT system, and how that number affects the net number of teachers currently in the system; and
 - (iv) the total of actual recruited teachers in the current year, and how that affects the net number of teachers in the system; and
- (b) provide a clear plan, with costings and delivery dates, to recruit and retain the teachers to address the crisis in teachers in the ACT, and provide that plan to the Assembly by the first sitting of 2023.

Madam Speaker, I am inspired in a negative way at the start of my speech, having listened to Mr Barr speaking about what he described as a miserable former government. If anyone would understand misery and the ability of a government to inflict misery, it is Andrew Barr and his fellow ministers. Let me tell you how miserable this current government is and how miserable his ministers are.

You can think about how many teachers are not in their schools, either through not being allowed there, because of the violence that occurred at Calwell, or because of the chronic teacher shortage. You can think about the children who have suffered in our schools—and we have seen numerous reports. This Chief Minister, who talked about the misery inflicted by governments, is the Chief Minister who cut 23 schools. If ever there was a minister who inflicted misery on people, it is Andrew Barr, the most miserable minister of the lot!

This is a government that cut 3.3 per cent of funding to ACT public schools. It is in the Productivity Commission report. If Mr Barr wants to talk about inflicting misery, that misery is playing out now in some of our ACT schools—in decaying school infrastructure and in schools that are not up to the standard that they should be in this wealthy city. There are declining academic results, as we have seen. There are schools that are overcrowded. And this is being led by a minister who has the audacity to call kids who struggle through NAPLAN “dumb”!

If the Chief Minister wants to talk about misery and being miserable, let me tell you who is inflicting misery on the children and the teachers of this jurisdiction: you need to do nothing more than look in the mirror, because we have a teacher crisis here in the ACT, and it has come on your watch.

After 20 years of funding cuts, of cutting schools, we find that this miserable government has caused a dire situation in our school system. We have discussed it at length. There have been numerous damning reports on infrastructure and teacher shortages. There have been pleas for help from the unions. There have been reports of a culture of bullying across our schools. What have we heard from this government? There have been bombastic responses, simply saying that every school is great and that there is nothing to see here. We are told, “We don’t need some sort of review of our school system,” as has been called for by Ms Lee and me.

We, the union, teachers, parents and children are incredibly frustrated by this miserable government that has not done what it needs to do to keep our teachers on the front line and to provide the support that they have needed. It has not provided the assurance, certainly, that the opposition wants in order to know that this government is across its portfolio, that the minister knows what is going on in the schools, how many teachers we need in the longer term and how we are going to get there.

At its heart, that is what this motion is about. It is about ensuring that this government has done the workforce analysis and has developed a plan over the long term. At the start this motion recognises the issue of teacher shortages and the problems that we have seen for years and years—made worse by COVID, of course, but this is not a new phenomenon. We went into this pandemic with a crisis, and now it is the children, the teachers and the parents who are paying the price for the malaise that has occurred under this miserable government.

We are in the middle of a term. During the last term we saw that these problems were present. In 2018 a *Canberra Times* headline read, “Student violence against ACT teachers doubles”. The article stated:

The teachers’ union will seek assurances from the ACT Education Minister after figures showed a doubling in reported physical violence by ... school students against school staff in the past four years.

When the minister, no doubt, as she normally does, tries to blame everything on COVID, I point out that 2018 was a long time before COVID arrived. In 2019 another media report was titled, “Something is wrong: inquiry hears harrowing school

violence stories”. It included stories such as that of a nine-year-old boy who felt that—and I quote:

... all hope is lost after being punched, kicked and strangled in the schoolyard, remains in the same class as the child responsible.

Another story reads:

A family was forced to send their daughter interstate to escape bullying and violence at school ...

In 2021 the Australian Principals Occupational Health and Wellbeing Survey showed that 44 per cent of school leaders had been subjected to threats of violence, 39 per cent of school leaders had been subjected to physical violence, 33 per cent of school leaders have been subjected to bullying, 31 per cent of school leaders have been subjected to cyberbullying, and 31 per cent of school leaders have been subjected to both threat of violence and physical violence. One of the key findings was about the stress of teacher shortages. A finding was:

Teacher shortages are now at their highest rank as a source of stress across the decade of this survey.

The warnings in these reports were echoed again by the report that was released by the ACT division of the Australian Education Union last year. The report was called *Under-staffed, under-resourced, under-appreciated: the teacher shortage and its impact on our schools*. Let me quote from that:

The extent of staff shortages is undeniable, with 91% of respondents telling us that their school is negatively impacted by a shortage of staff.

This is a view overwhelmingly shared regardless of employee classification or setting.

Almost all respondents (95%) say the impacts are ‘serious’.

As well as the stress on teachers and the violence used against students and teachers alike, the shortage has created a massive risk for learning in the system right now. Again, I quote from the AEU report:

The staffing pressure on the public education system has direct consequences for students.

Almost all respondents ... feel that students are disadvantaged and their learning outcomes compromised.

Finally, the report puts the blame squarely on resources. While acknowledging that it is a difficult and complex system, it states:

In relation to overall resources, 70% of respondents say that schools are not sufficiently resourced to provide the consistent quality of education that their students need to succeed.

Let me say that again: 70 per cent of respondents say that schools are not sufficiently resourced!

This is your mob that do this. This is Mr Gentleman's budget that he keeps voting for, and 70 per cent of teachers say that it does not give the resources to provide the consistent quality of education that their students need to succeed. The report continues:

Almost all principal respondents ... who have the widest view of both a school's budget and its impacts on learning conditions, say that the Directorate lacks the necessary resources to meet the demands of schools.

Mr Gentleman votes for this budget that Ms Berry no doubt puts forward, supported by the Greens—they are championing it!—but 94 per cent of principals say that the directorate lacks the necessary resources to meet the demands of the schools. Shame! And you want to talk about miserable governments. Mr Barr wants to talk about miserable governments. It is a miserable government when 94 per cent of principals and over 70 per cent of teachers say, "You are not giving us the resources we need to do our job." Talk about a miserable government!

This lack of funding is not just anecdotal; it is backed up by the Productivity Commission. The Productivity Commission's *Report on government services* shows that the ACT government has in fact cut real expenditure per FTE student in public schools by 3.3 per cent during the period 2010-11 to 2019-20. With respect to that 3.3 per cent cut in real terms, Mr Gentleman voted for all of those budgets, didn't he? I am sure you voted for a few of those, Mr Assistant Speaker Pettersson. Ms Berry no doubt put those budgets together. The Treasurer would have been championing those cuts, and that is playing out now—all supported, all aided and abetted, by their Greens mates. Those cuts are in black and white in the Productivity Commission report, with almost 95 per cent of principals saying that the directorate does not give them enough resources.

No matter how you try and spin this, and no doubt there will be a lot of spin coming from the minister and her Greens mates, we know that there have been problems with stress, workforce pressure and teacher shortages, and that leads to a whole bunch of other things. It leads to issues with occupational violence and academic results, and we have seen a degrading of facilities. We have just had an Assembly inquiry into that. At its nub, everybody is saying that we are under-resourced—the union, the principals, the teachers and the Productivity Commission.

Let me go to what the government tells us. I go to the coverage of a 2019 Assembly inquiry:

Revelations in the *Canberra Times* that some students were being left in harms' way after attacks sparked calls from parents and the opposition for an expert-led inquiry into the handling of violence in schools.

Instead, the ACT government referred the matter to a joint standing committee—on the condition it seal any evidence which could identify a person or a school.

A number of secret hearings have already been held behind closed doors, though the committee chair was unable to say how many there would be in total or if any would be public, as had previously been indicated.

At the time the shadow education minister said:

It looks designed to protect the minister's reputation rather than shine a light on the problem.

I think that is true. That again goes to our significant disappointment that the minister will not instigate a system-wide review into the education system, as Ms Lee has been calling for and as I have been calling for. Now we have it happening retrospectively, once a school has been shut down by WorkSafe; then we are told, "We'll do a review." It is short-sighted not to do a review of our system to prevent that sort of terrible stuff from playing out, as we have seen at Calwell. We want to shine a light on the problem. We want to understand, at its nub, how the government will dig itself out of this hole that it has created for itself.

The Labor Party promised 400 new teachers to address this shortage. This was in the lead-up to the last election. At the time Ms Berry said:

As Canberra continues to grow, a re-elected Labor government will make sure that our public education system grows with it. That's why we'll hire 400 new teachers and support staff for ACT public schools.

We are now halfway through the term, and I think we are a long way short of 400 new teachers having been hired, particularly in net terms. As teachers leave the system you do not need to just hire 400; you have to backfill the ones that have left before you even start to grow the system with new teachers.

We want to know how many teachers we have. What is the shortfall? The minister will continually say, "There's only one vacancy." That is her response when asked questions about it: "There's only one vacancy." When there is occupational violence, we are told, "These incidents are very rare." That is clearly not the case.

I am calling for information that the government should have; if it has not, it needs to provide that information. I do not think it is difficult. I do not think it is controversial. I think it is necessary. We do not want to be in this place in several years time with the same problem. We want to make sure that there is a long-term plan, and, at its nub, that is what this motion is about. It is about making sure that there is a long-term plan to make sure that we do not have an ongoing problem.

We want to know how many teachers we actually need to meet current needs, and out to 2028. What are the projected future needs? The union want to know that as well. I am pretty sure they are disappointed by the fact that this government has not been able to provide that information about how many teachers we will need over the longer term.

What is that shortfall? How many teachers have left the system? How many have been recruited? This is pretty basic information that I think we need to know. As the AEU said:

It is a mystery to the AEU as to why we do not have projections for what numbers of staff we need, the teaching staff we need and in what specialisations we need them.

This motion calls on the government to provide that. We agree with the AEU that that is information that should be provided.

In part, this motion calls for some information that the government needs to have, in order to do the next step which I am calling for, which is to develop a plan. If you do not know how many teachers you need in the longer term, and in what classifications and so on, you will not be able to develop a plan to recruit and retain. That is what I am calling for—a clear plan, with costings and delivery dates, to recruit and retain the teachers to address the crisis in teachers in the ACT, and to provide that to the Assembly by the first sitting of 2023.

I hope that that is not actually controversial. Hopefully, that is something that we would all support here. It seems reasonable that the government should have such a plan and provide assurance not just to us but to teachers and to parents, who are on the front line and who are currently looking to this government to provide some sort of leadership and a way out of this crisis that they have created.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (3.17): I move the following amendment to Mr Hanson’s motion:

Omit paragraph (1), substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) for several years, critical staff shortages in the ACT school system have been noted by teachers, parents and the Australian Education Union;
- (b) in the 2020 election, ACT Labor committed to hire 400 new teachers and school staff for ACT public schools;
- (c) the Productivity Commission Report on Government Services shows that ACT public schools are the best funded in the country, with the exception of the Northern Territory;
- (d) recent incidents of violence, bullying and assault, which have led to notices from Worksafe Act, have been reported as being ‘a direct result of the teacher shortage’; and
- (e) the ACT Government routinely reports on staffing in public schools; and”.

Rather than going along with all of the negativity and talking down of our public schools, which Mr Hanson has made a habit of since he has been the spokesperson for

education in this place, I will start by talking up our public schools, and talking about how proud I am of ACT schools—how proud I am of every single public schoolteacher and school staff, and how proud I am of all of our school communities.

They have done an incredible job over the last couple of years, which have been difficult for everyone. Our teachers have adjusted in ways that we would never have been able to predict. The international COVID health pandemic exists and still continues today. Whilst I understand that the opposition does not think that it even existed in the past, it still continues, and it is still exacerbating and causing concern across our community. Our schools in the ACT have not been immune from the impact of COVID-19 and the pandemic that we have been facing.

In celebrating our public schools, I would like to give a shout-out to the Australian Education Union and their public schools awards which were held on Friday night of last week. I begin by congratulating Zuzette Fahey, the winner of the reconciliation award, which was presented by Patrick Judge, the secretary of the Australian Education Union. I presented Kirsty McGovern-Hooley with the award of friend of public education, and Lorelei Choy was presented with the advocate of the year award by the national secretary of the AEU. It was a wonderful celebration of our public schoolteachers after such a difficult time, and a time of not being able to get together and celebrate our wonderful public school community. I give a massive shout-out to our schools, to the award winners and to all of the runners-up and people who celebrated on that night and across our schools in the ACT.

I know that Canberrans are incredibly proud of their public education. It is why more Canberra families every year are choosing their local public school. This shows how much the ACT government values its public schools, and that is shown in our budgets, despite what Mr Hanson says.

Last year's budget saw an additional \$51 million invested in education. That number does not include the hundreds of millions of dollars of capital investment in school infrastructure every year. ACT government funding for the school system has grown year on year. Last year's budget included total expenditure of \$1.5 billion on education—20 per cent of total government spending. ACT public schoolteachers are the highest paid in the country, with the last enterprise agreement negotiated with the government voted up by almost 99 per cent of staff.

Mr Assistant Speaker, Mr Hanson will have you believe that funding is being cut to ACT public schools, just because he keeps saying that it is so. The truth is that the ACT government funds above and beyond the Gonski school resourcing standard, meaning that ACT public schools are the best funded in the country, with the exception of the Northern Territory.

I want to be clear that having well-funded schools does not make the ACT immune from the national teacher shortage. We have never denied that. Nor does it mean we have escaped the impact of COVID-19 and the effect that it has had on staff absences. These are real challenges facing ACT schools. It is why the government is working closely with the Education Union, the CPSU and the UWU to ensure that schools can continue to operate safely during this pandemic and support all of our staff with the increased workload that has come with increased absences.

These unions represent the workers who understand these complex problems best. This government is determined to listen to the public schoolteachers, leaders and school staff, and work with them to understand and respond to these complex problems. In particular, we have partnered with the AEU to form the teacher shortage task force, which is methodically working to identify the root cause of these complex issues and, piece by piece, tackle their solutions.

We trust and respect our teaching professionals here in the ACT, which is why we are working with them, through their unions, to find solutions that will work in the ACT context. We have already made significant progress with the introduction of a centralised relief teacher pool and a suite of workload reduction measures, including reduced reporting and two additional planning days this term.

We also know that retaining teachers in the profession is really important. For example, the UC Affiliated Schools Program, which is unique to the ACT, is all about providing teachers at the start of their careers with opportunities to practise their craft before they even step into the classroom. Once teachers have started in our system, they are supported with mentoring and high quality professional learning.

Of course, we know that we cannot stop there, and there is much more to do. The teacher shortage task force is continuing to examine these challenges, and we are looking forward to getting great outcomes for teachers and school staff in the upcoming bargaining round.

This work is not easy, but I am proud that we have been able to work together with the union to do the hard work of addressing the national teacher shortage here in the ACT. Of course, Mr Hanson forgot to mention this work that is already occurring when he did his interviews today.

I would like to finish by thanking all of the unions, school principals and the P&C council for continuing to work well with us, and with me, to get the best possible outcomes for public education.

I would again like to congratulate the celebration of the ACT public school system, as well as, this week, the gathering of leadership here in the ACT, in their conference, on continuing on their own learning journeys. School leaders and teachers and school staff across Canberra are doing an incredible job, and they are doing it well, under the most challenging circumstances. Canberrans should be proud of them. I am proud of them, and this government is proud of them, and we will continue to work with them to overcome these challenges.

I commend the amendment that I have moved in my name. I thank Mr Hanson for bringing this important motion to the Assembly today and giving me a chance to talk proudly about and really talk up our public schools here in the ACT.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.25): I rise to speak to Mr Hanson's motion and in support of the amendments circulated by Minister Berry. I would like to note that the amendments circulated by Minister Berry go to the "notes" section of Mr Hanson's

motion and not the “calls on” part of Mr Hanson’s motion, as the requests are reasonable and the ACT Greens are pleased to support them.

We have discussed the systemic issue of teacher shortages in the ACT several times throughout this term of the Assembly. Last year the local branch of the AEU published a members report which found that schools throughout the ACT are deeply impacted by teacher shortages. We know that these shortages lead to grave workplace health and safety concerns for teachers and students alike.

In response to the AEU’s report, the Education Directorate, in partnership with the union, have established the Teacher Shortage Taskforce, which is the first of its kind in the country and is tasked with trying to limit the impact of national shortages here in the ACT. A necessary part of this work is the development of accurate workforce estimates and projections for the numbers, distribution and expertise of teachers across the territory, work that has been necessary for some time and discussed previously in this Assembly.

As a strong advocate for our public schools and our teachers, families and communities, I have been in constant discussions with the Education Union since my first week in this office about the impact of shortages on teacher safety, education delivery and school culture. In my dealings with the AEU ACT Branch, I have been confident in their practical approach to dealing with these issues and their generous contributions to the Teacher Shortage Taskforce thus far.

Teacher shortages around the country are causing significant issues across the public and non-government education sectors. As we have noted many times before, necessary COVID quarantines have only exacerbated these pre-pandemic shortages, having a profound impact on our teachers and the young people that they are educating.

It is absolutely necessary to note the issues faced across the country in relation to this issue, and I extend my solidarity not only to members of our teachers union but those in the New South Wales Teachers Federation and the Independent Education Union who have felt forced to strike in recent weeks over the same issues.

As a local member first and foremost, I am of course particularly concerned about the impact of these shortages on the schools and families in my electorate of Brindabella. In recent weeks there have been reports particularly surrounding Calwell High School, a school community which I am proud to have a strong relationship with. I am reassured by the government’s recent announcement of an independent review into the issues at Calwell High School.

This review does not demonstrate a failing, Mr Assistant Speaker, but rather calling for such a review and supporting and funding such a review is a demonstration of a commitment to due diligence and transparency around what is proving to be a very challenging situation. The systemic issues surrounding the conditions of teachers, including their pay, intensifying workloads and increasing administrative burdens, have been brought to bear on this school, impacting those who call it a workplace as well as the young people who attend.

I have met with the Work Health and Safety Commissioner in recent months too, and I am very encouraged by her strong approach and her commitment to stamp out unsafe working conditions across our city in all workplaces. We need to ensure that schools are supported to utilise the resources of this commission to the best of its ability. Let me take this opportunity to commit to continue to work with the Calwell High School community and all schools in Tuggeranong to best navigate this complex and difficult situation.

The “calls on” in this motion are straightforward. In this motion the Assembly is asking the government for a report on teacher numbers, projection for future staffing needs, and a plan to build our staffing cohort to meet those needs. This motion fundamentally supports process and transparency for already agreed upon policy directions, which is why I am pleased to see the minister’s support for this section of the motion.

The amendments we are supporting to the “notes” section provide clarity on the context and the position of the government in relation to these unfolding issues. The Teacher Shortage Taskforce is an important instrument for government in addressing shortages by doing what we can to support teachers. I hope that in fulfilling the “asks” of this motion, which simply support the ambitions of the taskforce, the government puts forward a practical yet bold plan to manage these shortages.

Teachers are the backbone of our schooling system, but it is necessary for us to be thinking creatively about the school environment as a whole and the types of supports that can and should be provided by our schools that go beyond the delivery of the curriculum and the learning objectives in each class. Schools are community facilities. They are hubs of activity. They are not only responsible for education but they provide whole of life pastoral care and support to young people.

The ACT Greens strongly back the government’s investments in youth and social workers and increased supports for teacher librarian training. Growing non-teacher roles through learning support and administrative officers as well will help to alleviate the intensity of the workloads on our teachers, which not only is important for ensuring their enjoyment of their jobs and their safety at work but will help in the retention of a high-quality teaching workforce across our system.

At the same time, we will need practical and almost immediate measures endorsed by the directorate and the union to reduce the workloads of our teachers. While we struggle to recruit enough teachers, we cannot afford to be bleeding qualified and committed educators because of unreasonable working conditions. As I said when we discussed this issue last year, without significant injections of funding into our public school system from our federal counterparts, public schools and the state and territory governments that run them are at pains to make the systemic reforms we already know need to occur. We have the plans, we know what works and we need increased investment locally and nationally to ensure that those plans, which have come from significant consultation and review, can be implemented wholeheartedly.

I take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the incoming federal Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP, and look forward to seeing the new federal Labor

government enact in full all of the requests of the “Every School. Every Child” campaign led by the Australian Education Union. Their demands are simple and reasonable, and I was pleased to support their campaign in the course of the federal election.

They ask that the federal government fund public schools to a minimum of 100 per cent of the schooling resource standards, which is recognised as the minimum funding requirement to give every child, regardless of their background, the greatest opportunity to achieve their full potential. That includes fully funded loadings for students with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from low-income SES backgrounds, rural and remote students and students requiring English language support.

They asked to remove the legislated 20 per cent cap on the commonwealth share of the SRS for public schools, remove the four per cent capital depreciation tax in school funding bilateral agreements between commonwealth and state and territory governments and establish a capital fund for public schools to help meet rising enrolment growth and infrastructure needs.

While I am encouraged that our nation is in a new direction under a new government, the proof will be in the pudding and I look forward to seeing these strong union calls achieved during this term of the federal government. This of course remains true, considering the change of government, a federal government that fundamentally supports and represent workers, but with strong left-wing voices on the crossbench in both houses I believe that now is our opportunity to achieve some of these bold visions for education reform that previous Labor governments, to their credit, have considered.

What we saw on 21 May was a public indictment of the neoliberalism of workplaces and the undermining of social services such as schools, hospitals and other public supports. I truly hope that this new parliament and new government rise to the very practical challenges that our country is facing, not least fundamentally funding for the inequalities in our education system.

With a properly funded education system, we could provide scholarships that pay for the degrees of those wishing to train as teachers, allowing them to make a liveable wage while undertaking the necessary practical training in our schools. This is a simple but practical way of making it easier to become a teacher while incentivising people to do so.

I am surprised that so many find the suggestion that we would create fee-free university and TAFE for highly skilled high school and college graduates to undertake the professional learning required to become a classroom teacher such a radical idea. If we acknowledge that there is a crisis, if we acknowledge that there is a shortage across the country, why are all sides of politics not united to find innovative and practical ways to encourage more people, more highly skilled graduates in high school and college to go through our school system and get an education degree? It baffles me that that position is considered radical and cannot be universally endorsed across the political spectrum.

As a workforce comprised primarily of women, considerations must also be paid to the gender dynamics of this situation. There is no doubt in my mind that structural inequality is bearing down upon our teacher shortage and steps must be taken to support the lives of workers in our system. With proper federal funding, we could provide support to teachers with caring responsibilities, ensuring that teachers with their own children, who they need to look after, do not find that a barrier to educating and working with other young people in our public schools. We can and should ensure that early childhood education is publicly funded and universally accessible as well.

We can and should ensure that our public mental health systems are well funded and universally accessible. I do not think it would shock anybody to say that some of the challenging situations we have seen in the media and politicised by the Canberra Liberals at some of our public schools have a root cause in wealth and income inequality and the ongoing challenge of managing our community's mental health. We can and should ensure that government policy developed in this space is bold, evidence based and delivered by expert public servants. The issues in our schools are intersectional with issues that are across our society. We must all be committed to practical, work-based solutions to teacher shortages, but we must also be attuned to these bigger structural forces at play and create solutions to tackle them too.

I look forward to working closely with schools in my electorate and across Canberra, the Australian Education Union ACT Branch, the ACT government and the minister to ensure that we are considering this issue from all angles and at all levels. I thank Mr Hanson for this practical motion and I look forward to discussing this matter further in the Assembly, no doubt.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.36): Well, Mr Assistant Speaker Pettersson, I think you would agree that it is seldom that I am delighted in this place, but I am today. And I would genuinely like to thank Mr Davis and Ms Berry for their contributions to the debate and the support of the motion. I think that the amendment is fine. As Mr Davis said, it is very minor, and it is to the “notes”. There is nothing in it that is in any way problematic. It broadly used the same “notes”, but it is slightly differently written on a couple of points.

I think it is fabulous that this body of work is going to be done. I was expecting a response that would whitewash the motion. This amendment is not doing that. It will help us progress what I think we all want to see here, which is more teachers on the ground in our public schools. I am thankful that the minister acknowledges that there is a problem; I think we all do. I accept that there is going to be a different interpretation of why that problem has arisen. I will probably point more to the hand of the ACT government, the minister will point elsewhere and so on. That is fine. That is the political discourse that we are going to have in this place—and, to an extent, perhaps that does not matter as much as what we now do.

We find ourselves with a position which we all agree on. We have the Liberal Party, the Labor Party and the Greens all agreeing on the current state of the system and that there is a problem. We acknowledge it and we need to work together with teachers on the frontline, with the union and with all the stakeholders—parents and citizens

groups and so on—to make sure that we dig ourselves out of this hole. That is what this motion is about. It is about making sure that the minister and her directorate develop that plan, because, as I said, we do not want to be here in years to come with the same problem. This is simply calling for that plan, and that it be supported by the relevant workforce analysis and data that would be necessary to make it a viable and workable plan.

I thank the members for their contributions. I think that this is a good day—we seldom get them in opposition—but if we can get a report from the government that develops a body of work that helps us address the teacher shortage that is plaguing our schools, then that is a great outcome, and I thank the minister and I thank the member of the Greens, Mr Davis, who has contributed to this. I look forward to seeing the report.

Hopefully, what we get out of this will be a workforce analysis of the numbers of teachers required by 2028 and some other data, but also a plan with costings, delivery dates and how we are going to recruit and retain teachers to address the problem in the ACT. Hopefully, that will be a longer-term plan that leads us out to that 2028 timeframe. I accept that there is no short-term fix to this; there is no silver-bullet fix to this. It is going to take a bit of time and it is going to take a lot of work. I acknowledge that there is work occurring already through the taskforce. That is a good thing, but I note that when I asked questions about the taskforce, I was told that it was not going to be providing any reports. Part of the reason for instigating this motion today was to make sure that there is a body of work that we can all refer to.

I think that it is going to be tough at the frontline of our schools for some time to come, but if we all have an agreement here—and if the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the Greens acknowledge the problem and accept the fact that we have to do everything we can to resolve the problem—that is a good thing. We will still have our barneys in here, I have no doubt, but I am genuinely delighted by the support of this motion today. I hope that it has a useful impact on the problems that we are facing in our schools at the moment.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Gaming—online gambling and advertising

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (3.41), by leave: On behalf of Dr Paterson, I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) Australia has one of the biggest gambling markets in the world per capita – from poker machines to online gambling (including sports betting and horse racing);
- (b) while the ACT Government has an extensive reform initiative to address harm from poker machines, it has limited levers to address the issue of online gambling and television advertising;

- (c) the regulation of online gambling and television advertising (including sports betting, special events and horse racing) is the responsibility of the Commonwealth;
 - (d) the majority of online gambling companies are registered in the Northern Territory;
 - (e) the ACT Government is working with the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to provide a harmonised approach to the regulation of online gambling through the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering;
 - (f) to provide a fairer taxation regime based on the location of the consumer rather than the location of the operator, most Australian states have implemented a point of consumption tax;
 - (g) in 2019, the Betting Operations Tax was introduced in the ACT. This is a 15 percent point of consumption tax payable by all betting operators in the ACT;
 - (h) in 2019, 7.7 percent of the ACT's adult population bet on sports and special events within 12 months. Of those people, 38.5 percent were classified as at-risk gamblers, of which 3.2 percent were problem gamblers;
 - (i) the COVID pandemic lockdowns saw prolific advertising by the online gambling industry, with studies finding increases in online gambling and the numbers of Australians who opened a betting account during the pandemic;
 - (j) gambling has become a large part of sport in Australia, largely due to increased and normalised advertising that targets certain groups in the community; and
 - (k) more needs to be done to specifically address the harm that comes from online gambling in the ACT community; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) continue to work with and advocate to the Commonwealth and state and territory governments on the implementation of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering;
 - (b) conduct a review of the online gambling and advertising market and the impacts of this on the ACT;
 - (c) investigate ACT revenue sources that can be used for harm minimisation activities for the ACT community that target online gambling;
 - (d) consider ways to raise community awareness (particularly targeting groups in the population susceptible to online gambling harm) around the risks of online gambling; and
 - (e) report back to the Assembly by December 2023.

This motion looks at the ways the ACT government can reduce harm from online gambling in our community. I know that Dr Paterson would be proud to be here herself today if she was able to—unfortunately, she is ill—because it would give her the opportunity to bring together her former career as a researcher in the field of gambling and her role as an MLA. Dr Paterson's time as a researcher instilled in her

an unquestionable understanding of the importance of using a data-driven and evidence-based approach to informing policy decisions affecting our community. So, on her behalf, I wish to make the following remarks. This is, I believe, the speech she would have been giving if she were here today.

Australia has one of the biggest gambling markets in the world, per capita. From poker machines to online gambling, including sports betting and horse racing, this is a prolific gambling nation. Australia has the dubious and unceremonious title of leading the world in annual gambling losses per capita—expected in 2021-22 to be over \$25 billion. International gambling companies have described Australia as a standout performer over the past two years of the pandemic, with global companies seeing massive increases in customer numbers and in revenue growth. Sportsbet grew its average daily customer count by 86 per cent over 2020, and this was reflected in research from the Australian Gambling Research Centre, which found that one third of people surveyed opened a betting account during the lockdown.

Sportsbet, the largest operator in Australia, with 50 per cent of the market share, saw a 20 per cent year-on-year growth over the past two years, reaching one million average monthly players in 2021 across Australia. Companies are bending over backwards to get a share in the booming Australian gambling market with News Corp set to announce the launch of its own online wagering brand in Australia. News Corp is owned by a consortium of international investors.

Our sports codes are beholden to these companies. AFL, for example, signed a deal with BetEasy for \$10 million a year for the next five years. The NRL has gone one step further this year by pocketing \$20 million through a deal to allow Americans to gamble on Rugby League matches by the end of the year. The Australian Alliance for Gambling Reform states, “A 13-year-old today does not know a world without gambling ads. Three in four kids in Australia think gambling is a normal part of sport.”

We have normalised gambling through sport while simultaneously banning smoking advertising through sport. But how can this be? There is a major conversation coming in Australia around integrity in sport, but that is for another day. So, while we have the *Australian Financial Review* publishing multiple articles on the booming wagering market that is Australia, very little care or concern is given to how all this plays out on the ground in our community. The COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns saw prolific advertising by the online gambling industry. Ad after ad on free-to-air TV at prime-time news hours as well as ads on social media and on You Tube were excessive. Two to three ads in one ad break were by gambling companies—all offshore, international companies that give nothing, owe nothing and care nothing about this country or this community.

All these ads are directly pitched to men—young men, men with mates, and salt-of-the-earth Aussie men. In 2019, in the ACT 9.7 per cent of our adult population bet on sports or special events in the last year, and 14.3 per cent bet on a horse or greyhound race. In the ACT, statistics show that those who bet on sports and special events are more likely to be male, at 80.2 per cent; are more likely to be below the age of 45, at 80.7 per cent; are more likely to be born in Australia, at 77.1 per cent; and are more

likely to be employed full-time, at 78 per cent. The problem lies with the 38.5 per cent of those people that were classified as at-risk gamblers, of which 3.2 per cent were problem gamblers.

Being an at-risk gambler or experiencing harm from gambling is more than just losing money. It is about experiencing negative consequences as a result of your gambling in your everyday life. It is about your gambling impacting on your relationships, your mental health, your physical health, your financial situation and your work. For example, if a fun afternoon drinks session at the pub with mates means that you cannot pay your rent that week, you are experiencing a level of harm from gambling; if you placed twice as many bets last night on obscure sports because you just had to try to make that money back, you are experiencing a level of harm from gambling; if you feel guilty about the fact that you have been lying to your partner about how much you have been spending on your gambling, you are experiencing a level of harm from gambling.

The data that is outlined is old in the current context of bushfires, hailstorms, pandemics and now the housing crisis and increasing cost of living that has occurred quite dramatically over the past three years. What we do know about gambling harm is that in stressful times, particularly financially stressful times, people turn to gambling. Yet we have no context in the ACT about how the environment has changed, because we do not have any data. What is also concerning is that through this time of lockdowns, when people are less likely to go out and engage publicly, in every aspect of our lives, people have turned online. And the ease with which you can place a bet on your phone, online, any time of day or night is highly concerning. At the very least, to play a poker machine you have to get yourself out of the house and to a venue. There are lots of decision-making points in that process, and there are venue staff that engage with you. And in an ideal world there are fully-implemented, high-functioning codes of practice and self-exclusion schemes that are designed to protect people.

However, in the online gambling environment this is significantly lacking. Dr Paterson would like to note that she has had multiple engagements with people with lived experience of gambling harm from this online wagering industry since starting in her role as an MLA. She describes a sad world of people who have experienced great stress and mental ill-health over the past couple of years, who have been suckered by the advertising. Dr Paterson suggests that, when the seriousness of the situation is exposed, these companies offer minimal compensation. For example, a customer loses \$140,000, and these companies, when they find out how distressed the customer is, offer them \$5,000 or so and a non-disclosure agreement to keep quiet.

Dr Paterson would like to commend the ACT government for its many reforms to address the harm from poker machines across the territory. Unfortunately, we have not seen the same level of attention towards minimising harm from online gambling. This is largely because the regulation of online gambling is the responsibility of the commonwealth government. The majority of betting companies are registered in the Northern Territory and are subject to minimal tax. As a result of this, most Australian jurisdictions have, in recent years, introduced point-of-sale taxes. In the ACT, this has been established as the betting operations tax—the BOT—which was introduced in

2019. The BOT is a 15 per cent point-of-consumption tax payable by all betting operators in the ACT, and betting operators across the country are responsible for determining where bets have been placed in Australia.

This is a great start, but we need to do more to minimise harm from online gambling. We need to start to focus on understanding what the ACT market looks like. In recent decades we have seen a strong policy approach to addressing the harm caused by the tobacco industry—heavy taxing of the industry, a ban on advertising, and community preventative health messages and campaigns. We can do the same for gambling; indeed, we must. We need to treat gambling habits in much the same way as we have treated tobacco smoking. They have many similarities, including health impacts, whether these be physical or mental. Of course, the financial toll of gambling losses is heart-wrenching. Families' homes are lost and futures are lost.

Dr Paterson calls on the ACT government to address the harm caused by online gambling, for the benefit of our community. She calls on the ACT government to continue to work with the commonwealth, state and territory governments on the implementation of the national consumer protection framework for online wagering. This is a framework which provides stronger consumer protections from online gambling. It is a nationally consistent approach that was established in 2018 in response to government concerns that online gambling is three times higher than other types of gambling. The framework consists of 10 measures to empower individuals and to minimise harm, including prohibiting lines of credit, customer verification, restrictions on inducements, a voluntary opt-out pre-commitment scheme, consistent gambling messaging and a national self-exclusion register.

Further, Dr Paterson calls on the ACT government to conduct a review of what we know of online gambling in the ACT; what we know of the online gambling market advertising that ACT residents are exposed to; and what we know about the harm that stems from this. We know enough to know that the online gambling industry in the ACT is alive and well—too well! We do not know enough to be able to form clear policies and actions to address it. So, in this motion, Dr Paterson calls on the ACT government to investigate revenue sources that can be used for harm minimisation activities for the ACT community that target online gambling. I have already mentioned, the ACT government's betting operation tax. Dr Paterson would like to investigate whether we need to increase this tax and use the proceeds for harm minimisation activities and whether there are other opportunities. These are the types of things that Dr Paterson wants the ACT government to explore: are there ways that the industry itself can start to ameliorate the harm it causes?

Finally, Dr Paterson is calling on the ACT government to consider ways to raise community awareness about the risks of online gambling, and to target particularly those groups in our community that are most targeted. By taking these steps, we will be on our way to devising and implementing a plan to address and mitigate the harm caused by online gambling. Dr Paterson calls on colleagues in this Assembly today to support this motion and, in doing so, to support our community. I commend the motion to you on her behalf. I am very happy to present her words today for you, here.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (3.53): The ACT government supports Dr Paterson’s motion to review online gambling and advertising issues. I thank her for bringing this important matter to the Assembly. I know that gambling harm reduction is an issue Dr Paterson has a genuine and deep interest in, as well as expertise from her life before coming to the Assembly.

As outlined in the motion, the ACT government has an extensive set of measures in the parliamentary and governing agreement to reduce the harm caused by gaming whilst supporting sustainable clubs. I have worked, and will continue to work, with the Community Clubs Ministerial Advisory Council and the broader clubs industry on these important reforms, including implementing \$5 bet limits and \$100 credit limits on electronic gaming machines in the territory. This is a very significant reform that has taken a number of years to bring to the table and I am pleased that we are now working on the implementation of that reform.

The ACT government is working with the federal government, which has responsibility for online gambling and advertising, to reduce the harm caused from online gambling, which is the fastest growing part of the gambling sector in Australia. Online gambling has increased at a rate of 15 per cent annually since 2004 and research shows that almost 21 per cent of adults in the ACT, or 68,000 people, gambled online in the past 12 months. Participation in online gambling further increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, with recent research from the Australian Communications and Media Authority finding that more than one in 10 Australians reported participating in online gambling at some stage in the previous six months, which is up from eight per cent in 2020.

We know that online gambling advertising causes harm to people, families and the broader community. The ACT government has limited levers to address this issue, because the legislation that regulates online gambling and advertising sits with the commonwealth. We have worked and will continue to work with the federal government on this issue, through mechanisms such as the national consumer protection framework and our partnership with Gambling Research Australia. I will come back to those points a little later.

Online wagering providers in Australia must meet requirements under both the commonwealth’s Interactive Gambling Act 2001 as well as broader gambling requirements set out by state and territory governments through their licensing regimes. The majority of wagering providers are licensed in the Northern Territory and must abide by their rules.

The current framework was introduced at a time when the online environment was less sophisticated and mobile internet technology less developed. Over time, technological advances have changed the online gambling environment and it is necessary to continue to review the regulatory framework to ensure it is fit for purpose and responds to current regulatory challenges.

Given the nature of the industry, there are challenges for the ACT in regulating certain aspects of the industry. As I touched on earlier, the commonwealth has responsibility for regulating the provision of telecommunications in Australia, including television and internet advertising of online wagering products. As regulation of TV advertising is undertaken through the commercial television industry code of practice, the ACT is somewhat limited in the measures we can introduce to address the issue of TV advertising. The code does have rules for gambling advertising during live sporting events and during children's programs or times when children may be watching television.

However, I do believe that more can be done in this space. As I have said publicly on a number of occasions, I find the trend in advertising, particularly from the sports betting companies, particularly distasteful and I think particularly dangerous in the way that they target young men in Australia. These ads that run products such as "bet with mates" carry an implicit message that this is what you should do together, that to be cool, to be in with your mates, you should join a betting group with them and you should participate in it on a regular basis. I think this sort of peer pressure that is built into this advertising approach is distasteful at best. There are a number of other ways I could describe it that would probably fit into the unparliamentary category, so I will move along.

This is an issue that I will be raising with the incoming federal minister. Ministers have just been sworn in today. I intend to write to a range of ministers in my portfolio areas in the coming days raising issues that they need to contemplate and that we would like to work with them on as they come into office. In this context, this is something that has been raised with me by various members of the community, including the Community Clubs Ministerial Advisory Council which, as members will know, brings together the government, industry, unions and gambling harm reduction advocates to talk about a range of issues, particularly in the context of clubs in the ACT.

People have said to me, "How are you dealing with these pokies when online gambling is such a problem?" My response to that has been very clear: we have to deal with all of these issues. This is not an either/or situation. For too long, in my view, we have not taken the strong measures that we should on poker machines. But at the same time we also need to address online gaming issues. This is a space where we need to work together to try and address some of these things.

I will briefly outline a number of measures that are already in place in the ACT to respond to gambling concerns. In doing so, I acknowledge that there is more work to be done, as is noted in the parliamentary agreement and through other various fora. The ACT government has implemented a number of strategies to address the harms and risks associated with gambling.

The Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002 is mandatory for all licensees and is the key mechanism to reduce the risks and harms associated with gambling in the ACT. The harm minimisation framework in the code includes a range of harm reduction strategies. The code requires a licensee to allow for deposit

limits to be set for online wagering and a simple process for closing an online wagering account. Advertising must not target children or be false or misleading about the chances of winning. Direct marketing must not be sent to an online wagering account holder unless they provide consent.

The ACT gambling exclusion scheme also provides a means for people to exclude themselves from gambling at any or all licensed venues in the ACT, if they wish. This could include licensed clubs and hotels with electronic gaming machines, TAB facilities, including face-to-face, online and telephone services, and Casino Canberra. A person may nominate to be excluded from all venues in the territory through a single process or can nominate for exclusion from venues in their local area. All staff involved in the provision of gambling services must have undertaken an approved responsible conduct of gambling training program within the last three years.

Additionally, the ACT Gambling Harm Prevention and Mitigation Fund is used to support projects, events and research for the purposes of preventing and reducing gambling harm. This fund is sourced from a 0.75 per cent levy on gaming machine licensees' gross gaming machine revenue, a 0.4 per cent contribution from each club's net revenue as well as contributions from TABcorp and Casino Canberra.

Initiatives supported by the fund recently included the ACT gambling counselling and support service, which is a free service offering confidential face-to-face, telephone and online counselling services for people experiencing gambling harm, as well as for the family or friends who might also be experiencing harm. Individual relationship and financial counselling is available through Relationships Australia, which operates the service. Gambling Help Online provides residents of the ACT with 24/7 access to online gambling counselling and support. Of course, it funds Gambling Harm Awareness Week, which provides an opportunity for the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission to raise community awareness about the range and extent of gambling harm here in the territory.

Consistent with the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the Tenth Assembly, the government does have a significant harm minimisation policy agenda which will consider the most effective way for the government to reduce further harm minimisation measures. Of course, those commitments are well known, but they include targeting a further reduction in the number of gaming machine authorisations to 3½ thousand by 1 July 2025, with additional incentives where a venue goes completely pokie free, and the bet limits and load-up limits which I referred to earlier.

In the remarks that Ms Orr delivered on behalf of Dr Paterson she noted the national consumer protection framework. As has been flagged, whilst legislative and regulatory responsibility for online gambling and advertising is the responsibility of the commonwealth on the whole, the ACT government believes it has a role to play in advocating for, and playing its part in working towards, these national reforms.

That is why we are working with the commonwealth and other state and territory governments through an intergovernmental committee to implement the national consumer protection framework for online wagering, commonly and more easily known as the national framework. This was developed jointly by the commonwealth

and state and territory governments. It sets out 10 measures to protect consumers from online gambling. The intergovernmental committee enables all governments to work together to implement the framework in a nationally consistent way. The ACT government is represented on this committee by a representative from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

The framework's 10 measures to protect consumers are: prohibiting online gambling providers from offering or providing credit to people who gamble on their site or app, with limited exceptions; stopping wagering service providers from advertising payday loans; mandatory customer verification to prevent underage people and self-excluders from accessing online gambling; prohibiting online gambling providers from offering any credit, voucher, reward or other benefit as an incentive to open an account or to refer another person to open an account; account closure, which requires online gambling providers to provide their Australian customers a simple, easy-to-find and readily accessible way of closing or cancelling their online wagering account; a voluntary opt-out pre-commitment scheme to enable consumers to monitor and manage their gambling by setting deposit limits before they start gambling; a requirement for online wagering providers to send consumers meaningful activity statements so they can easily track and monitor their online wagering, spending and behaviour; consistent gambling messaging, requiring online wagering providers to use the same messaging about the risks and potential harms of gambling in their advertising, direct marketing, websites and other direct communications to their customers; staff training in the responsible service of online wagering; and a national self-exclusion register to enable people experiencing gambling harm to exclude themselves from all interactive wagering services.

These measures are implemented through a mix of commonwealth, state and territory legislation and regulation, which will align with current regulatory responsibilities. The measures provide consistent, easy-to-use tools and information for all Australians, no matter where they live, to help them better control their gambling. All online gambling providers must comply with these measures. There is also discussion of a betting operations tax, which was introduced in 2019, which is a point of consumption tax of 15 per cent for all online gambling operators.

The ACT government also supports gambling research through work with Gambling Research Australia. This is a partnership between the commonwealth, state and territory governments to initiate and manage a national gambling research program. The ACT is represented on that by the Gambling and Racing Commission. The current research program is from June 2018 to 2023 and includes the prevalence and impact of online gambling in Australia. The results from the research are used to inform policies and programs that minimise the harm that can be caused by gambling and to target information and early intervention.

I am also mindful of the issue of unlicensed offshore operators. Mindful of the time. I will not speak about this in great length, but I do note that in recent years the commonwealth has sought to target illegal offshore wagering. This is an area that will require further and ongoing work.

In closing, I reiterate the ACT government's ongoing commitment to reducing the harm caused by gambling while supporting sustainable clubs here in the ACT, evidenced by our commitments in the parliamentary and governing agreement. The government also remains committed to continuing to work with the commonwealth and state and territory governments to address the harm from online gambling and advertising through the implementation of the national consumer protection framework.

As I said, I also plan to engage with the incoming commonwealth ministers in this space to discuss opportunities to do more. The figures that point to the explosion in online gambling, the number of people that are participating and the identified harms, indicate that, just as there is with poker machines, there is more work to do in this space. That is an effort that I am committed to following through on. I am also aware, of course, that the discussion of this topic may impact people impacted by gambling. For those who are listening to this debate, I would encourage them to call Gambling Help Online on 1800 858 856 or visit their website at gamblinghelponline.org.au if you think those services would be of benefit to you.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.08): Mr Assistant Speaker, at the start I want to make a concession of a conflict of interest. It is a genuine conflict of interest in the context of this debate, in that I love a punt. I really enjoy it. For me, it is one of life's great pleasures, and I have had many afternoons betting with mates at clubs and pubs. I acknowledge that there are many Australians and many Canberrans who need to be protected and who are suffering from gambling harm. But I think we also need to acknowledge that there are thousands of Canberrans who responsibly participate in the recreation form of having a punt.

Dr Paterson and I agree on a surprising amount of things in the gambling space. I was quite pleased to see this motion come forward because, at its core, it echoes many things that I have said in this chamber for years about gambling harm. We have continued as a jurisdiction to focus entirely on the things that are within our control, and that tends to land on poker machines. That is where our focus has been when it comes to gambling harm. We all know—and it has been outlined by the minister and by Dr Paterson—that the explosion in usage is with online forms of gaming. That is where the flock is flying.

We know that people who are gambling on their phones in their bedrooms at night do not have a safety net that is provided by the local club. We know that. We all know that, despite what is said in this place by Dr Paterson and Mr Rattenbury. We all know the quickest way to lose your money is not on the poker machine; it is by gambling online. You can do it 10, 20 or 100 times faster.

We are all in support of the point of consumption tax as it has been rolled out in most places in Australia. I would say, Mr Assistant Speaker, that we are not in favour of the fact that this is the only jurisdiction which does not direct some of that revenue back to the racing codes. But when you consider how anti-horseracing the ACT Greens are, it is no great surprise. Despite Minister Steel's protestations that it is ludicrous for me to suggest that this government would ever try to ban or stop horseracing in the ACT

in the way that they have banned greyhound racing, I think more and more will come to light about that in coming months, and we will all be able to clearly see that the ACT Greens are on a mission to radically change or to end horseracing in the ACT. But I digress.

We have all noticed the increase in gambling advertising, and I think we all worry about who is being sucked in. We know that there are vulnerable people who will be sucked in by those messages. I think we all agree that more needs to be done specifically to address the harm that comes from online gambling across Australia. How can we do that in this jurisdiction? That remains to be seen, because most of the levers, as has been indicated in this debate thus far, are out of our reach.

In terms of the “calls on” in this motion, sure—let us continue to work with and advocate to the commonwealth on the implementation of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. Tick; yes, sure. Let’s do that. Conducting a review of the online gambling and advertising market and the impacts of this on the ACT: that sounds fine in principle. Honestly, I do not know exactly how you would conduct such a review, but I would note that Dr Paterson has plenty of expertise in that area, based on her history with the ANU. I am sure she has some very clear ideas on how that review could be conducted.

I am always worried when I see “investigate ACT revenue sources that can be used for harm minimisation”, because on just about every other occasion that this has been raised it has involved gouging more money from clubs. But, sure; let us get creative and investigate some ACT revenue sources. In fact, straight off the top of my head, if you drop the speed limit in that new Northbourne zone to 30 kilometres an hour, you could raise \$10 million in a couple of months, just like that! That is something that could be considered!

Obviously, Dr Paterson is not here today, which is disappointing, but it is outside her control, and I cannot help feeling that there are some pieces missing from this motion. I have taken it upon myself to complete the picture of this motion by adding some amendments. I seek leave to move the amendments that have been circulated in my name together.

Leave granted.

MR PARTON: I move:

(1) Insert after paragraph (1) (k):

“(l) according to a recent article from the ABC there has been \$18 million worth of political donations from the gambling industry across Australia in recent years in the states and territories, with the majority of that money going to ACT Labor; and

(m) the ACT Government’s most recent Listed Company Shareholdings list from 31 March of this year includes investments with Betmakers Technologies Group which is linked to Sportsbet, Tabcorp, Ladbrokes, Bet365, Unibet and William Hill;”.

(2) Add paragraph (3):

“(3) condemns ACT Labor for pocketing millions of dollars directly or indirectly from gambling companies over many years.”

I am not sure that we can have this debate without acknowledging that ACT Labor has received, and continues to receive, millions of dollars, directly or indirectly, from poker machines. This assertion has been made by the Canberra Liberals for years, but it is always batted away by ACT Labor with a “nothing to see here” sort of tone. There was a really interesting explanation of this from the Chief Minister today, when he went to great lengths to describe the amazing process that was set up so that the government—or at least ACT Labor—could distance itself from this money, even though, of course, we all know that it has come from gambling.

The ABC News website did a rather comprehensive exposé of gambling money and politics in recent weeks, and they arrived at this conclusion:

Organisations and individuals linked to the gambling industry have poured at least \$18 million ...

This is the ABC. It is not Sky News; it is not the *Daily Telegraph*. This is the ABC. It said:

Organisations and individuals linked to the gambling industry have poured at least \$18 million in political donations into the states and territories in recent years ...

And more than three-quarters of that national figure flowed to the ALP. In this tiny little city of 450,000, three-quarters of the national amount has gone to Labor through the ACT. The report goes on to say:

More than \$12.5 million of the nearly \$13 million gambling groups donated in the ACT in the decade to June 2020 went to the ALP and its associated entities. Almost all came from the ALP-owned Canberra Labor Club group and ALP investment vehicle 1973 Foundation ...

Whatever process this money has gone through—I cannot really say washing machine—we all know where it started. It might have been washed on a number of occasions, but it is pretty clear where it started. We all know that.

I have also sought to note that, as per the most recent ACT listed company shareholdings list, which is from 31 March this year, BetMakers Technology Group are listed as a company that this government still has shareholdings in. The BetMakers Technology Group put together the software for Sportsbet, Tabcorp, Ladbrokes, Bet365, William Hill and Unibet, among others.

The government was made aware of these holdings five years ago, when it was brought up by the then Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur. Again the government was reminded of these holdings in hearings last year. But this government continues to profit from gambling through its shareholdings in the BetMakers Technology Group—cannot get rid of those at this stage.

Of course, ACT Labor continues to benefit from its ongoing, rather complex arrangement known as the 1973 Foundation. It is no wonder that, in a recent policy document from the Attorney-General in the gaming space regarding a central monitoring system, there was a focus on money laundering. At the end of the day, this government knows much more about money laundering through poker machines than any other government in Australia. If there is any political party in the country that fully understands the intricacies of funnelling gambling money through other entities so that it then becomes okay to access that money, it is ACT Labor.

We are not the ones making this claim. It is not the Canberra Liberals that are making this claim; it is the ABC. It is your ABC. They are the ones who are making it. I find it remarkable that Dr Paterson can submit a motion to this chamber that is all about the woes of gambling harm—

Ms Cheyne: Mr Assistant Speaker, on a point of order.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Davis): Mr Parton, take your seat. Minister Cheyne, a point of order?

Ms Cheyne: Mr Assistant Speaker, I appreciate that you and the Acting Clerk were deep in conversation before, but Mr Parton has continued to make imputations about ACT Labor, making inferences perhaps about the government and money laundering. He referred to a washing machine, to get around it before, but the imputation stands. He has continued to talk about laundering in the last few paragraphs of his speech. Earlier today you asked—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Cheyne. I have heard what you had to say and I did hear Mr Parton's comments.

Mr Hanson: Mr Assistant Speaker—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, just a minute. I will rule on the point of order.

Mr Hanson: Just on the point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, if I could.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Yes?

Mr Hanson: I do not think Mr Parton is in any way inferring any criminal activity at all. All he is trying to do is make the point that the money has been moved from gambling assets into non-gambling assets so that they can be used for political donations and so on. As a turn of phrase, I do not think there is any imputation about criminal activity. No-one is suggesting that. Certainly, the suggestion is that that money has been essentially moved so that it is no longer seen to be coming from gambling; it is seen to be coming from an associated entity. I think that is the point that is being made. I do not think that there is a point of order.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I understand, Mr Hanson. Given that I am warming the chair for Madam Speaker, this is what I will do. Madam Speaker ruled earlier in the day that use of the term “laundering” was not appropriate. Mr Parton, did you use the term “laundering” while I was speaking with the Clerk? If you did, I would ask you to withdraw.

Ms Cheyne: He used “washing machine”.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: “Washing machine”, I think you would agree, is a slur. Noting that a ruling has not been made previously on “washing machine”, they are—

MR PARTON: Let me just withdraw. Allow me to withdraw, please.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Parton. Save me from myself. You may continue.

MR PARTON: We are not the ones that are making this claim; it is the ABC that are making the claim. There would be very little doubt that Dr Paterson’s own election campaign was in part funded by money that originally came from poker machines—that is, at least, according to the ABC.

When it comes to my amendments, my eyes are firmly on the crossbench. I have to concede that I am a little taken aback by the amendments that may be coming from the Greens in this space, because I fully expected that the first two paragraphs, the “notes”, would actually be knocked back by the Greens. I am pleased to see that, at least in this amendment form, they are likely to remain there. That is good.

I note that there has been mooted a substantial change to the last “calls on” and that the Greens at this stage are not keen to condemn ACT Labor for pocketing millions of dollars, directly or indirectly, from gambling companies over many years. With reference to that, Mr Assistant Speaker, can you imagine the song and dance that would be made in this chamber if the ABC suggested that the Canberra Liberals had benefited from \$12½ million of gambling donations? Can you imagine how triggered the Greens would be? There would be such a song and dance in here if it was about us—but not so much if it is about Labor.

Despite Mr Rattenbury’s and Dr Paterson’s apparent concern about gambling harm and all of those being affected by the evils of gambling, it remains to be seen where we are going with amendments, because I think it is still a fairly fluid situation. I dare say that there are parts of this amendment that will be erased, and it will just be a case of “let’s pretend it was never there”. Let us pretend that it never happened—that it was just fake news on the ABC. Let us put the ABC in the same category as Fox News and say, “It was just fake news.” “Just keep smiling for the cameras and pretend that everything is okay. The Liberals don’t have the numbers, so we can rewrite history whichever way we want to.”

I have to say, in closing, that there is actually nothing about Dr Paterson's motion that we are particularly opposed to. I just felt that it was my duty to fill in some of the gaps that were left in the narrative. As such, I commend the amendments that I have moved.

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

Public Accounts—Standing Committee Report 7

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.23): I present:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 7—Inquiry into the Auditor-General's Report No. 3 of 2021: Court Transport Unit Vehicle—Romeo 5, dated 18 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

The report was circulated to members pursuant to standing order 254C.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for the Tenth Assembly. The public accounts committee examined the audit report and endorsed all of the Auditor-General's recommendations. The committee held one public hearing in August last year, hearing evidence from the Minister for Corrections, and officials from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the ACT Audit Office. In July last year, the committee also had the opportunity to do a site visit to the ACT Supreme Court to view the Romeo 5 vehicle in person.

The committee made seven recommendations as part of its inquiry. The report's recommendations include that the ACT government terminate the lease for the court transport unit vehicle Romeo 5 and commission a new vehicle; ensure that all officers are appropriately trained to operate any CTU vehicle; and ensure that all CTU vehicles are appropriate and fit for purpose. The report also recommends that WorkSafe ACT reviews and revises its policies to provide greater clarity on its pursuance of prohibition notices.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank those who have contributed to the committee's inquiry, including the Auditor-General and staff from the ACT Audit Office, and the Minister for Corrections and his directorate officials. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 16

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.25): I present:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 16, dated 19 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR CAIN: Scrutiny Report No 16 contains the committee’s comments on two bills, nine pieces of subordinate legislation, private member’s response to one bill, and three government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I would like to thank the secretariat for their professional support, Mrs Janice Rafferty, Ms Sophie Milne, and legal advisers, Mr Stephen Argument and Mr Daniel Stewart. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee Report 7

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (4.26): I present:

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Report on the conduct of Mr Davis MLA*, dated 12 May 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceeding

The report was circulated to members pursuant to standing order 254C. I move:

That the report be noted.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.27): I rise to comment on the report by the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure regarding the conduct of Mr Davis. I welcome the committee’s recommendations that no further action be taken against Mr Davis, and its recommendation to members in respect of seeking advice when they are unsure about the application and interpretation of the Code of Conduct. I also note the findings of the Commissioner for Standards that he could not be satisfied that Mr Davis had breached the code in the fashion alleged.

Integrity is a key principle for the ACT Greens. Trust is so important to us here in this place. We need to make sure that we earn the trust of the community and do right by them with our every action here. I am glad to have external and impartial validation of the trust we are able to place in Mr Davis’s integrity. Mr Davis, throughout this process, has clearly held himself to the highest standards. He sought advice from the Clerk of the Assembly before he sent those letters, and upon the motion being moved to refer him to the Commissioner for Standard he proactively referred himself.

I am pleased that Mr Davis took the initiative to engage with his community on important issues, including the federal election, and that he did so in a way that was cognisant of the standards to which we need to hold ourselves, clearly delineating his community and Assembly roles. It bears mentioning the commissioner’s comments, “It is not always possible to draw a sharp line of demarcation between political

activities undertaken by members and actions undertaken in the execution of their roles as members of the Assembly.” This shows clearly to us that we cannot always characterise with absolute precision what is and is not a political campaigning activity. It is our responsibility to make sure that we are conscious of this difficulty, and seek advice when we are unsure. That is what Mr Davis did. Despite this, the attack on his character launched by Ms Lawder and Mr Hanson was truly incredible—far out of proportion with the conduct they were attacking.

We need to take account of the shockingly hyperbolic path that led us here. Ms Lawder described the letter, the origins of which she did not seem to actually know, as an egregious misuse of Assembly resources. And Mr Hanson—unsurprisingly I am sure—treated us to a spectacular display! It included such choice gems as accusing Mr Davis of “playing tricky with the rules”, and telling us: “Mr Davis has got it wrong. He needs to admit that, not try to double down and obscure that.” I look forward to Mr Hanson meeting his own standard, admitting that he got it wrong and not doubling down on it or obscuring it.

But, returning to Mr Davis, I think it is important to note on the record that Mr Davis was forthcoming with the referral and in providing information to the commissioner. And that is in spite of the dubious motives for the referral. He was honest and open, and I am proud to count him amongst our responsible and diligent team, here in the ACT Greens.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (4.30): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality.

Members will recall that, at its meeting on 3 May 2022, the Assembly passed a resolution requesting that the economy and gender and economic equality committee consider inquiring into the working conditions of casual and contract workers in the ACT, and to investigate the provision of sick and carers pay for workers who work in industries that do not usually have access to sick and carers pay.

At a private meeting on 26 May 2022, the committee decided to include consideration of the current working conditions in the ACT for casual and contract workers as part of its inquiry into the future of the working week.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.31): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety.

At a private meeting on 11 May this year, the committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Amendment Bill 2022. The committee notes that the bill is to extend the Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Act 2006 for a further five years, to 19 November 2027, as it is due to expire on 19 November 2022, with a further statutory review to be submitted to the Legislative Assembly a year before the expiry of the next extension.

Given that the act has been in place since 2006 and has been extended several times, the committee sees value in a public discussion about its impact on the community before a further extension. The committee called for submissions on 12 May 2022, with a closing date of 26 May 2022, and will hold a hearing on this issue on 6 June 2022. The committee will then report to the Assembly by no later than 5 July this year.

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (4.33): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion.

The committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into racial vilification in the ACT. Through this inquiry, the committee is considering experiences of racism in the ACT, as well as the suitability and effectiveness of existing mechanisms for reporting and redress.

The committee considers it critically important that its own views and recommendations are informed by evidence from a broad cross-section of the ACT's diverse community, with a particular focus on the lived experience of community members. The committee has therefore resolved to extend its closing date for submissions until Friday, 10 June 2022. To assist stakeholders to engage with the committee, submissions are welcomed in any language.

The committee also appreciates that members of the community may not always be comfortable with formal submission processes. Accordingly, the committee encourages stakeholders to share views and experiences in other forums, such as at a public hearing or a private briefing. In addition, the committee is making efforts to reach out directly to organisations and to members of the community and to explore less formal settings in which to take evidence for the inquiry.

The committee thanks the community for its assistance with this inquiry so far and looks forward to hearing suggestions on how the ACT can be a more inclusive place.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (4.34): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing for the Tenth Assembly relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A.

Continuing resolution 5A requires standing committees which consider statutory appointments to report on a six-monthly basis and present a schedule listing appointments considered during the applicable period.

For 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021, the committee considered a total of 10 appointments to two different statutory bodies. In both cases, the committee had no comment on the appointments. Accordingly, pursuant to continuing resolution 5A, I present the following paper:

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee—Schedule of Statutory Appointments—Period 1 July to 31 December 2021.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Municipal services—footpaths

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.35): I would just like to recount, again, part of my journey through my electorate and, again, a bit of a sad story about service delivery from this Labor-Greens government. Earlier in May, I joined Warren and John—one a constituent and one a visitor with family members in the electorate—for a walk around the streets and footpaths of Holt, particularly around O’Dea Place. Unfortunately, the streets and footpaths around O’Dea Place have disintegrated into a hazardous state, due to the continued failure of this Labor-Greens government to provide adequate upkeep of vital amenities out in the suburbs.

Even more unfortunate is the fact that I first raised this issue with Minister Steel at the start of April. His response was that the necessary repairs had been made and that the streets and footpaths around O’Dea Place were safe once again. Imagine my surprise, when I was reached out to, to hear that still nothing had been done to repair fairly obvious hazardous footpaths that are essential for the safe passage of children riding their bikes to school, parents going to and from work, or elderly residents hoping to enjoy a nice walk in the sun.

So, I went out and inspected the area with Warren and John and could see clearly, with my own eyes that, for example, the sprayed seal on O’Dea Place had not actually been repaired as they had been promised. There were cracked and crumbling concrete driveways and footpaths all along O’Dea Place and Powell Street, and the bitumen was bleeding considerably in Biggs Place and Brownlow Place.

It was extremely helpful having Warren, an experienced and well-regarded traffic engineer, to be my guide on the technicalities of pavement technology and how it should have been done. Even so, I could see with my own eyes the absolute state of disarray that those streets and footpaths were in, and remain in, due to careless and

cavalier Labor-Greens service delivery. Listening to the people in the suburbs does not seem to be a high priority.

Between 20 January 2021 and 8 April this year, residents of and around O’Dea Place sent seven letters to Minister Steel requesting urgent repairs of nearby streets and footpaths. So not only was the minister made aware of this situation by me in early April but the residents themselves have made the minister aware of this situation seven times since January last year. Seven letters requesting safe and functioning streets and footpaths were seven times ignored by this poor service delivery Labor-Greens government—the worst the territory has had in recent history.

It is beyond me why this government does not care more about basic amenities for the citizens of Canberra, particularly when it is encouraging active travel. Unfortunately, active travel is sometimes hazardous travel. Time and again the maintenance of key amenities in the suburbs of Canberra is either half done or fully forgotten. Areas like west Belconnen in particular—and I have been out there, at the request of residents, on many occasions—seem to be continually overlooked and underserved.

It is absolutely imperative that the safety and accessibility of our streets and footpaths are kept at a high standard through effective and efficient road and footpath maintenance services. I look forward to the day, and maybe it takes a change of government to bring that about, when citizens get the services that they deserve.

Seniors—health and wellbeing

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (4.40): Last Thursday, 26 June, I had the pleasure of attending and opening the Silver is Gold Seniors Expo at EPIC, organised by the Council of the Ageing ACT. The expo featured a range of health, leisure, hobby and lifestyle stalls catering to the older community in Canberra.

It was a real joy to see how many of our seniors community were at this event, and the number of conversations taking place between older Canberrans with the over 150 stallholders in the panel events, and watching the music and dance performances. I personally found the conversation between Janet Jeffs from Ginger Catering and Maggie Beer about good food both for nutrition and for social needs in aged care to be very, very informative. The social connection and wellbeing of our older community is something I have been very concerned about over the last couple of years, so it was amazing to see so many older Canberrans out and about and engaged in the community. I thank COTA ACT for organising such an amazing event.

But we cannot become complacent. COVID-19 continues to spread in our community, and our older community are among our most at risk. I encourage all Canberrans who have not yet received their booster for COVID to do so, and I take this opportunity to remind older Canberrans that they are eligible to receive a winter booster. People aged 16 to 64 years with immunocompromising conditions and people that have significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities are also eligible to receive a winter booster. This is particularly important as we head into winter, when we will likely see

increased prevalence and intensity of the flu, compared to previous years when we had public health restrictions in place that reduced transmission of regular colds and flu, as well as COVID.

Because flu symptoms are so similar to COVID symptoms and people who are in essential work like health care, aged care and disability care are not able to work while they have these symptoms, this flu season has an impact on our workforce that makes it challenging to ensure that everyone is able to continue receiving the care and support that they need to live a healthy life. Because of this, I encourage all Canberrans to get a flu vaccination. Older Canberrans are eligible for a free flu vaccine, and people with disability can receive their flu vaccination at the Access and Sensory Vaccination Clinic.

I remind all Canberrans to be vigilant and to stay home if you are feeling unwell so that we can keep our community safe. Avoiding COVID and colds and flu is not just about protecting your own health. It is about protecting the people around you who might be more at risk, or who might be providing vitally important care and support to people who are more at risk. If you want information and advice about COVID, you can find that at [COVID19.act.gov.au](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au).

Transport—Brisbane Metro electric buses

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.43): I want to share with the Assembly that I travelled to Brisbane last week, as the shadow transport minister, to have a very close look at the Brisbane Metro electric bus network, and I am so glad that I did. The Brisbane Metro project revolves around Swiss-made bi-articulated electric buses. They are pretty big. They are 24½ metres long. They are fully electric. They transport 170 passengers in one hit. That figure of 170, of course, is their absolute capacity. Certainly, in event mode, they can transport 170 people in one hit. I think that the actual seated number is 64. They are manufactured in Europe under a joint agreement by Swiss company Hess with electric infrastructure experts Hitachi Energy and bus company Volgren.

The Brisbane Lord Mayor describes them as the Tesla of public transport. The council has taken possession of one vehicle for testing at present, and that vehicle is doing the rounds all over Brisbane. You can imagine that a 24½-metre-long vehicle pretty much looks like a tram on the road, so a lot of people are stopping and looking at it.

I had the great pleasure initially of taking a virtual reality tour of the Brisbane Metro vehicles at the newly minted Brisbane Metro information centre in the city before heading out to the bus depot at Eagle Farm so that I could ride in one of these amazing vehicles. Mr Assistant Speaker Cain, they would not let me drive one. I was allowed to sit at the driver's wheel; unfortunately, they would not let me drive one. I did not think they would but I had to ask.

Testing on this vehicle will continue for some months. If this vehicle passes those tests, the council will purchase 59 more and install flash charging points along the way, as well as a fully electric depot at Rochedale. The total cost is \$300 million. There are some extras in that bottom line. It is not just about vehicles. But if we break

down that figure, we are talking roughly half a million dollars per vehicle. At this stage, the Brisbane City Council are not telling us how much they paid for the first vehicle. Certainly, if you break down that total project cost, it is about half a million dollars per vehicle. The Liberal council certainly seems to be embracing electric buses much more robustly and much more rapidly than our Labor-Greens government here.

My briefing and onsite tour were done by Councillor Ryan Murphy, who is the chair of the Brisbane City Council's transport committee. He was quoted in a recent ABC article—it is the only quote of his in this article—as saying:

We think that the Metro vehicle will actually set the model for how smaller and mid-sized cities can address public transport challenges in their jurisdictions, without the heavy cost and the years of construction that light rail causes ...

That was his position. Peter was our bus driver for the day. He told me that the Metro vehicle is much easier to drive and much more manoeuvrable than a regular articulated bus. The Metro vehicles are able to be driven on all roads in Brisbane which currently have a green light for articulated buses to travel on.

I would note that buses in Brisbane function differently to ours. Most of the Metro buses will be driven on the extensive Brisbane busways. These are dedicated busways. But, as I mentioned earlier, they certainly have the ability to get off the busways and go out into the suburbs.

My trip to Brisbane was self-funded because, as we know, there is no travel allowance for non-executive members of this place. As such, I was not required to report back to the Assembly on my study trip. That is between me and the taxman. Nevertheless I think it is important to share this information.

I would hope that the transport minister, who is able to travel at taxpayers' expense, could have a close look at what they are doing in Brisbane. There are potentially parts of the Brisbane plan that could be adopted here, in conjunction with things that we are already rolling out.

Specifically, I look forward to engaging more with the council in regard to the rollout of their fully electric bus depot. I know that we are having some problems here. I know that there are problems in Sydney with charging capacity for electric bus fleets. Let us look closely at what other jurisdictions are doing, because ultimately we are all heading to the same bus stop here. It is just that I actually bought my ticket.

Mrs Rosemary Lissimore—tribute

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.48): I rise today to remember the life of Rosemary Lissimore, who sadly passed away earlier this year. I would like to express my sympathy to her loving husband, David, to whom Rosemary was married for almost 63 years. Her passing represents a great loss for the Tuggeranong community and the Brindabella electorate. It is the loss of an esteemed community member who served our community for many years with passion and devotion.

Long before coming to Australia with her husband in the 1980s, Rosemary had already cemented her place as an advocate and leader amongst her community in England. She was born in Gloucestershire, England in 1936. She grew up with her adopted parents, Alfred and Lucy, her three World War II veteran brothers, and a sister. She met David at her first job as a clerk at the local aircraft factory. He was a young apprentice assembling fighter aircraft. They were married in March 1959.

Rosemary worked with children for much of her career and was commended by teachers for the kindness and manners instilled in her students. She was then elected to her local council and displayed her talent as a community servant by organising significant events, raising charity money and meeting with dignitaries, including Princess Margaret and Princess Anne.

Later, Rosemary and David moved to Australia, specifically to Tuggeranong. More recently, they were residents in Gowrie and, even more recently, at LDK in Greenway. It was when they moved to Australia to be with family that Rosemary's greatest service began. She joined the Tuggeranong Community Council, and she was with the Tuggeranong Community Council in one capacity or another for nearly 20 years.

In this role she communicated between the residents of Tuggeranong and the ACT government. She achieved progress regarding the Tuggeranong swimming pool, the town centre police station and heritage of homestead land. She also assisted with lobbying for Hyperdome extensions—because it will always be the Hyperdome to people who have lived in Canberra for a long time, the development of Lanyon Marketplace and Gleneagles. Nineteen years is a long time to spend on one endeavour, and, with Tuggeranong Community Council, we should all acknowledge that contribution.

In 2001 Rosemary Lissimore was awarded a well-deserved Centenary Medal for her lifelong service and commitment to community and local representation. We now all live with the fruits of much of her labour in terms of some of the developments we see around the Tuggeranong town centre and in Lanyon.

On behalf of the Tuggeranong community, I would like to extend my very best wishes and condolences to Rosemary's loved ones, her family and friends, and especially her husband, David, at this sad time of her passing, and to thank them for allowing her to be of such service to the community of Canberra, and Tuggeranong specifically.

Environment—Holt micro-forest

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) (4.51): I rise briefly tonight to congratulate the Holt micro-forest on very successful community planting days over this past weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, which saw the most beautiful coming together of the community—from right across Canberra but of course from Belconnen and the Holt community.

What was so very special about those planting days—and I know that you were there, Mr Assistant Speaker Cain, on a different day to me—was the wide range of ages that were there, from young to old and everyone in between. It was an extraordinary community effort. I think that comes as no surprise to those of us who have been engaged with the Holt Micro-Forest in the 14 months since its inception, with it taking the personal endeavours of community members applying for grants and then doing the most amazing amount of community fundraising—\$25,000—in just a short period of time. Many very serious sponsors attached their name to this project, all because there was a vision and people genuinely believed in this and what this could give back to the community: the real gift that is being given to and will continually give back to the community.

I think that was most evidently on display over the community planting days that occurred on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday just past, with the sensitive design being realised and the many, many, helpers who came together to literally see the program, the vision, come to life, come off the ground, as so many plants were planted and the forest was realised. The food forest as well made up such a big part of that. I think that the residents of Holt are very lucky. But I also know that the Holt Micro-Forest team want this to be a gift to the whole community and would love for people right across Canberra, and perhaps even interstate, to see this as a bit of a destination, to take some inspiration from it, to enjoy the surroundings while they are there and as they change over time, but also perhaps to use it as a model to bring back to their own communities so that the micro-forest concept can gain even more legs, so to speak.

I will speak briefly about my own participation, which was on Friday morning, which was the school planting day and then morphed later that day into more of a community planting day. I was very lucky to spend some time with the Green Team from Latham Primary School, who were incredibly energetic and enthusiastic—if not at the start then certainly towards the end.

Members would recall that last week we received a considerable amount of rain, particularly on Friday morning, that then did ease by about 9 am. That made for some very happy conditions! No-one was able to get away from mud and getting that quite thick clay stuck all over our bodies and especially our shoes. But it was great to get in there and to see such energy from these young people, who really got stuck into planting, who were able to put tree guards that they had designed themselves around these plants and, in what felt like literal moments but was really an hour, were able to see the product of their hard work.

Just drawing from the Facebook page, some of the comments are: “I can’t believe this is so rewarding.” “This is the best!” “This mud is so fun!” “I found an earthworm.” “Our Green Team is so cool.” Yes, yes, it certainly was.

I offer my thanks and my warmest congratulations to every single person involved in making this a reality. There is still plenty more work to go, as there always will be, because this is a forest that will continually be tended across generations, I hope. But particularly—this is not an exhaustive list—can I pass on my thanks to Edwina, Caroline, Gerard, Janet, Sylvia and the indefatigable Jennifer Bardsley, who has been quite extraordinary in her push for this. (*Time expired.*)

Yerrabi electorate—community organisations

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.57): I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work that SHOUT has recently been doing. I went along and visited SHOUT just recently. I want to thank the CEO of SHOUT, Carol Mead, for the invitation to share with them their 30th anniversary celebrations at the Pearce Community Centre. This is our second visit to SHOUT. We visited there just a few months ago to have a look at the offices and the gardens there, and at the amazing work and what that centre has to offer for the community. They did an amazing job with the gardens there. They have certainly got a great variety of vegetables, fruits and everything else that they are growing.

They have also just set up an under-fives playground there. It currently has a slide, but more playground equipment will be installed there. It is certainly going to provide a great space for young children that visit. I also want to acknowledge that they have just installed a disability swing. It provides an opportunity for people living with a physical disability. They can wheel the wheelchair up to this swing and swing and have slow movement. It can create enjoyment and fun for those that are living with a disability. On the day of the launch of this swing, there were a number of people there and a number of people had a go on this swing. It was great to see the joy that it brought these individuals and the support that was on offer from many people out in the community. I really want to commend the work that SHOUT has done, as well as Carol, for the work that she has been doing there at SHOUT, plus all the other service providers that are located in the Pearce Community Centre.

In a similar vein, I visited the Ngunnawal Street Pantry and visited Margaret and Paul. I think a lot of people here know Margaret and Paul and have visited them numerous times. They were pretty much the group that started the Ngunnawal Street Pantry. From that, a number of other different initiatives have taken place as well: the Food Pantry and the Book Pantry. I remember doing a “back in five” video for them several years ago. This was when they were first starting out and they were very small.

Visiting them just recently, I could see how much they have grown. Their whole front yard is full. They have got clothing, they have got kitchenware and of course they have got a lot of food there that is on offer to those people in the community that need help and support. They have got to a point right now where they have run out of space. They need a bit of space to store what they have on their property. I would like to use this opportunity right now to say that if there is anyone out there that would like to support the Ngunnawal Street Pantry to offer them some space or sponsor a unit, a storage facility, so that they can store some of the donations that they receive, I am sure that that will be greatly appreciated.

In the same vein, I visited Mulligans Flat reserve. I did a “back in five” for them, I think, with Jason, probably back in 2017. Then, they just had an initial design, an idea of creating an information centre for Mulligans Flat reserve. We filmed this “back in five” in the paddock. There was nothing there. Just recently we visited this location, and the site is pretty much completed and finished. It will be opening in the next two to three weeks. There is an information centre, they have a café, they have a

restaurant there, plus they also have a lot of commercial space that can be leased out to businesses that may want to use that venue for their conferences and the like.

I encourage anyone who has not been to Mulligans Flat reserve to visit their information centre in Throsby. Go along and have a tea or coffee, something to nibble on, and then head out and have a walk through the reserve. I really commend the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust, along with Jason, on the amazing work that they have done to build this centre, because I think it is going to be a great asset to the community. I encourage people to get along and visit the Throsby visitors centre.

Federal election 2022—election day

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (5.02): With all the argy-bargy in this place from time to time, I thought I would reflect on the recent election day that we all enjoyed—some of us enjoyed it more than others, obviously!—here in the ACT. I made an adjournment speech back in 2010, following the federal election then, which was a less than pleasant day in the ACT. It was freezing cold and miserable and the various volunteers for the political parties huddled together. I remember I was running the Curtin booth for the Liberal Party and it was John for the Labor Party. I cannot remember the Greens fellow's name. I apologise. I spoke then about the civility with which we treated democracy.

I am delighted to say that that has not changed in the intervening period. I was at St Jude's in Holder all day on Saturday just gone. I was there with Laura from the Greens, who I am sure the Greens would know well. Matt from the Labor Party was one of the volunteers, and a fellow called Tim was out there supporting Mr Pocock—despite what you might read in the press, not yet Senator but Mr Pocock! I would just like to say that it was one of those days that restores your faith in humanity, in the democratic process.

We are all on the front line of politics. We are on the front line of the argy-bargy and the battles, and that is a good thing. I make no complaint about that. This should be the place for vigorous debate, and we should be passionate about what we think and feel in this place and articulate it forcefully on occasion. But it was nice to be there with fellow Canberrans with very different politic ideas. One of the first things that Matt did was go and get me a coffee. I got Laura a snag sandwich as well. Isn't it wonderful that here in Canberra, at that booth at St Jude's in Holder—and, I am sure, in other booths all across Canberra and all across Australia—despite our quite differing political views, when it comes down to it we can all hang around at the booth all day, eat snags, eat some cake, have a cup of coffee and at the end of the day when the results are in we can pat each other on the back and say, "Well done".

I know that that happened on other booths. Certainly, it was something that I experienced during the pre-poll as well, in Civic and out at the Old Parliament House site. So I just wanted to put on the record my thanks to Matt and Laura and Tim and all the other volunteers that were there from all the political parties. I had Richard and my wife, Fleur, supporting me on my booth, and Rosemary from the Liberal Party—everybody getting on fabulously together.

I would also like to put on record my thanks to the AEC. It is a tiring job that they do, and I think they do it very professionally. It is difficult, I know, because they have got to go through the whole process and get the votes, and people are frustrated that the numbers cannot come in sooner. But we would rather get it right, I think, than rush it. So that was tremendous to see.

Reflecting on democracy, we are going to be, hopefully, as I understand it, changing the standing orders tomorrow, and I anticipate without too much debate. I think that we are changing the standing orders here tomorrow—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Cain): Order! The time allotted for the debate has expired.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.06 pm.