



Debates

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Tuesday, 22 November 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.

Leave of absence

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

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

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Report 11

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.02): I present the following report:

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee—Report 11—*Inquiry into Urban Forest Bill 2022*, dated 17 November 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

Today I rise to present the report by the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services on the inquiry into the Urban Forest Bill 2022. The bill was tabled in the Assembly on 3 August 2022 and referred to the committee according to the resolution of establishment. The committee decided on 11 August that it would undertake an inquiry into the bill.

Following the referral by the Assembly, the committee called for submissions. The committee received 16 submissions and held a public hearing, during which the committee heard from community and environmental groups, representatives of the housing and construction industry, and the Minister for Transport and City Services.

The committee's report makes 17 recommendations. These cover staffing for the processing of applications, a review of the specified dimensions of protected trees

after two years, the appropriateness of tree species in urban plantings, and education for the public and the housing and construction industry on canopy contribution agreements and their administration. We heard a great deal of evidence about having the right tree, in the right place, at the right time.

The committee considers that, given the interaction between this bill and the planning bill, and the significance of both bills to Canberra's planning framework, it was really important that we conduct this inquiry.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone who participated in our inquiry and assisted us. I would like to thank all of the witnesses. I would like to thank our very hardworking secretariat, who have an awful lot on, and I would like to thank my colleagues Ms Orr and Mr Parton. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Trees—Bradfield Street, Downer—petitions 20-22 and 36-22

By Ms Lee, from 322 residents and 266 residents, respectively:

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 there is a significant contradiction between the ACT strategic plan for climate change and separate specifications concerning urban street tree planting, and the ACT Heritage Council's decision regarding the choice and positioning of replacement heritage pine trees in Bradfield St, Downer. These take no account of strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change, and no cognisance of government advice that the trees now planted are inappropriate in an urban setting.

The heritage value of the former CS&IR Dickson Experiment Farm is well-represented in the open space of the Downer ovals, the 400m of heritage windbreak trees that will remain after developments on Bradfield and Melba Streets, and in the retention of the former farm buildings that now comprise Downer Village.

Residents have no avenue to appeal the Heritage Council decision. Neither the local elected representatives including the responsible Minister, nor the government can intervene on behalf of constituents.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call upon the Government to ensure the removal of the new pine trees, to be replaced with appropriate deciduous trees for the front of all north-facing buildings in the developments of both "The Bradfield" stages 1 and 2 and the yet to be approved Goodwin Village on Bradfield Street, Downer.

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of, and requests that the Assembly recognise that:

“There is a significant contradiction between the ACT strategic plan for climate change and separate specifications concerning urban street tree planting, and the ACT Heritage Council’s decision regarding the choice and positioning of replacement heritage trees in Bradfield St, Downer.

“The heritage value of the former CS&IR Dickson Experiment Farm is well-represented in the open space of the Downer ovals, the 400m of heritage windbreak trees that will remain after developments on Bradfield and Melba Streets, and in the retention of the former farm buildings that now comprise Downer Village.

“The planting of evergreen trees close to north-facing buildings of The Bradfield, takes no account of strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change, and no cognisance of government advice that the trees now planted are inappropriate in an urban setting.

“Residents have no avenue to appeal the Heritage Council decision. Neither the local elected representatives including the responsible Minister, nor the government can intervene on behalf of constituents

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly call on the government to ensure that appropriate deciduous trees be planted in front of all north-facing buildings in the developments of both “The Bradfield” stages 1 and 2 and the yet to be approved Goodwin Village on Bradfield Street, Downer.

Development—block 6 section 88, Gungahlin—petition 26-22

By Ms Orr, from 590 residents:

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

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

That there is a serious lack of parking in and around the high-density developments on Swain St, Gribble St and Anthony Rolfe Ave in Gungahlin.

This lack of parking is causing a range of dangerous parking practices. Delivery drivers often have no choice other than to park on the path and it is only a matter of time before a pedestrian is injured.

The lack of parking is having a detrimental effect on the small businesses that have recently opened as there is often no available parking for customers

Pedestrian access to Yerrabi pond from Gribble St is dangerous and needs to be improved.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to

Call on the ACT Government to consider taking back the undeveloped land at Block 6 Section 88 Gungahlin and make this underground paid parking with urban open space on top - similar to the Barangaroo development in Sydney - for the use of some 1000 apartments in the vicinity. The space could be used for such things as a small dog park or community garden for residents.

Creating such a space would also provide additional parking for those wanting to access Yerrabi pond and aligns with the government's Urban Forest strategy, ACT Climate strategy, Canberra's living infrastructure plan and will help small businesses and the broader community in the area thrive.

Review and improve access to Yerrabi pond for residents

Speak with businesses about reducing parking timeframes and have parking inspectors monitor the area regularly.

Richardson shops—leasing—petition 31-22

By Ms Lawder, from 513 residents:

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

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

Richardson residents are disappointed and disadvantaged by the derelict state of the Richardson Shops. Some of these Shops have been vacant now for 9 years.

Residents appreciate that these shops are privately owned, however we believe more can and should be done by the ACT Government to improve this situation.

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

1. Better incentives potential business owners to occupy shop fronts at local suburban shops, like the Richardson Shops
2. Better incentivise landlords to lease shop fronts rather than keeping them vacant such as those at Richardson Shops.
3. Upgrade the area surrounding the Richardson Shops so that it's more appealing to potential lease holders.
4. Report any findings and progress back to the Assembly by 31 December 2022.

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

Building—proposed developer licensing scheme—petition 29-22

By Mr Pettersson, from 820 and 308 residents, respectively:

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 Property Developers wield incredible power over our community. They design, commission and eventually sell our built environment. They extract incredible and reliable profits from the Canberra community, including home buyers, businesses and government, while dictating terms to the local construction industry, surrounding residents and the broader ACT community.

Despite the power they wield, who can and can't be a developer in the ACT is currently unregulated. Despite the frequent and high-profile corporate collapses, consumer protection failures and poor quality builds, there's no rules about who can and can't develop our valuable and limited urban space. The people who are making the decisions about how we live in our city are accountable to no-one but their financiers – and they don't need to tell us who they are, either.

The community has had enough of the cowboy behaviour of irresponsible property developers. In a recent poll, 77% of Canberrans surveyed agreed that property developers have too much power, 76% said they were too reckless about adhering to community standards; and 77% wanted the government to introduce a new licensing scheme.

It's not unreasonable - we ask anyone who drives a car to get a license to protect themselves, their passengers and the public. We ask anyone who sells a beer to get a license to protect their consumers and their next door neighbours. We ask anyone who owns more than 3 cats to get a license to protect the environment and the community.

Isn't it about time we protected all of the above, and licensed property developers?

The undersigned petitioners, therefore, call upon the Assembly to call upon the ACT Government to move, within this term of parliament, to implement a broad property developer licensing scheme that requires property developers to:

- a. Have the financial and operational capacity to complete any proposed developments and address any building defects arising;
- b. Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing ethical behaviour;
- c. Not engage in phoenix activity or other unfair commercial practices;
- d. Not engage in misleading or deceptive conduct in the course of marketing a development to the public;
- e. Accept liability for industrial practices, environmental impacts, building quality and the health and safety of workers on sites that they control or have influence over;
- f. Publicly disclose the source of funding of any development; and
- g. Nominate a natural person as a nominee.

Pursuant to standing order 99A, the petition, having more than 500 signatories, was referred to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality.

Development—Chisholm shops—petition 32-22

By **Ms Burch**, from 287 residents:

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

The following residents of the ACT draw the attention of the Assembly to the Development Application (DA) by Chisholm Village Pty Ltd's proposal to build a KFC fast food outlet at Chisholm Shops.

The DA proposes demolition of the existing car park and construction of a KFC dine-in and drive through, car wash facilities, new supermarket collection facility, commercial signage, car parking, landscaping, new driveway verge crossing, and associated works. Lease variation to Block 48 to increase the permitted gross floor area to 4,159 square metres, and to reduce staff car parking requirements to 6 spaces.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to oppose the proposed Development Application from proceeding as it will have a direct and undesirable impact on the local community.

KFC at a local shopping centre is not at all what the local community desires or needs for a number of reasons:

- (1) Local businesses are struggling and a large multi-national company's presence in the local community will take away business from small business owners;
- (2) A fast-food outlet is detrimental to the communities health;
- (3) The planned location for the outlet will be unsafe to local road users and pedestrians on Halley Street (e.g. right next to a pedestrian crossing where the two bus stops for Chisholm shops, ALDI, hairdressers, dental surgery is located)
- (4) Local Residents were extremely upset at the prospect of McDonalds chain being built at the location where the former Chisholm Tavern was located, and successfully fought the proposed development application.

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.

Ministerial responses

The following responses to petitions have been lodged:

Environment—Bluetts Block-Piney Ridge—petition 11-22

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for Minister for Planning and Land Management, dated 10 November 2022 in response to a petition lodged by Dr Paterson on 2 August 2022, concerning the protection of Bluetts Block-Piney Ridge.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

I refer to your letter of 2 August 2022 providing petition No. 11-22 Protection of Bluetts Block – Piney Ridge.

I note that the petition received more than 732 signatories and has also been referred to the Standing Committee for Planning, Transport and City Services (the Committee), consistent with Legislative Assembly Standing Order 99A.

The ACT Government acknowledges the considerable public interest in the future of Stromlo Block 402 and 403 and Denman Prospect Block 12 Section 1, due to the high ecological values outlined in the petition. The blocks contribute to significant habitat corridors for native fauna, bridging the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors, the Lower Cotter Catchment and several conservation reserves.

The ACT Government takes environmental protection seriously and undertakes several environmental studies before deciding whether land should be set aside as a reserve for environmental conservation, or whether the land is suitable for development. Early studies are underway for the ‘Western Edge investigation area’ which includes Blocks 402 and 403 Stromlo. The Western Edge investigation area spans approximately 9,800 hectares and includes land generally bordered by the Murrumbidgee River to the west and the existing urban areas of Belconnen, Molonglo Valley, Weston Creek, and Kambah, to the east. Further information about this work is available at:
www.planning.act.gov.au/planning-our-city/planning-studies/western-edge-investigation

A preliminary ecological review and assessment was undertaken in 2021 and is publicly available online. Further ecological condition and habitat surveys are expected to commence soon. Ongoing environmental and aquatic surveys are expected to be needed to identify the ecological values associated with this area.

Denman Prospect Block 12 Section 1 is zoned with a future residential development overlay and associated fire fuel management. It is part of the Molonglo Valley development area and is not considered part of the Western Edge investigation area.

Denman Prospect Block 12 Section 1 is subject to pre-development consideration currently underway through the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. Environmental values are a central part of these considerations.

The future land use decision for the Stromlo sites is subject to consideration under the Western Edge Investigation Area. As part of these investigations, a small mammal survey was completed covering the Stromlo Blocks. The survey found Common Dunnarts, which suggest other small mammal species may also be present. In response to this important finding, fire and feral management controls will be implemented on these blocks, and ongoing monitoring and further ecological investigations will continue. The findings are also helping to inform understanding of habitat connectivity requirements for the Western Edge

Investigation Area. If this investigation finds the need for environmental protections, then the planning system allows for these to be put in place.

As more information becomes available in the coming years, I will work to make sure that the biodiversity and conservation values are appropriately considered in future deliberations about the use of land in the Western Edge.

I thank you for referring this petition for my consideration. I trust this information clarifies the ACT Government's position in relation to the matters in the petition.

Environment—Callum Brae Nature Reserve—petition 16-22

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for Planning and Land Management, dated 14 November 2022, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Clay on 2 August 2022, concerning the protection of Callum Brae Nature Reserve.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 2 August 2022 providing Petition No. 16-22, lodged by Ms Jo Clay MLA, concerning the Callum Brae Nature Reserve.

The ACT Government notes the concerns raised in the petition in relation to Callum Brae Nature Reserve.

As you may be aware, a development application (DA-202138789) for a privately owned and operated crematorium, was lodged with the independent planning and land authority (the authority) on Block 1 Section 3 Symonston. The development application is currently being assessed in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, which includes protection for environment and heritage matters. A crematorium/cemetery is an assessable development in the NUZ1 Broadacre zone under the current Territory Plan.

The authority has informed me that prior to the DA being lodged, environmental impact assessments were conducted to understand the potential effects of the development proposal. This resulted in two Environmental Significance Opinions (ESOs) being given for this development. An ESO was provided by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna on 18 August 2020, subject to conditions and mitigation measures, as the proposal would not have a significant impact on the environmental values.

The ACT Heritage Council also granted an ESO for the proposal on 31 August 2020, subject to conditions, as the development is unlikely to have a significant impact on heritage values.

The proponent of the subject development also referred the proposal to the now Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) under application 2019/8595. DCCEEW considered application 2019/8595 in relation to matters of national environmental significance and on 26 May 2020 determined that the development was not a controlled action under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Conservator has advised that from an ecological perspective, Block 1 Section 3 Symonston has values that are consistent with being included in the reserve estate. These include areas of Box Gum Woodland endangered ecological community, mature native trees that provide nesting resources for native fauna and local links providing functional canopy connection between Callum Brae and Mount Mugga Nature Reserves. However, managing the site as a nature reserve would have significant challenges and require more resources than most sections of the existing reserve as there is a quite a large weed load on the site resulting from past disturbance and likely a significant issue with rabbits. These challenges would need to be carefully considered against the potential benefits of inclusion in the reserve estate.

The Government is committed to ensuring sufficient and equitable availability of cremation services and accommodating the faith and cultural needs of the ACT community. We continue to review alternative burial methods and monitor developments in the industry. The proposed crematorium will be a privately owned and operated facility and not a government managed public facility. Private sector decisions about investing in a new business are based on their assessment of the market and need for a service. Sufficient demand for a specific type of permitted commercial proposal will continue to depend on market factors and community needs that the Government will consider appropriately at the time.

Currently, DA202138789 is still under consideration by the authority and a decision will be made based on the merits of the proposal after a thorough assessment is undertaken in accordance with the statutory requirements of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. This includes the location, scale and type of development permissible within the Territory Plan zone, suitability of the land for the development proposed, and the probable cumulative impacts (including environmental, traffic, noise, amenity of adjacent developments etc.) of the proposal.

The authority has requested the proponent to apply for new ESOs, as both have now expired. The authority is currently awaiting further information from the proponent.

Development Applications of this kind are a matter for the independent authority. The authority makes its decisions at arm's length from Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly. In doing so, the authority takes great care in ensuring proper consideration and assessment of all matters required under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and its subordinate legislation.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Roads—speed limits—petition 18-22

By **Mr Steel**, Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 2 November 2022, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Lee on 2 August 2022, concerning speed limit reductions on Canberra Avenue.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 2 August 2022 regarding petition 18-22, requesting the reduction of the speed limit to 40km/h on Canberra Avenue between Barrallier Street, Griffith and Hume Circle (intersection of Canberra Avenue, Wentworth Avenue and Sturt Avenue, Griffith).

The ACT Government acknowledges that St Clare's College and St Edmund's College are located adjacent to Canberra Avenue and that some students walking and riding to school cross Canberra Avenue. Several streets surrounding St Clare's College and St Edmund's College are already currently designated as school zones, including parts of McMillan Crescent, Blaxland Crescent and Barrallier Streets.

Canberra Avenue is a busy arterial road that transports approximately 20,000 vehicles per day at an average speed of 60km/h. Over the past seven years, a total of 23 crashes were reported on this road section, three of which resulted in injury, and none involved pedestrians.

Given that Canberra Avenue is a main arterial route between Canberra and Queanbeyan, the current reduced speed limit of 60km/h is appropriate. Introducing a 40km/h speed limit on this road section is unlikely to be an effective measure without extensive traffic calming measures, which are incompatible with this road's arterial function.

However, Transport Canberra and City Services will undertake an internal review of traffic movements in this area to inform consideration of other possible interventions, such as a controlled/signalised pedestrian crossing.

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.

Trees—Bradfield Street, Downer—petitions 20-22 and 36-22

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (10.07): I thank Robyn Sirr and the almost 600 petitioners who have signed this petition, objecting to the inappropriate planting of Canary Island pines at the front of the north-facing Bradfield Street apartments in Downer. According to the ACT Heritage Council's ruling, these Canary Island pines must be planted to replace the Monterey pines.

There is no objection to having trees from these petitioners and Bradfield Street apartment residents. In fact, they would love to have more trees, as we try to negate the heat effects of urban infill and rising power prices, as well as being mindful of more solar heating opportunities in the face of climate change. The issue, they argue, is that more appropriate trees, such as deciduous or native varieties, should be used to enable more sunlight in the winter, when it is most needed for warmth and light. They question the practicality of imposing plantings and weighing decisions from a previous era, when we were facing a totally different set of circumstances and issues from those faced today.

The government's own website notes that Canary pines are not suitable as street trees. These plantings, the petitioners argue, are also contrary to the government's current push for more solar capture and less energy use. The overshadowing from the trees, when they mature, will negate the effectiveness of solar panels on the roofs of these apartments, as they will be of similar height. The expectation of up to eight hours of sunshine and light will be reduced to only a few hours per day. It is of great concern to the almost 600 petitioners that have implored the relevant ministers, as well as local members, to look at this issue. I commend the petition to the Assembly.

Building—proposed developer licensing scheme—petition 29-22

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.09): I rise today to thank Mr Zach Smith, CFMEU ACT and the wider Canberra community for their hard work in bringing this petition forward. They have done an amazing job in collecting over 1,100 signatures in support of a property developer licensing scheme.

In the ACT, property developers wield significant power over the community. They hold a trusted position in designing and constructing our built environment—the apartments and houses that we call home, the small and large businesses that we shop in and the public spaces that we enjoy. In exchange, they reap the profits for themselves and their financiers, but they answer to no-one. There are no rules about who can and cannot be a property developer. If they do not have the financial capacity to complete the projects or have a history of failing to meet their obligations, it does not matter. Even if they have been publicly exposed for roting consumers, creating shoddy builds or leaving huge debts, they can get off completely scot-free. New customers can be engaged again and again. Damage can be done again and again.

The success of this petition demonstrates that the community wants decisive action to be taken on this issue. We know that 77 per cent of Canberrans agree that property developers have too much power, and 77 per cent want the ACT government to introduce a new licensing scheme.

The consensus is clear. The great power that we bestow upon property developers should be honoured by them taking great responsibility. Right now, they do not care. All they care about is lining their pockets. In 2019 the ACT government announced that it was committed to implementing a property developer licensing scheme by the end of 2022. Given the community's strong support for this matter, now is the time for the ACT government to fulfil its promise. Canberra has waited for too long. Once again I thank the petitioners for bringing forward this great petition.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (10.11): Madam Speaker, I need to respond to this petition from Mr Pettersson; more, I need to respond to the media rhetoric from Mr Pettersson in the last 24 hours, which I note was somewhat toned down on ABC radio this morning, and here in the chamber. When a government backbencher comes out and gives a whack to a government minister and declares that he will write his own bill, so as to do that minister's job properly, I do not know whether it is just me or whether anyone else can detect the smell of dysfunction in the air. I am not sure that this is really how it works.

If this is the sort of stuff that Labor members say publicly about their Greens colleagues, you dread to think what they say about them privately. I would love to see some of the WhatsApp threads, but it is encrypted so I will not. But you wonder about how this machine holds together at all. What we are seeing here is that, if anyone despises the Greens more than us, it is Labor!

You have this mental picture of the two skippers of the *Titanic* wrestling with each other, trying to control the wheel, as it heads for the iceberg. When Mr Pettersson says that he will write his own bill, he actually means that Zachary will write a bill for him! I wanted to reflect on that, at this point.

Richardson shops—leasing—petition 31-22
Development—Chisholm shops—petition 32-22

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (10.12): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to two petitions, one relating to the Richardson shops and the other related to the Chisholm KFC. Let us start with the Richardson shops. I would like to thank my fellow member for Brindabella Ms Lawder for sponsoring the petition. Having listened to the 513 voices that have signed that petition, can I say that I absolutely agree with them. If you drive down Clift Crescent past Richardson shops, you will see that it is derelict, abandoned and a blight on that community, and the Richardson community absolutely deserve better.

That is why, earlier this year, I brought a substantive motion to the Assembly calling on an Assembly committee to investigate the possibility of a vacancy tax for both residential and commercial landlords who purposely withhold their properties from market, leave them derelict, leave them as blights on their community and not being held to account.

The economy and gender and economic equality committee is inquiring into that matter as we speak. Unfortunately, the government's submission to that inquiry completely overlooked the need to consider commercial property, only providing one line in their submission. That is disappointing, and I will continue to be active on this case.

It is worth noting, though, to the government's credit, that a fair bit of money has been spent around the Richardson shops in recent years, including updating the skate park facilities, the playground facilities and the bus stop. When we are considering carrot versus stick for rich private landlords who own big chunks of our own community, I put it to the Assembly that the government has already given quite a bit of carrot to the owner of the Richardson shops, and it is my view that now is the time for the stick approach. When you own big chunks of our community, when you purposely allow them to sit derelict and vacant, and when you rob community of infrastructure and amenity, you should be held accountable.

On the question of the Chisholm KFC proposal, Madam Speaker, I thank you for sponsoring the petition and sharing the voices of 287 of our shared constituents. We have worked together quite closely on previous petitions, and I was proud to be a small part of stopping the McDonald's development at the Chisholm shops.

It is fair to say that our community is growing increasingly resistant to and concerned about the threat of multinational conglomerates and for-profit fast-food chains buying up corners of our communities. I understand that Mr Parton may not share that view. His fondness for KFC is known in this place! But I am of the view, and my constituents who I speak to regularly are of the view, that it is a great threat to our group centres and our community centres that fast-food chains, multinational conglomerates, continue to buy up corners of our suburbs.

That is not to say that restaurants like McDonald's and KFC cannot exist, but good planning means they must exist in appropriate places, with useful auxiliary amenity, and not detract from the suburban locality. The constituents that I have spoken to in Chisholm, and that no doubt you have spoken to as well, Madam Speaker, have made that point very clear.

Where these two petitions for me are so interconnected is about the need to put community voices front and centre in planning decisions. It is about putting people first, when we decide what our suburbs look like, what our districts look like and what our city looks like, not necessarily the interests of people who can afford to own and hoard property. That is the case for the owners of the Chisholm shopping centre and it is the case for the Richardson shopping centre.

On that note, I encourage all of my constituents to participate earnestly in the government's ongoing review of the Tuggeranong district planning strategy, which is taking place later this week. If memory serves, it is on Wednesday, but you can look at my social media to get the exact date.

We have provided an awful lot of carrot for a long time, to help development in this city. We see two very different cases—one in Chisholm and one in Richardson, and what happens when we allow too much carrot and too much incentive to rich property developers. The time has come for people to be put back in the centre of planning decisions.

Development—block 6 section 88, Gungahlin—petition 26-22

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.17): I would like to speak briefly in support of businesses in Gungahlin, particularly in Gribble Street. I believe there are 590 signatories who want to see change. It is incredibly difficult to get parking there, so I was thrilled to hear about this petition. Having spoken to business owners, they would particularly like to see parking time reduced and have inspectors in the area. This will enable delivery drivers to park safely, to pick up food and get it out to the people in Gungahlin who desperately want to support businesses in these mixed use development sites.

We have seen that the parking is inadequate. Many residents are parking there, and other workers are parking there. It makes it difficult to pop in and grab your fish and chips or your fruit and veggies. There is a kebab shop. There are all sorts of great things in that area. It is great to see so many locals signing this petition in support of our courageous business owners.

Richardson shops—leasing—petition 31-22
Development—block 6 section 88, Gungahlin—petition 26-22

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.18): I would like to speak briefly on the petition on the notice paper today relating to Richardson shops. As you would know, Madam Speaker, Richardson shops has long been an eyesore for local residents and a wasted community asset. Two months ago, I was contacted by a young mother in the area called Kathy, who was understandably disappointed at the state of what was previously her local shops, and she wanted better for her community. She shared with me how wonderful the local Richardson school is, for example, and her thoughts on how much nicer Richardson would look and feel if it had some proper local shops for its residents.

My team and I worked with Kathy to distribute the petition around the suburb so that other residents could have their say. I am very pleased to see that it has gathered over 500 signatures.

I understand that local shops such as those at Richardson do face particular obstacles. Obviously, the government cannot force businesses to take up residence in them. We have had in this place in the past many discussions about Giralang shops, for example. This is yet another example. Monash shops is another local example where there are some changes going on at the moment.

However, we cannot afford to put these local shops into the too-hard basket. We see the success of some, such as at Ainslie and Narrabundah, which are praised as a success. We need to look at what we can do to improve our local shopping centres. Residents in suburbs like Richardson deserve to have the same great local facilities as residents living in the inner north and south.

That is what this petition calls on the ACT government to do. They are not big asks in the petition. I hope that the government will be open to what is called for in the petition, because Richardson residents deserve better than what they have at the moment. They deserve bustling local shops.

I would also like to say a few words in support of Ms Orr's petition on the lack of residential parking around developments in Gungahlin, which also relates to people needing to park in order to shop at local businesses, as Ms Castley spoke about. Obviously, I do not live in Gungahlin, and I do not represent the people of Gungahlin, but I can absolutely relate to the experiences of residents, because we have similar issues in some areas of Brindabella. For example, those living on Cynthea Teague Crescent and Oakden Street in Greenway have, for years, expressed their frustration about the lack of adequate parking provided to accommodate the influx of people from new high-density apartment blocks. Businesses—for example, cafes in the area—tell me that people struggle to get parking in the area.

Small businesses pay the price, too, for this lack of forward planning. Customers struggle to find a car park to be able to pop in and grab a cup of coffee. If they struggle to find a car park, they will simply go elsewhere, through no fault of the business.

I have raised these types of issues with the relevant ministers, such as those responsible for city services and planning, on a few occasions, but there has been no action taken. It is disappointing that the government is so determined on their war on cars that they have failed to legislate for basic car park requirements for the areas of the ACT that need them, and it has taken Ms Orr to bring forward this petition to highlight that fact.

Once again, it is the same one that I have highlighted in relation to Greenway. What Ms Orr has highlighted in Gungahlin is no different to what we are seeing in some areas of Tuggeranong and, I am sure, many other areas of Canberra as well. I hope that the government will take the concerns raised in Ms Orr's petition seriously, as well as the comments made by Ms Castley relating to parking for businesses in the area, and start investigating how to improve this issue across Canberra.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Housing—affordability—update

Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (10.22): I rise today to report on the progress that has been made in the fourth year of implementing the ACT Housing Strategy, and present the ACT Housing Strategy year 4 report card.

The achievements recorded in this report card demonstrate the commitment of the ACT government to delivering housing outcomes for all Canberrans. Of the 74 actions outlined in the housing strategy, 27 actions have been completed, 39 are either progressing or continuing and only one remains in development. Of the strategy's seven annual actions, all have been completed over the last year. The housing strategy goal of achieving an equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for the ACT community continues to be of central importance for the growth of the city.

The ACT government continues to provide land for residential development through the annual indicative land release program. The ACT government is not the only provider of residential land and housing; the private sector, and other organisations also provide a range of housing for Canberrans. The government is committed to delivering housing for Canberrans across all income levels through a range of initiatives. While the ACT's comparatively high average wages make housing more affordable for most Canberrans, people on lower incomes find it increasingly difficult to compete in our private rental market, and where the private market has failed it is up to the government to step in and take action. It is impossible to overstate the connection between safe secure housing and positive life outcomes. And it is for this reason that the ACT government and the housing strategy, prioritises actions focused on households with low to moderate incomes and those most at risk of homelessness.

At the conclusion of its fourth year of operation, I am glad to share with you some of the highlights from this year's report card. In working towards reducing homelessness, the ACT government is working with the ACT specialist homelessness sector, through an unprecedented co-design process. A series of workshops have been held which will help shape the framework model and help to identify what is needed to create further pathways out of crisis accommodation. Minister Vassarotti and I have been working closely with the sector throughout this process.

As we continue to address gaps in our homelessness services system, the government has extended funding from the COVID-19 homelessness services initiatives. In addition to the Housing First program, Axial Housing, these include MacKillop House for women, extended hours of the Early Morning Centre, the OneLink accommodation and support fund, and Ainslie Lodge, previously the Winter Lodge, which has supported a total of 192 men since its opening. The second Common Ground site in Dickson is now complete. I recently attended the opening with tenants, and saw the beautiful new homes and community being built there. Building on Common Ground Gungahlin, it provides residents with ongoing support to sustain tenancies and community connections with 40 social and affordable homes for families and children in need of housing and supports.

To increase social housing assistance, the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program is continuing, with 219 dwelling constructed, 93 dwellings purchased, and 749 dwellings in the pipeline. This speaks to the ACT government's determination to provide more homes for people who need them, and is working towards the ACT government's commitment to grow public housing by 400 homes and renew a further 1,000. The program also aligns with the strategy's objective of delivering the right mix of homes across Canberra for those in need, regardless of their circumstances or abilities.

Housing ACT's dedicated tenant relocation team continues to work closely with affected tenants to make sure that they are fully supported and relocated to replacement properties that meet their needs and are more accessible, disability friendly, low maintenance and energy efficient. This has seen 735 property offers made to tenants who are part of the program, with approximately 349 households relocating between July 2019 and June 2022. This has allowed for tenants to be relocated to properties that better suit their needs.

More accessible public housing properties are also being delivered, with support to the broadest range of tenants and those ageing in place. Ninety-one per cent of properties delivered since the commencement of the program conform with class C or gold adaptability standards. Class C or gold adaptability standards provides design features such as wider circulation spaces to provide suitable homes for people of different ages and abilities—for example, a person with a disability or an older person with mobility restrictions.

I would like to share a brief story about Greta and Frank, who lived in their public housing home for 53 years. As they grew older their home became less and less suited to their needs. Despite the happy memories made during more than half a century of living in one house, they agreed that it was time to relocate. Greta is a music teacher and was keen to make sure that the new place still had room for her music studio. She reflected on her dealings with the tenant relocation team:

They were understanding of our needs and tried to find us something very suitable, even though I had some special and unusual requests. We have now moved into much more suitable accommodation for our age group.

Along with these great outcomes, the program faces some ongoing challenges. Demand in the construction industry is at record highs, and the supply of materials and labour is volatile. These are having a significant impact on the program. These challenges are likely to keep pressure on the construction industry for some time. In addition, the continued La Nina weather patterns are compounding construction delays, with extra days lost to rain.

What this means for the program is that construction timeframes have increased considerably since its commencement. Since July 2019, the average construction timeframe has almost doubled. There is evidence that this is the experience everywhere, of every state and territory across the nation. As a result of these impacts, while constructions would be under contract and under construction or in progress by 2024-25, physical delivery of dwellings will continue over the next two years until 2026-27.

Housing ACT is working closely with builders to make every effort to accelerate the process where possible. This includes bringing forward design, DA and other works required before construction commences, and builders erecting roofs before brickworks and windows go in without frames so that other work can commence when glazing is not available. Whilst this does not solve the ongoing national supply and weather issues, it demonstrates the flexibility and innovation being applied to the whole program to get it done. This program is of the highest priority and every effort is being made to deliver it as quickly as possible, but the unprecedented high demand for residential construction across Australia is having a significant impact on labour and supply shortages, which will not be resolved in the short term.

The ACT government continues to work closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to support culturally appropriate public and community housing options and support programs, including three older-person complexes. The third, Ningulangu, meaning “belonging to home or place”, was officially opened in February this year. I have been encouraged by the increasing participation in the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption program, which has now reached a milestone of over 100 properties, and continues to provide safe and secure as well as affordable homes for hundreds of Canberrans. I continue to be ambitious about reaching the program’s aim of 250 properties, and the ACT government has recently commenced a promotional campaign to increase awareness and encourage greater participation. I also encourage landlords with spare properties to get involved and participate in the program.

Additionally, the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme continues to provide opportunities across Canberra for eligible buyers to purchase a new home, with more than 5,500 people having signed up to hear what is on offer. More than 180 affordable house and land packages in Whitlam and Taylor have successfully been sold, and construction of these homes has commenced. A range of housing types, including apartments and townhouses of varying sizes, continue to be offered through this initiative.

The ACT government is also working closely with the new Albanese Labor government to support the delivery of their housing commitments and identify opportunities for collaboration or shared delivery. These commitments include the Help to Buy scheme as well as the Housing Australia Future Fund. In the federal budget, the commonwealth and all states and territories agreed on a housing accord with the following objectives—setting an aspirational national target of delivering one million new, well-located homes over five years from 2024; working collaboratively with the federal government and institutional finance to improve the financing for new social and affordable housing projects; and agreeing to the improvement of zoning, planning and land release.

The ACT government is ready to move on all these initiatives, looking to exceed housing delivery targets on a per capita allocation and working with the sector and across government to bring innovative proposals to the commonwealth to be considered under the housing future fund. These projects will require close collaboration with the commonwealth and will build on projects like Common Ground Dickson and actions to support affordable housing such as build to rent, and support for community housing providers.

I am thrilled to see the Albanese Labor government work together with state and territories to deliver more social and affordable housing for all Australians. When all governments are united, our shared commitments to grow social and affordable housing will deliver better outcomes for the community and more homes for the people who need them. The level of engagement from the new Albanese Labor government on these issues has been much needed, and I look forward to continuing to work with Minister Collins and all state and territory housing ministers to deliver more social and affordable housing.

To conclude, while it is great to highlight a range of achievements here today, I acknowledge that many things have changed since the ACT Housing Strategy was released in 2018, and that there is more to do to continue to address housing affordability in the ACT. Accordingly, over the next 12 months the government will consider how to update the strategy. The timing of this work will align with the halfway point in the strategy's implementation, and this will require a more fulsome review of the strategy and the delivery of the actions to support it. I look forward to sharing more on the ACT government's ongoing commitments and progress in providing housing for all Canberrans.

I present:

ACT Housing Strategy Year 4 Report Card—
Ministerial statement, 22 November 2022.
Report card, dated November 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (10.34): I support the statement made by the Minister for Housing about the ACT Housing Strategy year 4 report card. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight particularly the partnership work that the ACT government has been undertaking in relation to how we design the specialist homelessness service system in a way that ensures everyone can get access to the support they need at the time they need it. In this work we are united in our commitment to see homelessness in the city become something that is rare, brief, and non-recurring. That will take time, but it is something we are determined to achieve.

As Minister Berry has outlined, this comes at a time when we are investing significant resources in new services and approaches. Over the last two years we have invested over \$12 million in new accommodation services and flexible funding, and we have increased the base of current services that are supporting people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. This is progressively delivering on our commitment of \$18 million as part of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement.

We are working with the sector to develop an approach that places codesign, trust and respect at its heart. Through this process, the ACT government is working to ensure that trusted sector partners and people with lived experience are central to the planning, design, and delivery of services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This has seen us engage deeply with the sector. This work has culminated in the commencement of the investment phase of commissioning, which will result in services being funded with long-term service agreements that deliver outcomes for the community and translate Canberra's vision of a world where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

We also continue the codesign process on elements, including the central intake service and how to support people with complex needs. This plan builds on the lessons and successes that came out of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and really places trust in the sector and the community to tell us what needs to happen to eliminate homelessness. Homelessness can be solved. It will take time, but through genuine commitment and codesign with those on the frontline of support and those with lived experience, we will fund initiatives that will truly address the complexities of homelessness. I would particularly like to thank our community sector partners who are working with us to design a system that is accessible so that we are able to respond to the issues faced by people who need their support.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Government—land release program—update Ministerial statement

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella-Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.37): The ACT government remains committed to improving housing availability, diversity and choice in response to a growing population. This is reflected

in ongoing strategic planning work across the territory, including the investigations undertaken in West Murrumbidgee, West Greenway and the Western Edge.

Significant time and resources are invested in planning for the future of Canberra and identifying where and how the most suitable growth can occur, while considering a range of important factors such as climate change, accessibility, sustainability, the environment and the people of the ACT. Whether greenfield or urban infill development, considerable planning and site investigations are needed to identify where it might be appropriate to have development and redevelopment. Undertaking the relevant suite of studies and due diligence is fundamental to the underlying identifying opportunities for growth and what might be required to deliver that and manage risks.

The ACT government is committed to a policy of delivering up to 70 per cent of new housing within our existing urban footprint. The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 recognises that, to reduce the extent of urban expansion and to support sustainable urban growth, the position is to work towards delivering up to 70 per cent of new housing within our existing urban footprint and by concentrating development in areas located close to the city centre, town and group centres and along key transit corridors. This is government policy and continues to be.

The government is continuing to deliver new housing under the direction of the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 and related strategies for transport, infrastructure, climate change and housing. The intention continues to focus on urban development in areas that are close to the city centre, town and group centres and transit corridors which are areas of high accessibility; within existing residential zones on blocks or sites that are appropriate locations with the capacity to accommodate increasing housing supply, density and choice—for example, large blocks in accessible locations with the potential for dual occupancy; and close to local centres that could be suited to medium density housing typologies.

The above approach has been endorsed in a recent Productivity Commission report into housing affordability in Australia. Future greenfield development will be balanced against the need to protect key environmental values, reduce the risk from natural hazards and be in locations that facilitate access to employment, services and infrastructure.

The government is continuing to work on improvements to planning for the future in the ACT through the Planning System Review and Reform project. This year the government has released a new planning bill, a new draft Territory Plan and draft district strategies. The draft district strategies provide more detail on the implementation of the government policies related to 70 per cent of development within the urban footprint and approximately 30 per cent greenfield development. The draft district strategies indicate where development might be possible and opportunities where medium density development could occur.

The draft district strategies reflect government policy and identify how, where and what growth might occur across the territory and what is required to support this change. The draft district strategies are based on many years of conversation with community and further ask Canberrans what they wish to see within their individual district strategies. For housing, the draft strategies and draft new Territory Plan also

discuss changes that could support further housing, including single dwellings, within the existing urban footprint.

The draft district strategies are based on projections for an approximately 25-year horizon to 2046 and a longer-term horizon post 2060. Those draft district strategies have informed the preparation of the district policies and district specifications in the draft new Territory Plan. These strategic and statutory documents will inform and guide the development of future areas and what land might be available for release through the Indicative Land Release Program. The ACT government Indicative Land Release Program is an important tool, supporting the supply of land to meet the needs of our growing and changing city. The future supply of land and development in the ACT will increasingly rely not only on contributions from the ACT government but also on opportunities with the commonwealth government and private sector.

The ACT government Indicative Land Release Program is also a tool that we use to support the 70 per cent policy. Forecast housing demand plays an important role in shaping the Indicative Land Release Program and the timely release of land to enable housing construction to meet that demand. The residential release component of the 2022-23 to 2026-27 Indicative Land Release Program provides for the release of land to support 16,417 dwellings over the next five years to assist in addressing the demand for new housing. The indicative releases set down for 2022-23 would provide for 72 per cent of dwellings to be built within the existing urban footprint and 28 per cent in greenfield areas.

The ACT government remains committed to providing a diversity of housing choices for Canberrans both now and into the future. Delivering this means ensuring the territory heeds the lessons of other jurisdictions and ensures new growth in areas that are close to employment, health care, school services and infrastructure, and accounts and prepares for climate change. This is best achieved by continuing to work to provide up to 70 per cent of new development within the existing urban footprint and to identify land for medium density development. The recently released changes to the existing planning system reflect this. The government policy remains consistent with this approach and aligns with planning for the future to support key social, environmental, climate change and economic imperatives for the ACT, including a carbon neutral future.

I present the following paper:

Land release program—Ministerial statement, 22 November 2022

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Amendment Bill 2022

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

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.45): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today, I am pleased to present the Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Amendment Bill 2022. This amendment bill represents another step this government is taking to improve working conditions for Canberrans. Specifically, it advances this government's commitment under the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement of the 10th Legislative Assembly to expand access to portable long service leave.

It also addresses two resolutions of the previous Assembly relating to workers in the hairdressing and contract catering sectors. In 2009 when the Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) legislation was introduced in the Assembly, the government articulated its vision that ultimately everybody who is not employed in the public sector will be able to have their long service leave transferred from one industry to another.

This amendment bill is another important step towards realising this vision. The government is well aware of the systemic inequities faced by many workers, particularly women, in casualised industries such as food services. Many workers in these industries lose access to the accrual of entitlements by undertaking caring roles in families, often returning to their industries after breaks in service but with different employers.

Similarly, workers who have responded to the shifts in market priorities and pressures of mobility are also losing long service leave entitlements. In February this year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that the territory has the highest rate of job mobility, at 12.8 per cent. Workers in the accommodation and food services industry continue to represent the highest mobility by industry according to the ABS statistics. It is the workers in these industries who miss out on the opportunity to accrue long service leave, not because they do not stay in the industry long enough but because they do not meet the traditional requirement of working for a single employer over that period.

Previous Labor governments recognised the accrual obstacles which are necessary for workforce mobility, in building and construction, in contract cleaning, in community services and in the security industry, and did something about it. The benefits of portable long service leave are longstanding and well recognised. Measures were implemented in 1981 to allow workers in building and construction to access portable leave schemes, and similar arrangements were made in 2000 for workers in contract cleaning. The security industry was included in 2013, with the community sector being recognised as a covered industry for the purposes of portability in 2016.

So it is time for this government to give similar recognition to other industries by allowing more workers to retain their long service leave entitlements when remaining in their chosen industry but changing employers.

This bill enhances this government's vision for Canberra as the benchmark for wellbeing, advocating for Canberra as a liveable city that supports work-life balance and equity for all workers.

The amendment bill incorporates the expansion to cover two additional industries: the hairdressing and beauty services industry and accommodation and food services industries. It does so by expanding the existing cleaning sector scheme, to become known as the services industry. This will ensure consistency in scheme design and allows for regulatory, administrative and structural efficiencies. This design will also reduce the cost impact on the new industries by adding scale to an existing scheme, with fixed costs spread across a wider employer base.

In recommending this bill, I note that there is a suggestion by some industry groups that the expanded coverage is going to increase difficulties for small businesses. While I acknowledge that running a small business can be challenging, it should not be a justification to disadvantage workers in small businesses.

We are conscious of these challenges and are, in the design of this proposal, allowing a transition period for two years for commencement of the expanded coverage. This is to allow time for business and workers in the new industries to prepare for registration with the authority and make any adjustments, as well as allow the authority the time to establish the necessary administrative and regulatory services.

By bringing industries such as hairdressing into the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme, the bill will in turn support administrative authorities to better address concerns about sham contracting practices that further exploit workers and impede their access to workplace entitlements. The bill supports businesses to retain staff and provide them with professional development opportunities that benefit the industry as a whole.

The measures in this bill demonstrate this government's vision for Canberra by addressing systemic sources of inequity for all workers and creating opportunities for job security.

This bill also serves as another accomplishment for the labour movement. Schemes such as this have come about because of the tireless effort of unions, and I want to acknowledge the advocacy and work of UnionsACT and their affiliated trade unions. I also want to thank Mr Pettersson and Ms Cody. Both are champions of workers in this place and have campaigned to expand portable long service leave. This bill is a testament to their hard work as well.

I commend this bill to the Assembly as another example of this government's commitment to ensuring fairness for all workers.

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

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 23

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (10.52): I present the following report, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 23, dated 15 November 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 23 contains the committee's comments on seven bills, seven pieces of subordinate legislation, proposed amendments to one bill and 11 government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting.

I commend the report to the Assembly.

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee Report 6

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.53): I present the following report, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings:

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee—Report 6—*Inquiry into environment volunteerism*, dated 15 November 2022, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I rise to present the report of the Standing Committee on Environment Climate Change and Biodiversity on the inquiry into environmental volunteerism. The committee announced this inquiry on 15 December 2021. The committee received 30 submissions and held two public hearings, hearing from a number of groups, including the ACT government, the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and volunteer groups such as Landcare ACT, ACT Wildlife and Local Park care groups.

The report moved 22 recommendations covering a broad range of issues, including opportunities to facilitate environmental volunteerism in the ACT, policy and regulatory settings that affect the work of volunteer organisations, appropriate regulation and Indigenous caring for country. The committee heard that our environmental volunteers are very passionate about contributing to the environmental

wellbeing of the territory, and together provide over 300,000 hours of work, valued at over \$21 million each year.

The ACT is very fortunate to have such a strong culture of environmental volunteerism. Volunteer work is multifaceted and includes pulling weeds, caring for injured wildlife, collecting data, administrative support, planting trees and advocacy. Environmental volunteers contribute significant time, effort and expertise to the benefit of their local environment, their community and the ACT government. Their work greatly enhances the scientific, ecological and social wellbeing of the territory. The committee wishes to thank all those who volunteer, especially those who contributed to the inquiry.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone who participated in or assisted with the inquiry. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.55): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion.

The committee's inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan commenced in May of this year. On 25 October, an inclusive public hearing was held in which the proceedings were interpreted in Auslan as well as spoken English for full accessibility to all members of the public.

The committee had originally planned to table its report on this inquiry by December 2022. In order to give full consideration to the comprehensive evidence we have gained from the 33 submissions, the public hearing and our site visits to schools which cater to Deaf students, the committee has resolved to extend the reporting date to 28 February 2023.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (10.56): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing. On 1 July 2022 the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing resolved to conduct an inquiry into abortion and reproductive choice in the ACT.

The committee received 51 submissions and held a public inquiry on Friday, 28 October. We thank the witnesses for their valuable contributions to this important inquiry. The evidence received by the committee has identified barriers to abortion and reproductive health in the ACT, and several ways in which access to health care of this nature can be improved.

The committee resolved on 15 November 2022 to extend the reporting date of the inquiry to 28 February 2023 in order to give justice to the comprehensive evidence before the committee.

Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.57): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred bills. The Animal Management and Welfare Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 was referred to the committee on 11 October 2022. The committee notes that this is not a significant bill, and the committee considers that an inquiry would not add anything further to the topic. For this reason, the committee has resolved not to inquire into this bill.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.58): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred bills. The Electricity Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 was referred to the committee on 11 October 2022. The committee notes that this is not a significant bill, and the committee considers that an inquiry would not add anything further to the topic. For this reason, the committee has resolved not to inquire into this bill.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.58): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred petitions. Petition 07-22, titled “Safe active travel to school in Lyneham” was received by the Assembly on 1 June 2022 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A. As signatories to petition 07-22, 613 residents of the ACT requested that the Assembly call upon the ACT 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 committee notes that, in his response to the petition, the Minister for Transport and City Services, Mr Chris Steel MLA, said:

A consultant has been engaged by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) to undertake a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) around Brindabella Christian College and Lyneham Primary School. The TIA will assess Brigalow Street in Lyneham near the two schools with respect to the traffic operation, safety and accessibility of vulnerable road users. The TIA will also assess the feasibility of alternative options, including the carpark entry at Brindabella Christian College ...

The School Safety Program will consult key stakeholders, including Lyneham Primary School and the Brindabella Christian College, about the findings of the TIA and the Brigalow Street investigations.

Given the minister's commitments and the school safety program coordinating a response to the issues raised through this petition, the committee will not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petition 07-22.

Petition 13-22, titled "Safety of pedestrians at Narrabundah" was also received by the Assembly on 1 June 2022 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A. As signatories to petition 13-22, 651 residents of the ACT requested that the Assembly call upon the ACT government to improve Narrabundah's road infrastructure, especially around the La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent intersection.

The committee notes that, in his response to the petition, the Minister for Transport and City Services, Mr Chris Steel MLA, said:

Roads ACT recently engaged a consultant to investigate and recommend options to improve road safety in the vicinity of the La Perouse Street/Carnegie Crescent intersection following concerns raised by the Narrabundah community.

Based on the advice from the consultant, Roads ACT recommended proceeding with detailed design and installation of speed cushions and refuge islands on the approach to the La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent intersection. Speed cushions on La Perouse Street and Carnegie Crescent will reduce speeds at this intersection which is likely to reduce both the severity and the likelihood of a crash to occur ...

Following the introduction of these measures, Roads ACT will monitor the effect on safety and traffic and undertake a post implementation review to consider any further improvements that are required.

The committee considers the government response to be satisfactory and will therefore not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petition 13-22.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee Membership

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Pettersson): Pursuant to standing order 223, the Labor Party whip wrote to the Speaker to advise proposed changes to the membership of Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing. Madam Speaker agreed to the following changes on 4 November 2022: that Dr Paterson be discharged from the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing and Mr Pettersson be appointed in her place.

I present a copy of the email correspondence between the Labor Party whip and the Speaker:

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee—Change of membership—Copy of email correspondence between the Labor Party Whip and the Speaker, dated 4 November 2022.

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

That:

The change to the membership of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing as proposed to and agreed by the Speaker, pursuant to Standing order 223 be adopted.

Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Debate resumed from 9 June 2022 on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (11.03): I rise on behalf of the Canberra Liberals to support this omnibus bill but also to make a few comments about a particular change in two of the acts amended. This omnibus bill will amend the Agents Act 2003, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020, the Gaming Machine Act 2004 and provide some corrections to the Land Titles Act 1925 and the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

Regarding the Agents Act amendment, the amendment in this bill will be to section 99, to insert a reference to the sale of a business or professional practice with regard to agency agreements.

The COVID-19 Emergency Response Act amendment will amend section 3 to clarify that reporting requirements do not apply where a COVID-19 measure is either repealed or later amended to operate on an ongoing basis. This will enable the responsible minister to bypass preparing a report to the Legislative Assembly where its COVID-related legislation is re-operationalised or repealed.

The amendment to the Gaming Machine Act will allow the minister an extra year, until 30 November next year, to review and table a report on the gaming machine tax rebate. This is in light of COVID-19 and an inability to properly assess the operation of the gaming machine tax rebate.

Most significantly, though, the bill will amend the Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2022 and the Limitation Act 1995, which will allow the court to set aside institutional child abuse settlement agreements where the court deems it just and reasonable to do so, with the intention to allow victims access to equal compensation by today's standards. As members would be aware, the 2013 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, under the Gillard federal government, made several recommendations to state and territory parliaments regarding the treatment of child abuse cases.

It is disappointing that the ACT appears to be the last, again, to implement nationally agreed reforms. The Canberra Liberals strongly support these proposed amendments to those two acts, which will bring the ACT in line with several other jurisdictions and with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

As I have mentioned, it is unfortunate that we are, under this Labor-Greens government, the wooden spooners when it comes to legalising national reforms. It happened earlier this year, with the implementation of the national real estate training package, as part of the Fair Trading and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill. Again, it is disappointing that we are not at the forefront, as opposed to being well and truly behind others.

I do want to thank the department, the Attorney-General and his officials for the briefing in July this year. The Canberra Liberals will be supporting this omnibus bill.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.06), in reply: This bill is an omnibus bill, as Mr Cain has noted, which makes a range of minor and technical or non-controversial amendments to legislation, primarily within my portfolio as Attorney-General.

The need for the amendments has been identified through direct consultation with government directorates and agencies, and the community. While many of the changes contained in this bill are minor, technical and non-controversial, they are nevertheless significant to ensure the proper functioning of our government and legal system and improve the administration and operation of the territory's laws.

The changes will also make improvements that are compatible with and promote human rights. One of the substantive and most significant measures progressed through this JACS bill is amendments to the Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2022 and the Limitation Act 1985 to allow for the setting aside of past unjust settlements in cases of child abuse. These amendments reflect the ACT government's commitment to access to justice for survivors who were abused as children.

Importantly, the amendments are designed to remedy past injustices and, by allowing access to fairer compensation in appropriate cases, will promote access to an effective remedy. The bill will remove legal barriers and provide a clear pathway for access to justice for survivors of child abuse. The ACT government continues to acknowledge the nature and impact of the abuse suffered by victims of child abuse.

Many survivors of child abuse suffer long-lasting and severe injuries that can affect them for the rest of their lives. This bill is another reflection of the government's commitment to access to justice for survivors who were abused as children. The bill builds on the ACT government's previous reforms in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The bill will allow survivors to apply to the court to have a past settlement agreement set aside if, at the time the agreement was made, there were legal barriers to the survivor being fully compensated or if the agreement, in all the circumstances, is not a just and reasonable agreement. This is in recognition of the fact that many survivors gave up their ability to pursue just compensation due to being in an unfairly weakened bargaining position.

This legislation will allow such claims to be pursued anew, with the benefit of all the reforms following from the royal commission. Once the agreement is set aside, the survivor will then be able to have their claim determined on its merits and to receive just compensation for the harm they have suffered.

The bill will broaden the definition of child abuse in the Limitation Act to encompass physical abuse. As a result, survivors who experienced historical physical abuse as children will no longer be statute barred from bringing a claim for compensation in respect to that physical abuse. As introduced to the Assembly in June 2022, the bill outlines that the types of agreements that can be set aside are agreements, firstly, that happened prior to the removal of the limitation period; secondly, where there might have been the option to apply to the court to have the limitation period extended but the survivor did not, or could not do so; and, thirdly, that happened before the Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 was introduced, where the agreement is not just and reasonable.

It is in the court's discretion to determine what is just and reasonable according to the circumstances of each case. This may include, for example, the amount of the settlement, compared to what the survivor would receive today; the bargaining power of the parties; the inability to identify a defendant; deficiencies in the law of liability at the time; and misconduct of the institution or misconduct or weak conduct by the victim's own lawyer towards the victim.

The reform's intent is to provide the court with the power to consider settlements entered into because of any of these factors, or any combination of these factors, and to set them aside. This broad approach is intended to result in greater rights for survivors and recognises that not all barriers survivors face that result from unjust settlements are legal ones.

These amendments reflect what we heard from survivors throughout the target consultation process that was undertaken for the bill, including the fact that it was not just legal barriers that prevented survivors from receiving appropriate compensation. The bill intends to create greater equality for survivors by allowing access to compensation that is appropriate by the standards of today.

This legislation has been designed to help remedy past injustices. Survivors of all forms of child abuse deserve, and have always deserved, adequate compensation for the trauma and serious personal injuries they have been burdened with through no fault of their own. Compensation must be adequate by the standards of today and our legislation must work to benefit survivors and hold offending institutions accountable.

These reforms continue to demonstrate the government's commitment to upholding the rights of child abuse survivors, while allowing them to receive compensation that

is appropriate by today's standards. Overall, the changes are designed to promote access to the right to an effective remedy and to promote the human rights of survivors of abuse.

I would like to again acknowledge the considerable input and knowledge that survivors and advocates have contributed to the development of these amendments. I thank you for sharing your stories and for advocating for change. These individuals place great trust in us by sharing their profoundly personal experiences, as well as their extensive, valuable knowledge.

I thank each of you for your contribution, as well as your strength and commitment to ensuring that this reform will be of benefit to many child abuse survivors. This reform does belong to you, as does the good that it will bring. It is our responsibility, as a government, to ensure that survivors can access the compensation that they deserve and to meet the courage, resilience and determination of survivors and their advocates with a law reform that allows this to happen. I appreciate the support across the chamber today, mindful of the nature of the reform that we are proposing.

In addition to this important reform that I have just spoken about, the bill amends the Land Titles Act 1925, the Agents Act 2003 and the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to correct technical errors and ensure the proper functioning of our laws. The bill amends the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 to improve the efficiency of reporting to the Assembly on COVID-19 measures. The amendments remove the reporting and tabling requirements where a COVID-19 measure has been legislated to operate on an ongoing basis or where a measure has been repealed.

The bill amends the Gaming Machine Act 2004 to provide an additional year, from 30 November 2022 to 30 November 2023, for a report to be presented to the Legislative Assembly on the operation of the gaming machine tax rebate provisions. As I think is well understood, due to COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns many clubs were closed during those periods and did not pay standard rates of tax. This created difficulties for a proper assessment to be undertaken on gaming machine tax by November this year.

The amendment supports a more objective and informative report to be prepared and presented on the gaming machine tax rebate by extending the tabling requirement to 30 November 2023. This will enable that evaluation to take into account what might be considered more business as usual data, more representative data across the period being examined.

The bill makes important changes to ensure the proper administration of our justice system, and on that basis I commend it to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill 2022

Debate resumed from 4 August 2022, on motion by **Ms Davidson**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (11.15): I can confirm that the Canberra Liberals will be supporting this bill without any further amendments, because we believe it will improve the care and protection of our most vulnerable Canberrans. The two changes were made in response to feedback from the community, and the changes to section 7, particularly, make sense. They clarify what was a significant anomaly in the care of people with a disability. They will also help to bring the ACT legislation in line with the NDIS.

I will watch with interest the outcome to the changes to section 53, which adds the ability to enforce the regulations that accompany the act and the ability to create offences. The penalty units seem a little excessive, set at 30—currently the equivalent to almost \$5,000 for an individual and \$25,000 for an organisation. I am hoping there will be flexibility, guidance and education around these matters.

I was pleased to hear from the minister—and thank you for your response to my email—that the further regulations will be developed in consultation with the community. This will, no doubt, ensure they are fair and equitable and respond to further needs. This bill has the support of the Canberra Liberals.

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) (11.17), in reply: I am pleased to present the Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill 2022 for debate. The ACT government is committed to the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices in the ACT. This is defined under the Senior Practitioner Act 2018:

... to restrict the rights or freedom of movement of a person for the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm ...

We know that some of the most vulnerable people in our community are most likely to be subject to restrictive practices: people with disability, older people, and children and young people. The two amendments contained in the bill support our commitment to reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices and ensure that legislative compliance aligns with the intent of the act.

Firstly, the bill removes “verbal directions, or gestural conduct, of a coercive nature” as a definition under the meaning of a restrictive practice. The inclusion of coercion as a restrictive practice has caused significant confusion for stakeholders, chiefly because it implies that it could be used. Verbal direction or gestural conduct of a coercive nature includes a person being threatened in an attempt to force compliance. It may occur when a person is degraded, humiliated or forced into a position of powerlessness, such as a threat to deny access to a mobility or communication aid. It is clear that conduct of this kind negatively impacts people’s rights and wellbeing.

Secondly, the bill contains an amendment to allow regulations made under the act to create offences and fix penalties. While the act currently allows for the making of regulations by the minister, this amendment will strengthen the authority of these regulations by increasing the sanctions the senior practitioner is able to bring to bear to enforce them.

The capacity to create offences and fix penalties may be used to convey the seriousness and unacceptable nature of certain practices or actions. These practices or actions may include those which are deemed to pose too great a risk to a person's life, safety or wellbeing. Maintaining currency with changes to contemporary practice is supported by the ability to more easily and quickly amend subordinate legislation such as regulations, and this in turn enhances our ability to safeguard people subject to restrictive practices.

It is difficult to have a complete list of practices that should be offences. An example is practices like "prone restraint" that have been used in the past to respond to behaviours of concern by individuals that are known to have led to severe impacts on people, including death. Prone restraint that was used in some settings in the past, but is now prohibited in many jurisdictions, involves having two adults pin a child to the ground facedown, with one adult holding down their legs while another holds down their arms. There are cases where a child has suffocated and died as a result of this practice in other jurisdictions.

To provide the best protection to those most at risk in our community, it is important that the senior practitioner is able to assess the risk in a particular practice, and, if it is unacceptable, act to prohibit that practice while continuing their ongoing work to educate the community about better ways to support positive behaviour management.

As noted in the explanatory statement, seeking to enable the creation of regulations which include offences and fix penalties is specifically intended to discourage actions and practices that are deemed a serious risk to vulnerable persons. The Community Services Directorate are beginning consultation about the development of a list of prohibited practices, and that is broadly informed by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's practices which are proposed to be prohibited. Consultation will seek stakeholder views on whether these practices should be included in the regulations, and whether offences and penalties should apply. As subordinate legislation, a regulation would still be presented in the Assembly for consideration and scrutiny committee review.

Through removing coercion, clarifying that it is not a restrictive practice and increasing the authority of regulations, the Senior Practitioner Amendment Bill promotes the rights to protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the protection of families and children. The bill supports the government's commitment to improving the lives of all people who are vulnerable and potentially subject to restrictive practices.

I thank the community and our sector partners for their participation in consultations. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.22 am to 2.00 pm.

Questions without notice

Light rail stage 2A—traffic planning

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, the construction works for light rail stage 2A will cause ongoing disruptions for Canberrans in the city due to roadworks and road closures. For how many years will these disruptions last?

MR STEEL: Around four years, while we construct the raising of London Circuit, which will take around two years; and, following that, there will be around two years worth of work to construct the stage 2A project, which involves building stops, laying track slab, laying track and setting up for the light rail systems.

MS LEE: Minister, what financial costs will these disruptions pose to businesses that are situated along the route? Have you undertaken any analysis in relation to this? If so, can you table it in the Assembly?

MR STEEL: We have a business support plan for the project, which is available to look at on the MPC website, where we have set out a range of measures that we are taking to work with business to make sure that they are supported throughout the construction phase of this project. It will be disruptive. We have been talking with hundreds of businesses, including doorknocking over 100 just over the last couple of weeks, to let them know about the upcoming disruption with the closure of the southern part of London Circuit and the cloverleaves from 2 December.

We will continue to work with them through the construction period to make sure that they are supported and that we get this project delivered, which is important for businesses in our city in the future, and for the future growth of our city, making sure that it remains a vibrant, sustainable and better-connected city going forward.

DR PATERSON: Minister, can you speak more about what you are doing to inform the community about the disruption?

MR STEEL: I thank Dr Paterson for her question. We will be talking with the community early and often—often on a daily basis, as the construction program really ramps up, starting with an early heads-up about the changes on 2 December, and then moving into next year, when we will see the first of the bridges on Commonwealth Avenue over London Circuit demolished.

We will be talking with the community across a variety of different channels. Of course, we have a newsletter which people can subscribe to. We have over a thousand subscribers to that newsletter, where we provide regular updates. We will be providing a lot of information on the Built for CBR website—builtforcbr.act.gov.au—about those changes and what people can do to rethink their routine. We will also be talking on radio, including our regular radio slots near the traffic updates, to provide people with that information. We will, of course, be engaging through the media, as well as having face-to-face engagement with the community, as we progress this important project for Canberra's future.

Light rail stage 2A—federal government funding

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, regarding the federal government's \$85.9 million contribution to stage 2A of the tram, the federal government stated publicly on Friday, 28 October that payments will occur in the 2029-30 financial year but that stage 2A will be completed in January 2026. Minister, why is funding being received four years after the completion of the project?

MR STEEL: I cannot speak to the federal government budget, but, as I have outlined already to the opposition by way of an answer to a question taken on notice from the annual reports hearings, the federal government have written to me indicating that they will be providing funding for light rail, in addition to their existing contribution to the stage 2A project, from the 2026-27 financial year onwards. That funding, I believe, will be confirmed through national partnership agreement arrangements which have not yet been finalised.

MS LEE: Minister, did the NPA schedule that was sent to you on 25 October specifically and directly state that payments for the \$85.9 million will occur in the 2029-30 financial year?

MR STEEL: No. It said that they would occur from the 2026-27 year onwards.

MR PARTON: Minister, when did the ACT government sign and agree to the updated NPA schedule? Were there any changes to the \$85.9 million payment profile that was stated publicly?

MR STEEL: It has not been finalised, as I said in the answer to my previous question, if Mr Parton had been listening. But we certainly welcome this extra funding. It is a significant contribution to building a better public transport system in this city and delivering light rail to Woden, which is a very strong commitment that we have and that was also a commitment by the federal Labor government. We are committed to building this project. Every time the opposition stand up, it appears that they do not support this project. We saw the extraordinary admission earlier today by the Leader of the Opposition when she stood up at a press conference and admitted that she did not support the project, that she could not bring herself to support it—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, it was a very direct question. Point of order both on relevance and also debating the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat.

Mr Hanson: The minister has been asked a question. He should respond. I do not think the question has anything to do with a press conference by a member of the opposition.

MADAM SPEAKER: He is within the scope of the question.

Mr Hanson: No, he is not.

Light rail stage 2A—traffic planning

MR COCKS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Transport. I have been contacted by many people living in my electorate who are worried about congestion on the commute into the city on weekday mornings. Minister, how much extra travel time will the preparation works, including the raising of London Circuit, add to the average commute times for people living in Woden, Weston Creek and Molonglo?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We have been undertaking a very significant amount of preparation and plans, through the disruption taskforce, in the lead-up to major construction works happening, not only on the light rail project and raising London Circuit, but also on other infrastructure projects that are occurring around the southern part of the CBD in coming years. That also includes the National Capital Authority's bridge-strengthening project. We believe we will need to see lane closures to facilitate the work there as well.

The work that we have undertaken has told us that, from the southern part of the city it will take potentially up to another eight minutes to get into the city. And from the other end of the city it will take up to four to five minutes. We will not know the exact time until we start to undertake that construction, when we will be able to ground-truth the modelling that has been occurring to inform all of the measures that we have been putting in place to mitigate the disruption over the coming period. They include infrastructure investments like signalising the Coranderrk roundabout, which is already a major bottleneck on Parkes Way in our city, and signalising Vernon Circle to enable bus movements onto Constitution Avenue for those detour routes as people find new ways of moving around the city. And we will continue to inform people about this.

We have been very upfront for a very long time that this is going to be disruptive, but it is also important that we get on and build the major infrastructure projects that our city needs, in particular because we are the fastest-growing jurisdiction in Australia, and we need to make sure that we have mass transit that can support the efficient movement of people around our city as it grows.

MR COCKS: Minister, how much longer, compared with 2021, will it take our constituents to drive from Woden to the city during the rest of your decade of disruption, to deliver a tram to Woden that will be slower, less convenient and more expensive than what we had before?

MR STEEL: I think we have just had it confirmed that the Liberals do not support light rail, including a member who literally lives in the electorate that will benefit from light rail. That is an extraordinary betrayal!

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat.

Mr Parton: I have a point of order on relevance. It was a very simple question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister was on his feet for 20 seconds.

MR STEEL: I refer the member to my answer to the previous question, where I did answer that. I have been very clear in the answers to the previous questions of the opposition leader, as well, in relation to the timeline for the 2A project. There is going to be disruption over this period; there is no doubt about it. We have been upfront about that, and we have been putting in place a range of different measures to support people moving around efficiently.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, the answer that the minister gave previously was about 2A, which is going to go for four years, but the question from Mr Cocks is about the entire project, which includes 2A and 2B, and how long that disruption is going to go on for, and how long that is going to delay people.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson should resume his seat.

MR STEEL: I thank the member. The reality is that with 2B we have a bit of design work and planning work to work through for that project, which will determine the exact scope and how that particular project will be implemented. But what we know is that 2B is a very different route to 2A. Stage 2A runs on London Circuit on the streets. It is the first time that light rail has run on the street. It previously ran on the median strip on Northbourne Avenue. It does cross over into the verge when it gets onto Flemington Road in stage 1. Stage 2B will also benefit from having a large median strip on Adelaide Avenue, which is built for light rail. It is a very wide median strip that will enable us to undertake a lot of that construction work, much like stage 1, where it did not significantly affect road commuters. It was really just was confined to that median—*(Time expired.)*

MR HANSON: Minister, when will the 675 carparking spaces that are currently impacted by stage 2A be returned for public use?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. They will, of course, be in use over the next two years, at least, with the raising of London Circuit project, but those construction compounds may then transition to use by Canberra Metro, which is something that we will work with them on as part of the delivery of the stage 2A project. We have been out there talking about the loss of those carparks and the need for Canberrans to think about changing their habits about where they park in the city. We have done the analysis and we know that there are over 14,000 public carparks that are available for people who want to park in the CBD. So it is a matter of looking at where other carparks are available. We have provided all of those parking maps up on the CBR website for people to view, to make their decisions about changing their routines about how they move around the city, including how they park.

Economy—credit rating

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, following the affirmation of the ACT's credit rating, can you please update the Assembly on the economic outlook for the ACT?

MR BARR: Thank you Dr Paterson for the question. It is very pleasing that the Territory has retained the highest possible credit rating. There are only two states and territories in Australia with that highest possible credit rating, the ACT and Western Australia. On the question of the economic outlook, it undoubtedly has some challenges ahead but broadly speaking the outlook is positive. As Standard and Poor's observed and for the benefit of the Assembly, I will quote:

Our ratings on ACT reflect its excellent financial management; very high-income economy, which is closely linked to the stable public sector; and exceptional liquidity. The territory historically has Australia's most resilient labour market, with unemployment tracking 1-2 percentage points lower than the national average in the past half decade. Economic growth prospects are solid. We view ACT's financial management positively. The territory has a professional and independent public service, and prudent debt management.

So, in summary Madam Speaker, our population is growing faster than anywhere else in the nation, our level of educational attainment continues to grow strongly, we have the lowest unemployment rate, we have the highest incomes, we have high quality government services and a strong infrastructure pipeline. Canberra is a great place to live.

DR PATERSON: Chief Minister, what are the biggest risks and challenges facing the ACT economy?

MR BARR: The most significant risks are now external. For example, the war in the Ukraine and the rolling lockdowns in China, which have driven up prices of international goods, particularly fuel. COVID-19 remains a managed risk within our economy and society, even with our high vaccination rates. It will continue to have an impact on how we live and work locally, in Australia and it still has a global economic impact.

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, what is the government's economic and fiscal strategy in light of those challenges and opportunities?

MR BARR: Thank you Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. We have a clear fiscal strategy and the government remains committed to sustainable economic growth, quality and efficient services, sustainable taxation and revenue, sound public finances and a strong balance sheet. As has just been re-endorsed for the 30th consecutive year by Standard and Poor's, we take advantage of our continuing opportunities as a growing and diversified economy. Earlier this year, I released our economic development priorities, with three key missions. Firstly, that the city gives people back time, that it improves wellbeing and liveability. Secondly, that we work towards a net zero city and beyond, environmental responsibility and action.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson.

MR BARR: Thirdly, knowledge-based economic growth, inclusive innovation and responsible investment. Three key missions for this city, for this decade and beyond. A clear agenda for the future—one that is sustainable, one that diversifies the territory economy—and investments from the government that make Canberra more liveable in the long term.

Health—dental services

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, I was recently contacted by one of my constituents who is a low income student and has had trouble accessing affordable dental care in Canberra. I am aware that the ACT government does provide some publicly funded dental services to people with a healthcare card and to asylum seekers; however, the waitlist is about 13 months, there is a discretionary co-payment of about \$40, and these services do not extend to all low income people. Dental fees are largely unregulated and, as cost of living pressures increase, people are less likely to undertake preventative care like regular dental check-ups. What can the ACT government do to improve access to dental care for low income Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Davis for the question, and it is an important one. Of course, Mr Davis, you are right: the ACT government provides adult dental services to ACT residents who are primary holders of a Centrelink issued pension, concession or healthcare card, a veterans' affairs card or an ACT services access card. Emergency dental services are available to all of those eligible adults once they have been assessed as needing a priority appointment, with a very short wait time. You are also correct, Mr Davis, that it depends on the circumstances as to exactly what the wait time is. The wait times for people who do not need that emergency care are considerable for adults, although there is no current waiting list for children for dental services.

The ACT government has continued to invest and grow its investment in its oral health services. The total dental budget for 2022-2023 was more than \$13 million, inclusive of the commonwealth's federal funding agreement funding for adult public dental, which amounts to \$0.96 million, or \$960,000 per annum.

Part of the challenge we have had with the dental services is we have had a previous commonwealth government who cut funding for dental services under the national partnership we have for dental and, in recent years, only extended the agreement for one year at a time, providing no certainty for states and territories about what funding was going to be available and making it very difficult to plan for the expansion of this service, which is supposed to be a partnership between state and territory governments and the commonwealth. I look forward to working with Minister Mark Butler, who has indicated that he is keen to work with states and territories to resolve this situation.

MR DAVIS: Minister, what actions is the government taking to recruit even more dentists to the public program to help meet demand?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: We will continue to ensure our oral health services are recruited to and we are able to deliver services. One of the key things we will be doing is working with our colleagues across states and territories, and with the commonwealth government, to try to get funding certainty for this program.

I have sought Minister Butler's commitment to support the work of the national dental reform working group that was established by the Health Chief Executives Forum to develop a long-term strategy for dental policy and funding. The national dental reform working group is finalising an options paper for consideration by health ministers in the coming months. These options will be focused on achieving a longer-term funding commitment from the Australian government for public dental health services for both children and adults.

We will continue to consider how we can prioritise oral health services. We have, obviously, also recently reviewed oral health services within Canberra Health Services to understand what opportunities are available, but having some funding certainty and growth in funding from the commonwealth would be a very helpful start.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, has the ACT government advocated to their federal counterparts to put dental care into Medicare?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Braddock for the question. We have not specifically advocated to our commonwealth counterparts in relation to putting dental into Medicare. Federal Labor has made their position on that very clear. What we have advocated for is ensuring there is certainty of commonwealth funding under the federal funding agreement and considering how that can continue to grow into the future rather than be cut, as it was under the previous coalition government.

Federal Labor is committed to working collaboratively with the states and territories to understand how we can best structure that agreement and ensure we come to a long-term funding arrangement rather than an ad hoc year-by-year arrangement, where we never know what we are going to get from one year to the next, and sometimes it even goes backwards. I am looking forward to continuing that work with Minister Butler.

Transport—electric buses

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, regarding the delivery of electric buses, the ACT government has said through a number of avenues, "The first 12 battery electric buses will arrive before the end of calendar year 2022." Given that there are effectively 20 business days until the end of the year, Minister, what day will the 12 buses arrive?

MR STEEL: I am very much looking forward to making an announcement about the impending arrival of the 12 leased electric buses which will be joining the Transport Canberra fleet. This is part of the ACT government's commitment to transition our Transport Canberra fleet to zero emissions by 2040 or earlier. We set that out in our Zero-Emission Transition Plan for Transport Canberra.

We not only have committed to lease 12 electric buses but also are in the market to purchase a further 90 and, importantly, to invest in the skills and the electrical infrastructure to make sure that the transition to zero emissions, and particularly to battery-electric buses, is successful. We are very much looking forward to that, but—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. There is a lot of waffle going on here.

MR STEEL: I am not planning on making an announcement during question time.

Mr Hanson: It is not a policy announcement. You said that the buses were coming. That is not a policy announcement. Madam Speaker, it was a very specific question about what date they will arrive, and I would ask the minister to be relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, the minister was within scope and right to respond as he did. Mr Parton, do you have a supplementary?

MR PARTON: Minister, will the first 12 battery electric buses be arriving before the end of 2022, as promised by you?

MR STEEL: Yes. I am very much looking forward to announcing when they will arrive, so that we can get them into our fleet as soon as possible and start delivering the clean, quiet and comfortable services—

Mr Parton: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the question specifically asked will the buses arrive before the end of 2022?

MR STEEL: And I said yes.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, the question has been asked and answered.

Ms Lee interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lee, it has been answered, and your colleague is on the floor seeking the call for the supplementary.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, will the remaining 90 buses be delivered in 2023 and, if so, when? Or are they already delayed before the 2023 year has begun?

MR STEEL: We have already said that they will be provided and supplied over a number of years. That will be confirmed through the procurement process which is underway.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR STEEL: I can see the excitement building, Madam Speaker, not only in this chamber but also in the community about our transition to electric buses! I know that

Mr Parton has been up to Brisbane recently checking out some electric buses. It is pretty bizarre that he is so obsessed with them, because, just under two years ago, he criticised us for even planning to invest in electric buses after we undertook an initial trial of them here in Canberra. The more recent trial was very successful, and now we are getting on to transition our entire fleet to zero emissions!

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, if you are given the call to ask a question, you will ask it then; not across the floor.

Light rail—Tuggeranong

MR PARTON: My question is to the minister for transport. Minister, the Tuggeranong-specific September issue of the glossy Our Canberra newsletter has a headline article that states boldly “Light rail is coming”. Given that light rail is unlikely to arrive in Woden until the mid 2030s and that Tuggeranong is apparently stage 4 of the project, when will the tram arrive in Tuggeranong? Will it be the back half of this century or will it be next century?

MADAM SPEAKER: It is verging on being a question with a bit of irony, quite frankly.

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We on this side of the chamber do have a long-term plan for our public transport system in this city and building a mass transit system for this city. Of course, that starts with building a north to south transport spine. In order to get light rail down to Tuggeranong, we need to first get it to Commonwealth Park and then get it down to Woden. That is the current work that we are engaged in. That is our priority at the moment. As we continue—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order on relevance.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Mr Steel.

Mr Hanson: He has been asked for a time. At least, tell us which century. That would be reasonable. He could at least say which century this is being delivered in, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat. I will say two things, but I will wait for the minister to finish. Minister, do you want to say anything else?

MR STEEL: I have not finished, Madam Speaker. We continue to plan. In fact, we have just gone out to undertake further feasibility early planning work on future light rail lines, to update our existing light rail network plan, which is also known as the light rail master plan. It outlines the future vision for extensions of light rail.

One thing is for sure, Madam Speaker, and it is on display today. If the Canberra Liberals were in government, they would never deliver light rail, ever, to the south side or anywhere else in Canberra.

MR PARTON: Minister, is it misleading to tell the people of Tuggeranong that light rail is coming when its arrival date could well be 18 ACT elections away?

MR STEEL: We have an integrated transport system in Canberra. We have light rail running and we have buses—soon-to-be electric buses—running into the suburbs on local routes and on rapid routes. They connect with our light rail system. So people from Tuggeranong will use the light rail system when it comes down to Commonwealth Park and down to Woden. They will connect with it, using buses. Some of those buses will go direct to the city from Tuggeranong, and some of them will connect, through an integrated network. That is what a transport network is—a connection of various different routes on the system, including mass transit light rail. They will use light rail when it starts operating from Woden, from Commonwealth Park, if they are not using it already.

MR COCKS: Minister, when are you going to drop the secrecy, come clean and tell the people of Canberra what the tram is going to cost and when it is going to get to Woden?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. He may not realise that we have actually released a business case for stage 2A, and that we continue to publish the contracts that we are signing for each of the parts of delivering the stage 2 project, including contracts with Abergeldie, for the raising of London Circuit.

Mr Cocks: A point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Mr Steel.

Mr Cocks: The question was very specifically about getting to Woden. Stage 2A, which the minister is talking about, will not come to Woden; it will only make it to the lake.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Cocks, the minister was answering the question. You stood up on a point of order less than 30 seconds into it. The minister can continue.

MR STEEL: I think we have established that, in order to get light rail down to Woden, it needs to go to Commonwealth Park first. We continue to publish the contracts that we sign, including the latest contract with Canberra Metro for the supply of not only five new light rail vehicles, but retrofitting the existing 14 with wire-free onboard energy systems which will enable us to bring them through the parliamentary triangle to Woden. We are getting on with the work, because we are committed to this project. It seems that, under the Lee Liberals, it is the same old Liberals. They have never supported light rail, and they never will.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I give the next call, can I ask ministers to tamp down on your eagerness to respond to a question and wait to be called. Also, I remind members that in the standing orders, under 117—and I will be paying attention to this over the next couple of weeks—it says that there should be no imputations, no ironical expressions or hypothetical matters. Some of the questions, for me, verge on that, particularly some interjections.

Planning—Belconnen

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, I attended a consultation on the Territory Plan and district strategies, through Belconnen Community Council, last week. It was an interesting, although brief, introduction to both of these documents. I asked that there be a central webpage for the consultations and that we put some information in *Our CBR*, and I am pleased to see that both of those things have happened. I note that we are already substantially through the first month of a 3½-month consultation on these major reviews. Can you tell me the planned stages of the consultation over the remaining three-month period?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Clay for the question. It is an important one, as we go through this very important planning change for the future of Canberra. We have been working with the ACT community over several years to get to this point that we are at at the moment. The draft plan and district strategies are now out for consultation, as you have heard.

Consultation with the community has occurred at several different points throughout the process. A good example of this is the development of the district strategies. They were created because the community told us that they wanted something that captured the character of Canberra and set a strategic policy direction for the future.

If we look at what is happening at the moment, we will see some pop-up sessions run early next year, and there is the plan to look at the consultation process, which has four main elements: share, consider, listen and report. At the moment, we are in the “share” position of that consultation. This is where we are sharing all of the information that we have heard from the community so far and all of the work that our planning officials and stakeholders have done over those past three years. That will then move to the consider phase, the listen phase and then the report phase, towards the end of that.

MS CLAY: Minister, can you tell me the different purposes of the pop-ups versus the workshops, who they are catering for and what they are meant to deliver?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, they are varied. The reason is that people across the ACT want to engage at different levels and at different times. This is why we are providing community pop-ups, consultation directly with community councils and the YourSay website—those opportunities for feedback into the planning system. We know, as Canberrans have told us, that they want to engage in different ways, at different times.

MR DAVIS: Minister, will these consultations be recorded and publicly available for the community to hear online?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, wherever we can. There are of course some privacy considerations where people do not want their details published. As you will see on the YourSay website, people are able to look at comments that are made there.

Transport Canberra—ticketing

MR PARTON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Transport, regarding the bus ticketing system that this government has been talking about delivering since the days of Meegan Fitzharris, but still has not delivered. Why is the upgrade to the bus ticketing system so overdue, without an end date, or even a plan in sight? When will the upgraded bus ticketing system actually come into effect?

MR STEEL: As Mr Parton is aware, we are in the very final stage of procurement. Obviously, procurement is at arms-length from ministers, and we are looking forward to that being finalised so that we can get on with the implementation, which we still expect to happen next year.

MR PARTON: Why is the long-overdue upgrade to the system listed under “complex projects” in the budget? How long will this final stage of negotiations go for?

MR STEEL: I cannot speak to either matter. In relation to the budget, obviously ICT projects are often complex projects. We have seen other jurisdictions where they have been implemented poorly in relation to transport ticketing, but we are very confident that we will get an outcome. Obviously, that procurement process is being done on an arms-length basis by a Transport and Canberra City Services delegate. I am not directly involved in that.

I am really looking forward, again, to making an announcement about the implementation of this project, and also about what needs to happen in terms of the transition away from the current MyWay system, which obviously has been used now for over a decade. It is something that we want to replace with a new, modern, flexible ticketing system. We are committed to that. We are in the process of finalising that approach, and I look forward to updating the Assembly.

MR CAIN: Why can New South Wales and many other cities in Australia, and indeed the world, can have a next-generation ticketing system, yet Canberra cannot, and is so far behind?

MR STEEL: We can, and we will.

Gungahlin—active travel

MR BRADDOCK: My question is for the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, can you please provide an update on the active travel feasibility study for the Gungahlin town centre and what it has found?

MR STEEL: I thank the Member for his question and his interest in active travel. In Gungahlin, as Mr Braddock is aware, we have been consulting the community on a draft active travel plan for the ACT, which also identifies a new cycling network plan and a walking map for the ACT where we have identified priority routes in the Gungahlin region. We have also been undertaking a feasibility study to inform future priority improvements. We are looking at how we can use that study to make sure we meet the needs of the Gungahlin community as it grows and ensure we promote

sustainable reforms for transport. The feasibility study has been completed just recently. It will then inform finalisation of the final active travel plan, which I am looking forward to releasing next year.

MR BRADDOCK: How will the ACT government prioritise active travel actually coming in and out of the town centre?

MR STEEL: I understand as part of the feasibility study multi-criteria analysis was undertaken to assess the relative priority of each of the potential routes of active travel in the Gungahlin area to assist in prioritising future capital works and indeed prioritising it in the cycle network plan and the active travel plan. They have also used the route status in the network and safety existing active travel infrastructure as a criteria for that ranking.

MS CLAY: Minister, why does the government spend a tiny fraction on active travel versus car travel?

MR STEEL: Because roads cost more to build and maintain compared to active travel paths. That is the reality of it. Cars are much heavier, trucks, B-doubles are much heavier and cause wear on the pavement. We need to build them to a certain pavement specification to make sure they can handle those loads. This is where a majority of our transport occurs.

Of course active travel is a priority for the government and we want to encourage even more people to take up cycling and walking, which is the key aim of the new draft active travel plan. Through the range of steps outlined in that plan we are hoping to see more people using active travel and that will see further investment in active travel in the future. This is also part of our transport strategy overall to invest in more of the sustainable forms of travel; public transport including light rail but also in active travel. We have certainly seen a very significant pipeline of investment in active travel projects.

When we do invest in road projects, we invest in strategic road corridors. We are investing not only in the road itself but public transport that runs on the road in terms of buses as well as public transport stops and active travel infrastructure. Not only on-road cycle lanes but also off-road protected cycle lanes as well. You will see that more and more in the future. We are continuing to work to develop with stakeholders best practice active travel design guides which will see better prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists in our road infrastructure design in future.

Light rail stage 2A—traffic planning

MR COCKS: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, in July 2021 you announced that you would deliver record congestion for Canberrans, stating:

That's going to mean a significant amount of congestion that our city probably hasn't seen before in its history.

Since I joined the Assembly, working parents have been contacting me because they are worried the extra commute time from your tram project will make their lives

harder, and they may be unable to balance their jobs and school drop-off. Minister, how are working parents supposed to cope with your promise of record congestion and slower commutes?

MR STEEL: Our government has committed to build the infrastructure our growing city needs to move more people more efficiently around the city so that we do not end up in traffic gridlock like other cities—like Melbourne and like Sydney, in particular. That is why, in the transport strategy, we set out this principle of future-focused investment, particularly in public transport, so that we can shift more people on to sustainable, efficient forms of transit. What that means, even for road users who continue to use the roads, is that fewer people will be on the road. There will be fewer cars on the road over time as our city grows. This is an important investment in Canberra's future.

Of course, any major project around the world, around Australia, has disruption associated with it—any project of this scale. That is why we have been engaged for such a long time, through the Disruption Taskforce, in planning and preparing for the experience that people will—

Mr Cocks: Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order. The question was specifically about the impact on working parents. The minister still has not come to the point on how working parents are supposed to cope with his promise of record congestion.

MADAM SPEAKER: He is within order. It was around congestion, the time and the disruption. The minister is answering to those points.

MR STEEL: I reject the premise of the question. We are working to make sure all people have the information they need to be able to move around our city during this next period ahead. We are providing them with up-to-date information on a regular basis and making sure we have better surveillance and intelligence about our traffic networks so we can provide them with information on the road to make sure their commute in to work is as smooth as possible, whoever they may be—whether it is a family with children or otherwise.

We have been talking to workplaces about what they can do under our workplace program to make sure that we encourage people. *(Time expired.)*

MR COCKS: Minister, did you consider the impact on working parents, who are trying to keep up with the cost of living and balance work and family life, before you announced your commitment to record congestion?

MR STEEL: Our commitment is to try and reduce congestion as the city grows by building infrastructure that will help us to do that, including by investing in roads and light rail mass transit to move more people around our city more efficiently. That is the commitment we have made at the last three elections, and that is what we will continue to deliver.

As we build those projects, we will be working with the community by providing them with the information they need so their commute is as easy as possible.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, did you ever consider the impact on single parents, who face even greater challenges in trying to make ends meet and balance work and life, before you decided to make their lives even harder?

MR STEEL: Of course we have considered the impact on the community; that was the whole idea of setting up the Disruption Taskforce—that as we build these important major infrastructure projects for our city’s future, we work with the community, we provide them with information and we put in place the measures that will help them move around the city. That has included infrastructure interventions to deal with major bottlenecks that currently exist in the city on Commonwealth Avenue, on Parke’s Way and around Coranderrk Street. That has included signalling Vernon Circle and putting in Bluetooth “sniffers” so we can provide better, up-to-date, real-time information to make sure we are aware of accidents and intervene with emergency services as quickly as possible to remove those accidents and to stop congestion occurring on our road network. We are providing people with the information they need to make decisions about their commute into the city. We will continue to work with the community and build the infrastructure our city needs. It sounds like the Canberra Liberals would not do that.

Roads—Coppins Crossing

MR COCKS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, I have spent a lot of time speaking with our constituents in the Molonglo Valley. If you listen to them, they will tell that you one of their biggest concerns is traffic and congestion, and the impact of your failure to deliver a bridge over Coppins Crossing. Minister, now that your decade of disruption has started, will construction of the bridge over Coppins Crossing start before you commence construction of stage 2A of the tram?

MR STEEL: Construction of stage 2A of the tram has started. Walk outside and have a look. There is a bunting that says that we are building it. Just read the bunting.

We are also getting on with building the other infrastructure. That is also disruptive, as it is construction. That includes the John Gorton Drive bridge and the extension road to 500 metres to connect people north and south in the Molonglo Valley. So we are getting on with that work as well the upgrades to William Hovell Drive and the Monaro Highway and duplicating Athlon Drive. We are getting on with all of those major projects. We committed to them at the election and several elections, and we are getting on with delivering them.

The John Gorton Drive project is just one project in the Molonglo Valley. We continue the early planning work on an east-west arterial road to connect people from the middle of the Molonglo and the potential western edge investigation area in the future onto the Tuggeranong Parkway. We also continue to do feasibility on what improvements can be made on Parkes Way, which we know is actually the major bottleneck—and which was excluded by the coalition. They refused to do any work whatsoever on Parkes Way.

MR COCKS: Minister, will you guarantee that the bridge that you have promised at election after election will be completed before you start stage 2B of the tram and make the problems even worse?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. As I have said before, we still expect that the construction of the bridge over the Molonglo and the extension of John Gorton Drive will be completed around the end of 2025. We will continue to update the community. We are just going through the final stages of procurement for the new bridge, and we are looking forward to work on the project getting underway as early as next year. So construction will be very visible there, as it will be on the Monaro Highway next year and as it will be around the corner here, in the city, on raising London Circuit.

There will be significant infrastructure projects happening right around the city. Work continues on the hospital. It is rising out of the ground in Garran. There is going to be infrastructure that our government is building for Canberra's future.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, the question relates to Molonglo and Coppins Crossing. The minister is going on about other projects. How is the hospital development relevant to congestion for the people of the Molonglo? How is it relevant?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, resume your seat. The question was around congestion and timing of infrastructure. The minister is free to answer as he sees fit as long as he is in scope, and he was in scope. Minister, you have a few seconds left.

MR STEEL: I am right.

MR HANSON: Minister, on what dates will you commence and complete stage 2B of the tram?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. I will just correct him: it is a light rail system. It largely runs in its own corridor. It has priority. It does not run necessarily with the traffic. So it is quite different to what I think the Canberra Liberals envisage light rail to be.

We are currently going through the planning work and the early design work that is necessary to go through the approval processes for stage 2B. Attention at the moment is focused on delivering stage 2A. We will be putting in an NCA works approval by the end of the year for that project, with procurement being finalised, we expect, next year. We will be able to provide definitive time lines on the 2A project at that point. I am looking forward to announcing that.

We will then be able, with our technical design partners, to turn our focus to working on the 2B project. It is a much more complex project—the largest in our city's history. That is the reason that stage 2 was split into two parts—2A and 2B. Stage 2B has always been acknowledged as requiring a significant amount of work because of the sensitive heritage issues and environmental issues in the Parliamentary Triangle. We will continue to work on those, before we then consider a business case and undertake procurement on the project to establish the time lines the community is after.

We are certainly committed to this project and to delivering it down to Woden. But it appears that, every step of the way, the Canberra Liberals do not support this project. It is the same old Canberra Liberals. They have never supported light rail and they never will.

Orroral Valley—campground

MR PARTON: My question is to the minister for transport. Minister, Orroral campground has been closed for nearly three years, with no end in sight to that closure. It was closed before the helicopter bushfire incident, before La Nina and the rain activity, and before COVID could be blamed. A simple fix was required then and a simple fix is required now. The government just needs to fix the existing bridge. Minister, is it true that the ACT government has not made this simple fix for nearly three years, simply because it is not a priority for this government?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will respond, Madam Speaker. The Orroral campground sits in my portfolio. It has been a campground that has been well used by Canberrans over many years. As Mr Parton indicated, there have been issues with getting into it. We want to make sure that the other access roads into Namadgi and the campgrounds are safe for Canberrans. We are going through a process of repair of those entry roads into the nature park, to ensure the safety of Canberrans. I will get a time line for Mr Parton on when we will see that bridge repair completed. We have done a lot of work on the entry roads into the lower part of Namadgi National Park. Unfortunately, due to weather incidents—the rain, in particular—we have had some extra washouts as well. I will come back with a time line.

MR PARTON: Minister, how is it possible for the largest campground in Namadgi National Park to be closed for nearly three years, because the ACT government will not fix that bridge?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said, we will be fixing the bridge, but we want to make sure that it is safe for Canberrans and those people that attend the campground. At the moment, right across our park, it is unsafe for a number of people to enter because of the severe rain that we have had. But we will provide some time lines for Mr Parton.

MS LAWDER: Minister, will the Orroral Valley bridge be fixed before or after the tram arrives in Woden?

MR GENTLEMAN: As soon as we can.

Roads—infrastructure

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, how is the ACT government delivering critical road infrastructure for a growing city?

Opposition members interjecting—

MR STEEL: I thank for Mr Pettersson for his question and for his interest in road and transport infrastructure, particularly on the north side, in his electorate of Yerrabi.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members!

MR STEEL: We know that roads play a critical role in the movement of cyclists, pedestrians, public transport, freight and commuters. I can report that construction is well underway on the upgrade of Gundaroo Drive between Ginninderra Drive and the Barton Highway. The upgrade is delivering a duplicated dual carriageway, 6.4 kilometres of cycle lanes, new and upgraded shared paths, two new signalised intersections, new and upgraded bus stops and wider, safer pedestrian underpasses. This translates to safer and faster commutes for travellers between Belconnen and Gungahlin, which are only going to grow over time.

Work is also progressing on the Monaro Highway upgrades in Canberra's south. Safety upgrades to the rural section have been completed between Williamsdale Road and Royalla Drive. The early works have commenced on the construction of the new flyover interchange at Lanyon Drive in Hume. Design is underway for upgraded access between Hume and the Monaro Highway and a new flyover interchange at Isabella Drive, providing safer and more efficient travel for commuters and freight from the south.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, why is it important to duplicate roads like these?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. He would know well that Canberra's population is growing rapidly—the highest rate of growth in the country, based on the census. It is critical that our transport infrastructure and our roads are keeping pace with Canberra's higher than expected population growth. We want to make sure that our city remains one of the most liveable places in the world by continuing to invest in that infrastructure.

Upgraded and duplicated roads do improve safety for all road users, particularly for vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians, and particularly when we put in that additional infrastructure for them as well. When we upgrade roads, we do take the opportunity to improve active travel infrastructure, constructing new shared paths, protected intersections, and adding new intersections with control for pedestrians, which did not exist before. That ensures that road upgrades benefit not just drivers but also cyclists, pedestrians, and even electric scooter users, too, now in Gungahlin.

Roads are also critical for the fast and efficient movement of freight, particularly along our strategic corridors, such as the Monaro Highway. This is crucial for our growing city. It is the gateway to the south-eastern New South Wales region. The ACT government will continue to invest in road infrastructure, active travel infrastructure and public transport to ensure that Canberrans can move around our city easily, efficiently and, importantly, safely.

DR PATERSON: Minister, what progress is being made on duplicating Athllon Drive, in Canberra's south?

MR STEEL: I thank Dr Paterson for her question and her interest in representing an area that uses Athllon Drive every day. As we promised at the last election, we are getting on with the job of duplicating Athllon Drive, in Canberra's south. The public tender for the detailed design of the Athllon Drive upgrade in the southern section, between Drakeford Drive and Sulwood Drive, was released on 15 November. We are currently out in the market there.

That section of Athllon Drive is one of the most used pieces of transport infrastructure in Canberra's south, with more than 14,000 vehicles travelling on it each day and 2,000 in each peak period alone. The safety of cyclists and pedestrians is front of mind, with plans to include improved path connections, on-road cycle lanes and upgraded intersections, as well as a new pedestrian underpass under Sulwood Drive, which will link to the new shared path which will be built along Sulwood Drive. I am looking forward to those works kicking off around the end of the year.

Public transport users will benefit from new and upgraded bus stops and an expected two-minute cut to travel times for morning commuters on the R4 and R5 rapid bus routes. We are committed to building high quality road infrastructure in Canberra's south, and we are going to deliver on our election promises.

Mr Barr: Madam Speaker, I feel I must ask that further questions to Minister Steel be placed on the notice paper!

Ms Lee: Only the ones to Mr Steel?

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

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Barr. It certainly did seem like that today.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General's Report No 7/2022—ACT Childhood Healthy Eating and Active Living Programs, dated 9 November 2022.

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

Bills—Inquiry—

Integrity Commission Amendment Bill 2022 (No 2)—from the Chair, Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, dated 31 October 2022.

Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2022—from the Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts, dated 2 November 2022.

Bills—Not inquired into—

Animal Management and Welfare Legislation Amendment Bill 2022—from the Chair, Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services, dated 27 October 2022.

Background Checking Legislation Amendment Bill 2022—from the Chair, Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion, dated 7 November 2022.

Electricity Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022—from the Chair, Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services, dated 27 October 2022.

Multiculturalism Bill 2022—from the Chair, Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion, dated 7 November 2022.

Estimates 2022-2023—Select Committee—

Revised answer to question on notice No 306, dated 3 November 2022.

Schedule of questions un-answered 30 days after tabling, pursuant to standing order 253A, dated 2 November 2022.

Mr Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan—Statement of Condolence by Speaker—Response from the Ambassador of Japan to Australia, dated 17 October 2022.

Standing order 191—Amendments—Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill 2021, dated 26 and 27 October 2022.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports—2021-2022—Icon Water Limited, dated 16 September 2022—Revised Annual Report, together with a statement.

COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, pursuant to subsection 3(3)—COVID-19 Measures—Report No 16—Reporting period 1 July to 30 September 2022, dated 18 October 2022.

Financial Management Act—

Pursuant to section 10—Budget Outlook—Revised Appendix F—General Government Sector—Key Aggregates History—Budget Statements 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23.

Pursuant to section 25—Consolidated Annual Financial Statements, including audit opinion—2021-22 financial year, dated 28 and 31 October 2022.

Pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report for the financial quarter ending 30 September 2022.

Judicial Commissions Act, pursuant to subsection 61A(5)—ACT Judicial Council—Annual Report 2021-22, dated October 2022.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Report into the Inquiry into Petition 32-21 (No Rights Without Remedy)*—Revised Government response, dated November 2022.

Information Privacy Act, pursuant to section 54(3)—Annual Report—2021-22, dated 1 September 2022—Office of the Australian Information Commissioner—Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Capital Territory for the provision of privacy services.

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Blood Donation (Transmittable Diseases) Act—Blood Donation (Transmittable Diseases) Blood Donor Form 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-239 (LR, 31 October 2022).

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act—Cemeteries and Crematoria (Determination of Trustee) Determination 2022 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-235 (LR, 31 October 2022).

Crimes (Sentencing) Act—Crimes (Sentencing) Amendment Regulation 2022 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2022-14 (LR, 27 October 2022).

Electoral Act—

Electoral (Electoral Commissioner) Appointment 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-236 (LR, 27 October 2022).

Electoral (Fees) Determination 2022 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-232 (LR, 20 October 2022).

Motor Accident Injuries Act—Motor Accident Injuries (Premiums) Guidelines 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-231 (LR, 17 October 2022).

Public Health Act—

Public Health (Notifiable Conditions) Determination 2022 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-237 (LR, 27 October 2022).

Public Health (Reporting of Notifiable Conditions) Code of Practice 2022 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-238 (LR, 27 October 2022).

Territory Records Act—Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-233 (LR, 20 October 2022).

Victims of Crime Act—Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2022 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2022-234 (LR, 20 October 2022).

Work Health and Safety Act—

Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulations 2022 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2022-13 (LR, 17 October 2022).

Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulations 2022 (No 3)—Subordinate Law SL2022-15 (LR, 1 November 2022).

Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety—report 7—revised government response

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

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Report into the Inquiry into Petition 32-21 (No Rights Without Remedy)*—Revised Government response.

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

Environment—bees and other pollinators

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.02), by leave: On behalf of **Ms Orr**, I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that:
 - (a) bees and other pollinators are fundamental to our environment, with an essential role in pollinating plants, helping them grow and reproduce;
 - (b) bees and other pollinators are crucial to our food chain as they help pollinate most of the crops we eat, as well as the crops that feed farm livestock;
 - (c) without bees and other pollinators pollinating our crops, whole industries would collapse, and severe food shortages would impact all Australians;
 - (d) destruction of their natural habitat, intensive farming practices, climate change, and pests and diseases are just some of the complex reasons driving a decline in both the number and diversity of bees and other pollinators every year;
 - (e) the decline of bee and other pollinators populations is an issue that is present all around the world, not just within Australia;
 - (f) the varroa mite is currently threatening a large number of beehives around the NSW region with many beekeepers having to destroy their colonies; and
 - (g) Australia has around 2,000 species of native bees, with the introduced European honeybee species having a negative impact on our own native bee population but providing essential pollination for crops and other plant species;
- (2) further notes:
 - (a) in 2018-19, honey and beeswax production was valued at \$162 million in Australia, and the unrecognised value of pollination is believed to be in the order of \$14.2 billion to the Australian economy; and
 - (b) Hall Village in Yerrabi, is the first Bee Friendly Village in Australia, with over 90 percent of household's gardens being registered as bee friendly, according to Hall Village's February 2020 report;
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to outline:
 - (a) the variety and types of bees and other pollinators in Canberra;
 - (b) current populations and locations of native hives, feral European beehives and beekeepers and their hives;
 - (c) what the ACT Government currently does to support our bee and other pollinator population including but not limited to:
 - (i) easily available pollinator friendly planting guides;
 - (ii) targeted efforts to promote pollinator planting in different urban forms e.g. low, medium and high density;
 - (iii) plantings on public land that support bees and other pollinators;
 - (iv) spatial mapping of pollinator resources including pollinator gardens; and
 - (v) any other relevant information;

- (d) the response to currently identified threats to the ACT's bee and other pollinators population including but not limited to:
 - (i) insufficient diversity in public and private planting stock;
 - (ii) the potential for commercially available bee hotels to be unsuitable for native bees;
 - (iii) the identification and implementation of potential methods of pest control which are alternatives to pesticides but are currently not used in the ACT;
 - (iv) the methods for safely and properly disposing of domestic herbicides and pesticides; and
 - (v) any other relevant information;
 - (e) current biosecurity threats and the Government's response to an endemic threat;
 - (f) how Canberrans are educated on the importance and role of bees and other pollinators within our environment; and
 - (g) ongoing activities and potential opportunities where the ACT Government and Canberra community can collaborate to better protect our bees and other pollinators; and
- (4) calls on the ACT Government to report back to the Assembly on points (3)(a) to (3)(g) by World Bee Day on Saturday 20 May 2023.

I rise today to speak to the motion on the notice paper in Ms Orr's name to report on our bee and other pollinator's population. I acknowledge many of us go about our day to day lives never really considering how fundamental bees are to our lives and the environment as a whole. To put it simply, bees are part of the biodiversity on which we all depend for our own survival.

Bees have the role of being pollinators. For anyone who is unaware or needs a reminder, pollination is the movement of pollen from the anthers of a flower to the stigma of the same or a different flower. Pollination is required for plants to reproduce and helps prevent in-breeding. This process needs to occur for you to enjoy your favourite flowers. For a more important and serious example, this process needs to occur for the pollination of food crops.

I do not think I need to emphasise how fundamental food crops are in providing for us. There are over 20,000 species of bee that exist globally and Australia is home to around 2,000 of these native species. These bees have co-evolved with our unique native flora over thousands of years. Australian native bees do not store nectar and therefore, they generally do not produce honey. At least not in extractable amounts.

European honeybees were introduced into Australia for this exact reason, to produce honey. Unfortunately, European honeybees take resources needed by native birds and animals, including taking over hollows and other places they also like to call their homes. However, they pollinate some of our crops and many of our native plants. They have become a fundamental part of both our food production and the pollination of flora in our gardens and the bush since they were introduced. European honeybees have been present in Australia for around 200 years now but their distribution and

abundance has increased dramatically over the last 80 years. They are the most common and easily recognisable species of bee in Australia. Although the European honeybee is an introduced species in Australia the majority of the crops they pollinate have also been introduced and would struggle to be productive without the European honeybee population.

Our native bees are still essential and work alongside the introduced European honeybees. Native bees populate native plants many of which cannot be pollinated by the introduced species. Some flowers need vibration to release pollen, which many of our native bees are able to do. This is called buzz pollination. Native bees can also pollinate some introduced species.

So why exactly are bees so important to us? Well it is reported that 65 per cent of our horticulture and agricultural crops specifically require honeybees for pollination. Bees are fundamental in producing many popular foods we like to eat. For example, 18 bees are required to pollinate one kilogram of avocados, five bees are needed to help grow one kilogram of pumpkin and two bees are needed for one kilogram of watermelon to be produced. There are even some industries where bees are required for 100 per cent of the crop pollination with almonds, avocados and onions requiring pollination solely from bees. In Australia two thirds of all horticultural and agricultural crops need honeybees for optimal pollination. Many fruits, such as apples, raspberries and peaches are more productive and produce better and more attractive fruit which also stores for longer when they are serviced by honeybees. Now you may be wondering how bees were needed for the barbeque or roast you had recently. I can assure you that bees were required to pollinate the crops that fed the livestock. When you break it down, bees and other pollinators are critical to the vast majority of the food chain.

Often the importance of our natural environment and how it intersects with human society is overlooked. However, it is important and bees are also economic producers in and of themselves. Around \$14.2 billion is injected into the Australian economy thanks to the honeybee and pollinator industries each year. Australia is one of the top 10 honey producing countries in the world, with a large amount of honey produced in Australia exported to a variety of countries overseas in both bulk and retail shipments. Other honeybee products include bees wax production, live queen bees and packaged bee sales, pollen and paid pollination services.

Produce from bees have been incorporated into our day to day lives. Most notably honey, which is what bees are known for and what people associate them with. The Australian honeybee industry produces between 20,000 and 30,000 tonnes of honey annually. We also rely on beeswax in various items ranging from beauty and health products to candles. We know that as the bush capital, we are known as the bush capital for a reason. We pride ourselves on our open green spaces, and the ACT government has long supported initiatives to help protect and improve our environment. It does not matter where you are in the ACT, you will always have access to green spaces, trees and other flora and fauna that make you feel surrounded by nature.

As the bush capital, I think it is important that we look more closely at our bee and pollinator populations, like we do with other aspects of our environment. Our

pollinators current population numbers, what makes up this population, their threats, how we respond to those threats and how our younger generations are educated on the importance of bees are all very important questions that I know the Canberra community would be interested in knowing. This information should be readily available and something that can be improved on and updated as time progresses.

This information as requested through this motion will be a valuable asset for working to preserve the pollinator populations into the future. It is upsetting and concerning to know Australia's bee population is increasingly under threat, with our native, bee keeping and wild honeybee populations at risk due to certain challenges. I note the destruction of their habitat, intensive farming practices, climate change and pest and diseases are some of the complex reasons driving the decline in both the numbers of bees and in the diversity of the populations each year. Honeybees are a form of livestock and need water, food and shelter just like any other living thing. But sadly the summer bushfires of 2019 took a heavy toll on the honeybee population, destroying an estimated 15.6 million hectares of native forest, meaning critical nectar and pollen sources for honeybee colonies were lost. This impact also severely affected our native bee population.

There is an insect that instils fear into all honeybee keepers around the world. This insect is the varroa mite. I am sure we have all heard about the varroa mite outbreak that struck the New South Wales bee colonies around Newcastle region. For those unaware, in June this year the varroa mite was found at the port of Newcastle. These tiny little mites attach themselves to bees and feed on their blood while also infecting bees with bacteria and viruses weakening the bee and often causing its premature death. These mites originated from Asian honeybees but have taken a liking to the European bee species as well. The Varroa mite infests the whole colony of European honeybees where they attach themselves to the bee. Once the beehive is infected beekeepers have no choice but to destroy the whole colony. To date it is recorded that 99 infected beehives have been destroyed around the New South Wales region. The destruction of these 99 sites has resulted in millions of bees needing to be destroyed to protect Australia's broader bee population.

While this endemic threat may have gone silent in the media, it is still very much impacting bee farms and wild populations across New South Wales. Up until now, the varroa mite has been kept out of Australia. They arrived in Eurasia in the 1940s and in North America in 1987. Unfortunately it looks like they have finally broken through our biosecurity wall and will be an endemic threat in Australia from now on. We all have a responsibility to better protect our bees and that is why this motion is calling for the ACT government to report on biosecurity threats and how we respond.

While the bushfires and varroa mite are concerning, there is still a long list of other threats to our pollinator population. Intensive farming practices and pesticides have been linked to the decline of honeybees around the world. Scientific studies suggest that pesticides can affect the health of bees through immune suppression increasing the suffering from viruses and parasite infections.

I would also like to touch on how climate change has been linked to the loss of bees' natural habitat. Climate change is already contributing to declining populations of honeybees, thanks to reduced habitats, changing patterns of climate and changing

patterns of growth over the seasons. Climate change can make it more difficult for some species of plant to thrive in certain areas, affecting food supplies for the bees. Native bees in Australia are particularly vulnerable to loss of habitat as some species only feed on one or two different types of plants. We are a government that takes climate change seriously and we actively work to combat our impact on the environment. This motion will bring attention to our bee and pollinator populations, which will further protect an often overlooked aspect of our environment. This motion ensures our future generations will enjoy the same environment that everyone in this chamber has enjoyed in the bush capital over the years.

As a change of tone, World Bee Day falls on 20 May each year. World Bee Day raises awareness of the essential role bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and our planet healthy. World Bee Day coincides with the birthday of Anton Jansa, who in the 18th century pioneered modern beekeeping techniques in his native Slovenia and praised the bees for their ability to work hard while requiring little to no attention. Ms Orr has chosen to make the reporting deadline for her motion to fall on World Bee Day next year as the decline of our pollinators is a serious issue and one the ACT government can work towards to be better ready to prevent.

In conclusion, it is clear that Ms Orr is introducing this motion to the Assembly today to support our honeybee and native bee populations. The ACT has another opportunity to show the other states and territories how it is done. In this instance, how we as a community can be better aware of our bees and pollinators and to be ready to protect our pollinators from any threats that arise. It is no secret there are numerous threats to our bee and pollinator population. As mentioned these threats are vast and serious and range from biosecurity threats, human farming practices to climate change. While we may not be able to control every threat our bees or pollinators face, we certainly can better understand our population numbers and ensure Canberrans are educated on their significance and contribution to our lives. The spread of the varroa mite that is threatening parts of regional New South Wales should be a good wake up call for all of us.

It is so very clear how important our bees and other pollinators are to our biodiversity. There are many industries that rely on the bee population to pollinate their crops and produce developed from bees wax and other bee products contribute greatly to Australia's economy. It is for this reason that I commend Ms Orr's motion to the Assembly and look forward to reading all about pollinator populations and how we can work to protect them in 2023. Thank you.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.17): I thank Ms Orr for bringing the motion today and Dr Paterson for presenting it on her behalf. Bees truly are miraculous creatures, Mr Assistant Speaker.

According to all known laws of aviation, there is no way that a bee should be able to fly. Its wings are too small to get its fat little body off the ground. The bee, of course, flies anyway, because bees don't care what humans think is impossible.

This is actually an opening quote from *The Bee Movie* and a fitting start to my speech today. One of the many wonderful things about living in Canberra is that we have

such an environmentally conscious constituency. People recognise and value the essential work that bees and other pollinators do for our ecosystem. I know many residents keep their own bees, keep their own hives. There are businesses that have bees and hives on the roofs of their office blocks, and there are people who produce their own honey. For example, in my own neighbourhood in Fadden I know Amanda has hives in her front yard. A young boy called Declan has set up a fresh honey stand outside of his house to make a bit of pocket money. Shout out to Honey Boy Declan. He produces a range of raw and flavoured honey.

Just the other week, I attended the launch of a book about bees called *Native bees of the ACT and New South Wales South Coast. A spotter's guide* by local author Peter Abbott. It was a great event held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens and it was very informative and educational about native bees. We also have a number of bee-orientated organisations here in Canberra such as ACT for Bees and ACT Beekeepers Association. These and other organisations conduct important education and awareness work. They are mostly volunteers and I thank them for their volunteer work. They conduct important education and awareness work to help inform the community about bees, how to make your home and your garden more suitable to their needs and about the importance of these pollinators. Bees and other pollinators have such an important role in the health of our environment and in food production globally. In just one day the average bee can visit more than 2,000 flowers and will greatly increase the likelihood of a plant producing a fruit or vegetable. So much of our food depends on our pollinators.

Sadly, however, there have been a growing number of threats to bees and other pollinators; climate change, parasites, pathogens, agricultural pesticides and malnutrition are all serious concerns bees and other pollinators are facing. We have heard in the news about the recent varroa mite infestation. Australia had previously been one of the very few countries in the world that was varroa-mite free. That is no longer the case and it is a grave biosecurity threat for our beekeeper population.

In recent annual report hearings I asked the minister about the fertilisers used on ACT sports grounds. To my knowledge, based on first thing this morning, I had not received a response to that, to check whether the fertilisers that are used are friendly to bees and other pollinators. Organic fertiliser and fertiliser without any pesticides are safe, but fertiliser with pesticides will harm bees and fertilisers with herbicides may harm bees indirectly. So that is why I am very happy to support Ms Orr's motion today calling on the ACT government to outline the variety and types of bees and other pollinators in Canberra; the current populations and locations of native hives, feral European bee hives, and beekeepers and their hives; what the ACT government currently does to support our bee and other pollinator population; the response to currently identified threats to the ACT's bee and other pollinator's populations; current biosecurity threats and the government's response to an endemic threat; how Canberrans are educated on the importance and role of bees and other pollinators within our environment; ongoing activities; and potential opportunities where the ACT government and the Canberra community can collaborate to better protect our bees and other pollinators. The motion calls on the government to report these findings to the Assembly by World Bee Day on Saturday, 20 May next year. Like many others, I will be very interested to read those findings, and I hope Ms Orr's government colleagues support this motion today.

Like all issues, there are steps that residents themselves can take to help make a positive impact right now. For example, planting bee friendly plants in your garden is a great start. Bees love lavender, sage, rosemary, thyme, perennial basil and borage to name just a few. Removing the use of pesticides or herbicides is another small but impactful gardening step and when purchasing new plants, you could ask whether they have been treated with pesticides that may be toxic to bees. You can buy local honey; it is also a great tip for hay fever sufferers at this time of the year where it seems so common across Canberra. You can place stones in your bird bath to prevent bees from drowning when they try to get a drink. You can also spread the word about what makes your garden bee friendly.

I thank Ms Orr and Dr Paterson for bringing this motion forth today. It is a great motion. I am almost reluctant to say this, but I give you a bee-plus for it! I commend the motion to the floor.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.23): I rise to support Ms Orr's motion, moved by Dr Paterson, on bees and other pollinators and welcome this important debate about protecting our bees right across the ACT and beyond.

We know that bees are facing significant threats to their long-term survival, including climate change, development, habitat loss, invasive plants and pests, and disease. Recent biosecurity threats of the varroa mite remind us again of the importance of bees in our ecosystem and why we must protect them.

I am pleased that in the development of the Urban Forest Strategy, in my portfolio, the ACT government has identified that the renewal of the urban forest provides an opportunity to develop an improved diversity of habitat and resources for bees. There are not just many flowering plants and shrubs but also a lot of flowering trees that they are attracted to. We will do that by considering the flowering times and nectar and pollen characteristics of individual tree species in our tree planting lists. This is an approach that the ACT government will undertake as we continue our tree planting initiatives and plant thousands more trees across the city, but it is also something that we encourage all Canberrans, and developers, to consider as they plant trees and other plants around their leases.

We have introduced municipal infrastructure standards for plant species for urban landscape projects, where we have particularly identified species which support bees and other pollinators. This is a comprehensive document that identifies a large range of trees that should be planted in the urban environment of Canberra that will promote and encourage biodiversity.

We have collaborated with ACT for Bees in the development of these standards, and we have detailed the flowering times, any nectar, pollen or fruit produced and the forager which uses these bounties. In promoting these standards and encouraging plantings that support bees, Transport Canberra and City Services staff presented at a Planting for Pollinators symposium hosted by ACT for Bees in April 2021. TCCS staff identified how planning policy is playing its part in ensuring a steady and consistent supply of plant material for pollinating animals, including bees.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the ACT government has been collaborating with ACT for Bees in developing an urban planting calendar for the ACT. This calendar will provide information on strategic plantings to support bees and other beneficial insects and birds. The aim is that this will assist in providing a diverse range of foraging opportunities across the city and the wider landscape at different times of the year, because they need food throughout the year. All this work is crucial for our bees in the ACT.

As we face more and more threats to bee species across the country, it is right that we continue to look at how we can better support bees through tree planting, through using practical and important biosecurity measures and by identifying ways that the government can partner with community and the private sector to make sure that we grow the urban habitat for Canberra's bees.

We do use some pesticides and herbicides in our government, and particularly in Transport Canberra and City Services. We are always interested in what the latest research and methods are to try and limit the use of these substances where possible, whilst also making sure that we maintain Canberra as is expected. There have been some concerns, which I have previously identified in the Assembly, around some of those chemicals. That is something that we continue to monitor, as well as continue to be advised by the OPVMA on. We are very interested in making sure that bees continue to be a contributor to the ACT and, hopefully, that we do not get some of the pest species of bees that are not native to the ACT and not endemic to Australia.

On a recent trip to New Zealand—not that recent; just before the pandemic—I was infatuated with the bumble bee, which we do not have in mainland Australia. I think Tasmania may have them there. It is a very fat bee and I do not understand how it flies. We do not have those here, and we hope that we do not have them here because they compete with native bees and other pollinators, and of course they do not produce honey. We do not want them to take away from the honeybee population playing that valuable role.

I am looking forward to working with my ministerial colleague Rebecca Vassarotti on how we can continue to support bees in the ACT across the ACT government services.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (3.28): I rise to speak in support of the motion that Ms Orr has brought to the Assembly and that has been moved by Dr Paterson on her behalf. I thank Ms Orr for bringing this motion to the Assembly for its consideration. It highlights the value of European bees as a pollinator and applauds the achievements of Hall residents in making it the first bee-friendly village in Australia.

The ACT Greens have long been the champions of bees, pollinators and insects, and we will be supporting the motion today because we agree on its importance. While all organisms in ecosystems are essential, the role played by insects is particularly vital. Often under-appreciated, insects are the lever pullers of the world, and bees work very hard indeed to deliver ecosystem services.

The diverse mix of native forest, woodlands and grasslands, and the spring blooms of the household gardens and urban streetscapes of the ACT, provide a habitat for native bees and European honey bees alike, allowing different bees to access their preferred food source. The different species that can be found across Canberra can be explored on the Canberra nature map, and new records can also be added by citizen scientists for expert verification.

While it is an introduced species, the European honey bee is highly adapted to pollinating the blossoms of cultivated varieties of plants, as well as some natives. Apples and pears are grown commercially in the ACT and are examples of food crops that require insect pollination, which is primarily carried out by European honey bees. European honey bees tend to be very efficient pollinators of introduced plants, particularly species cultivated for their flowers, fruits, nuts and seeds, so the services they provide are invaluable and essential for Australia's ongoing food security.

Native bees, such as my favourite, the blue banded bees, are common in the ACT. They use a mechanical buzz pollination technique that has co-evolved to access nectar and pollinate the blossoms of certain native trees and shrubs that European honey bees are unable to access. Native bees and other pollinators are critical for the survival and the reproduction of many of our native plant species.

We often forget the major role that non-apiarian insect pollinators play, too. Many native species of flies, including hover flies, butterflies and moths, beetles and wasps are key pollinators in ACT ecosystems and their contribution should be recognised.

I note the request by the member for Yerrabi for detailed information about bees and other pollinators, including the location of hives and nectar sources, and the potential threats due to biosecurity incursions and inappropriate use of insecticides. Much of this information is publicly available, but a submission will be prepared ahead of next year's World Bee Day, an important day that I advocate for, and formally recognised earlier this year, on 20 May, in a ministerial statement.

There are issues affecting pollinators. Across Australia, habitat destruction, biosecurity threats, pesticide selection and application, and climate change continue to threaten populations of pollinators. Some of the work underway to protect pollinators includes protecting habitat, improving waterways, supporting urban agriculture and reducing pesticide use. I note Ms Lawder's comment around an outstanding question on the use of pesticides on sportsgrounds, and we have already started following that up with the directorate.

I would like to touch on the New South Wales varroa mite response that a number of members today have spoken about. Varroa mite, or varroa destructor, is the number one biosecurity threat to introduced honey bees in Australia. The parasite's first incursion into mainland Australia was originally detected at the Port of Newcastle on 22 June 2022, and eradication efforts are ongoing across New South Wales.

Varroa mite has not been detected in the ACT. I would like to thank our hardworking biosecurity team for their hard work in protecting our hives. Some of the measures that have been taken to date include surveillance of varroa mite, in partnership with a

sample of ACT beekeepers, a beekeeper webinar, and restrictions on the movement into the ACT of European honey bees, hives and apiary equipment that have been in New South Wales. These restrictions will remain in place until it is considered that the varroa mite no longer poses a threat to the ACT.

I am also happy to report that the ACT has supported the New South Wales response activities. Over the last three months, the ACT has deployed more than 25 staff from EPSDD and TCCS to the New South Wales varroa mite response. On top of this, the ACT has a dedicated biosecurity planning and response team that continually monitors the biosecurity threat environment. This team works closely with the commonwealth, state and territory governments, as well as industry, to identify and manage biosecurity risks and outbreaks.

The ACT government is working to harmonise and strengthen its existing suite of biosecurity legislation and is planning to strengthen biosecurity preparedness in our jurisdiction. Minister Steel has outlined some of the great work that is occurring across ACT government to support bees and other pollinators. I would also like to highlight the work of the Environment, Heritage and Water Division of EPSDD, which is running the Urban Habitat and Connectivity Project. This project quantifies and maps potential habitat for pollinators and wildlife in the ACT, and will use these maps and tools to maintain and enhance connectivity in future urban planning.

Insect pollinators are one of the taxa that the work has focused on. Workshops were held with native bee experts to quantify habitat requirements, barriers to movement and capacity for movement. An output of this work will be technical guidelines to help inform the composition and location of habitat for insect pollinators, with a focus on native bees. There is more detailed vegetation mapping currently underway, which will provide better data to inform this work in the next year or two. I really look forward to these results. Of course, there is much more work to be done. Some of these programs will need to be scaled up and funded into the longer term.

I am glad to note that Ms Orr and everyone across the chamber are allies in this area, and look forward to continuing our commitment to the health and abundance of pollinators in the ACT. One of the only disappointments in this debate has been the lack of bee puns! I think we have only had one.

To conclude, I wish to recognise the great work that is happening across the city to celebrate and protect our bees. ACT for Bees and others are real champions of this work. I had the pleasure and privilege of joining the ACT-NSW Rotarians for Bees, ACT for Bees and other pollinators for lunch and a tour of bee-friendly Hall at the end of October. To me, this demonstrated what can be readily achieved in a committed community, and it is a real sign of good things to come to protect our pollinators. I am pleased to be able to support this motion.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.37), in reply: In closing, I would like to thank members for their support of this motion. I would also like to thank Ms Orr for the privilege of being able to deliver this motion on her behalf today. I do feel that I am giving back in some way, because there have been a few bees over the years that have sacrificed their lives to sting my children.

There is lots of really important work that has been outlined. I think we have a way to go. I am grateful that the ACT government is supporting this motion. I look forward to World Bee Day next year, when we will hear the outcomes of that work.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Roads—federal funding

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (3.38): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the ACT government:
 - (a) welcomed road funding commitments made by the previous Federal Coalition Government for \$85.9 million;
 - (b) cancelled an agreement with the Federal Labor Government for \$85.9 million of federal funding for road projects; and
 - (c) in conjunction with the Federal Labor Government, allocated \$85.9 million of federal funding to Stage 2A of the light rail;
- (2) recognises:
 - (a) road safety and quality is an important responsibility of the ACT Government; and
 - (b) the death toll on ACT roads this calendar year to date is at a 12 year high, with the busiest period of the year yet to come and has been climbing year on year over the last four years; and
- (3) calls on the leaders of all three parties represented in the ACT Legislative Assembly to:
 - (a) write to the Federal Labor Government requesting the reinstatement of \$85.9 million in federal funding for road projects in the ACT, particularly the three main projects in the South West Corridor, on Boboyan Road and on Pialligo Avenue; and
 - (b) table that letter in the ACT Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in 2022.

We know that this Labor-Greens government has diverted millions of dollars of taxpayer funds from health, community safety and public housing to fund the tram, and last month it was confirmed that federal funding that had been allocated to important road upgrades has now also been diverted to pay for stage 2A. To shelve these much-needed road upgrades and divert funds into light rail is simply unacceptable. Where will it end?

Since 2015, this Labor-Greens government has taken money out of health, education, police and housing, and now road upgrades, to help pay for the tram. As a direct result of the ongoing diversion of funds, vital government services have declined to breaking point. Canberrans are paying record taxes. What we see and what we get is the longest emergency department wait times in the country, declining education standards and crumbling school infrastructure, the lowest number of police per capita, and less public housing dwellings now than we had a decade ago.

The average household rates bill has gone up 10 per cent every year—every single year!—for the past decade. We are all paying a lot more and getting a lot less from this Labor-Greens government.

Not only that; the Treasurer has delivered so many budget deficits, and borrowed so much money, that by 2025-26 Canberrans will be paying over half a billion dollars a year in interest repayments alone! That is \$1,000 for every Canberran every year, just to service the Treasurer's debt.

On top of that, add the taxes and borrowings required to fund health care, education, police, emergency services, transport, justice, housing and climate action. The Barr era has gifted Canberrans with declining services, high taxes, record debt and at least 10 deficits in a row. What a legacy!

Now, to top it off, co-funding for critical road projects from the commonwealth government will be diverted into that Labor-Greens white elephant the tram. Earlier this year, the ACT transport minister himself welcomed the co-funding for the road upgrades from the commonwealth government. He said:

The ACT Government welcomes continued investment in our city by the Australian Government to co-fund these urban road projects, but we strongly believe the ACT should receive the same share of funding for improvements for regional roads as other states.

He welcomed this funding commitment from the federal government. He supported this funding commitment from the federal government. Lo and behold, once the decision to axe these projects was announced, the ACT minister has changed his tune, calling it “all pork”. This, in itself, is downright laughable, given how he and his colleagues spent years howling about how the federal government, under the coalition, was not giving the ACT its fair share of funding. In fact, in his “welcoming” statement on these road projects, he pointedly made that dig. I again quote the minister's own words:

... we strongly believe the ACT should receive the same share of funding for improvements for regional roads as other states.

I know this gaslighting government has no shame whatsoever in its hypocrisy, but this is beyond a joke, after spending years complaining that we have been ripped off by the federal government, to now take aim and say that these road closures were “all pork”!

You cannot get any more ridiculous than this minister's pathetic excuses to deflect from the real issue at stake here—that is, this government's absolute and utter failure to be up-front and transparent with Canberrans about stage 2, how much will it cost, and when will it be delivered.

Not only are road safety and maintenance important responsibilities of the ACT government, but most Canberrans are road users as motorists and passengers in a diverse range of vehicles and rightly expect our roads to be maintained. Instead we are getting roads filled with potholes, which this Labor-Greens government is not even

able to fix quickly because it is so strapped for cash, as a direct result, of course, of long-term neglect.

Instead Canberrans are getting the cancellation of road upgrades, important road upgrades, to help pay for stage 2 of the tram. The minister will not, or cannot, tell Canberrans how much stage 2 will cost nor when we can expect it to get to Woden. But he is more than happy to cancel road upgrades to pay for it, especially to throw money into the tram-funding black hole.

The Master Builders Association has also suggested that there will be a significant loss of jobs, about 773 local jobs, as well as approximately \$250 million for the local economy from the cancellation of these road projects. Those upgrades would have been more likely to be delivered by local small and medium business, and to have them cancelled abruptly is extremely disruptive for their business planning, hiring and investment decisions.

The construction industry have expressed serious concern about the huge impact on confidence and certainty if the ACT Labor-Greens government and the federal Labor government are able to put an axe through important projects that have already been promised and announced. But it is so typical of this Labor-Greens government to take no notice of the Canberra community. It ignores them in its decision-making.

My suggestion to all Canberrans, when they are driving on the Tuggeranong Parkway, any of its feeder roads, Pialligo Avenue or Boboyan Road—or attempting to drive on Boboyan Road, because, of course, it is so dangerous!—is to remember that this Labor-Greens government diverted the funding to upgrade these roads. It diverted the funding that was allocated and planned for to upgrade these roads to help fund a tram that will take people from the city to the middle of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.

The next time Canberrans are waiting at the emergency department for hours and hours on end, or are worried about their children's education results and mould or hazardous materials in their classrooms, or wrecking their cars on another pothole, or concerned about the lack of police support in our community and about dangerous driving, or stressed about the increasing rates bill that they are hit with, I urge them all to remember that this Labor-Greens government has cut funding for all of those vital and essential government services, and that it is increasing taxes, increasing the burden, for all Canberra ratepayers. to pay for the tram.

My motion today calls on the leaders of each of the parties represented here in the Legislative Assembly to write to the federal Labor government calling for the funding to be reinstated for those necessary and important road upgrades. My motion demonstrates to the Canberra community that, unlike Labor and the Greens, we in the Canberra Liberals are listening to and taking notice of the things they care about. We will continue to keep fighting for not only greater transparency and accountability in government decisions on which millions and millions of dollars of taxpayer funds are being spent, but also making sure that basic local services, like road upgrades and proper maintenance, will be a priority. I commend my motion to the Assembly.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.48): We will not be supporting Ms Lee's

motion today. The ACT government is committed to delivering the road infrastructure that Canberra needs and that we committed to at the election. Our roads play a critical role in the movement of people, freight, cyclists, pedestrians, public transport and commuters. Investment in road infrastructure has never been more critical, with the ACT's population growing rapidly—the highest growth amongst all states and territories between the last two censuses.

It is critical that our roads are keeping pace with Canberra's higher than expected population growth, to ensure that our city remains one of the most liveable places in the world; and it is critical that we put that investment into the right projects at the right time to support that growth.

We have a productive relationship with the Australian government, which has delivered hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to road projects in the ACT in recent years. Construction is well underway on the duplication of Gundaroo Drive, between Ginninderra Drive and the Barton Highway, which will provide a safer and faster commute for travellers between Belconnen and Gungahlin. It also takes into account future growth there, with potential development of the CSIRO site. We are also upgrading over 35 intersections across the territory to deliver improved safety for road users, cyclists and pedestrians.

In the south, work is progressing on the Monaro Highway upgrades, which is important for connectivity, safety and more efficient travel for commuters and freight in a growing area—not just for Tuggeranong residents, but also across the border, in places like Jerrabomberra, South Jerrabomberra and Googong.

We are forging ahead with the John Gorton Drive extension and the new Molonglo River bridge, in the Molonglo Valley. Construction on this critical link is due to commence next year. The duplication of Athllon Drive is also on track, with a tender recently released to the market for the detailed design of the southern section.

In the October federal budget, the federal Labor government announced additional funding for road maintenance and renewal across the ACT through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program through to 2026. The ACT government welcomed that commitment, as we do all commitments that are made to infrastructure from the federal government. We welcomed that investment.

Ahead of the October federal budget, the commonwealth reached out to all state and territory governments to ensure that the delivery of infrastructure projects funded in part by the commonwealth were realistic, achievable and sustainable, recognising the challenges with the current construction market.

The commonwealth raised particular concerns about projects that were likely to be funded as a result of pork-barrelling efforts from the previous coalition government. Many of those have been well documented in the media. One project that was identified as a very ill-defined project with no clear deliverables was the commonwealth's south-west corridor project. It has always been unclear to the ACT government, and it has not been elaborated on today, either, by the opposition, in terms of what it would deliver. We are very unclear about what the south-west corridor project was supposed to achieve.

The reality is that the coalition had no conception whatsoever of what that project would actually deliver. There was no suggestion that the funding was to be used to deliver road maintenance or improvements to road safety; there was no suggestion regarding what it was meant to deliver at all.

The ACT government made representations to the previous federal government to use the funding identified for Parkes Way instead. As any commuter from the south would know, the real bottleneck at peak times, particularly in the morning, for drivers from the west and south-west, is Parkes Way. Of course, you enter Parkes Way through Glenloch Interchange, from the Tuggeranong Parkway.

However, this request was denied by the previous government. Instead we agreed in good faith that we would use a small amount of funding to work out what could be done. But we were very clear that we wanted that scope to include other roads, including Parkes Way. That work is currently underway to look at what is possible in the future, to inform future planning.

Our main focus and priority for south side roads investment remains important upgrades to the Monaro Highway, duplicating Athllon Drive and building the John Gorton Drive bridge over the Molonglo. These are the projects that we committed to in our plan for the south side at the election. These projects represent hundreds of millions of dollars of joint investment that will improve connectivity, create jobs, support freight movements and improve road safety outcomes for all Canberrans. There are clear deliverables for each of those projects—clear benefits that have been identified.

Let us be clear that the south-west corridor project was never an ACT government project. It was an Australian government project. The decision to fund and remove funding from the project was made by the Australian government.

The Australian government's decision to redirect the remainder of funding to other projects for the time being also reflects the reality that we cannot undertake major upgrades to every single major road from the south side into the city all at the same time as tearing up the Tuggeranong Parkway for no clear reason.

In relation to the Kings Highway corridor project, again, funding was allocated by the commonwealth, and not consulting the ACT government. We have recognised that planning work is still at a very early stage for any future extension of the runway at Canberra airport, which is likely to require the movement of Pialligo Avenue to the south. Pialligo Avenue was in the scope of the Kings Highway corridor, being one of the routes out onto the Kings Highway.

As a result the ACT government is not supportive of funding abortive road upgrades—effectively funding upgrades that then need to be torn up, a matter of years later, in order to undertake further upgrades. That is a waste of taxpayers' money. That is why we certainly agree that that should not go forward at this point in time. But we are doing some work in the immediate term, using a small amount of funding to undertake design improvements for two sections of Pialligo Avenue, at the intersection of Sutton Road and Oaks Estate Road, and at Brindabella Park.

The ACT government is continuing to work with the commonwealth on upgrades to our rural and regional roads, including Boboyan Road. We are in discussions with the federal government to reclassify regional rural roads in the ACT, which are currently classified as urban roads, so that they are classified as rural roads, and they attract the full 80 per cent commonwealth funding, as in other states and territories.

That is something that was a real problem that lasted over the 10 years of the previous coalition government. It is one that they failed to rectify when it was raised with them. We are now working with the commonwealth to address this. The federal budget reflects that agreement has not yet been reached on that reclassification, but we will continue to advocate.

The ACT government has never suggested that that road be defunded. In fact, in the ACT budget, the ACT government committed to fund upgrades to key sections of Boboyan Road on the basis of an 80-20 funding split being agreed with the commonwealth government through the National Partnership Agreement on Land Transport Infrastructure Projects. We will continue that discussion with them.

After almost a decade of underfunding from the commonwealth in ACT infrastructure projects, we are very keen to ensure that any funding for ACT projects remains in the nation's capital. The extra funding for light rail that the federal government have announced is very welcome. It ensures that commonwealth investment remains in the ACT, as we continue to work on collaborative infrastructure priorities with them.

It is worth emphasising that I have been advised that the ACT was the only jurisdiction in Australia where federal funding towards infrastructure projects did not go backwards in the federal budget in October. We were the only state or territory that did not have its overall commonwealth infrastructure spend cut. In fact, the federal government gave us more funding, through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, for road maintenance. They gave us funding for the garden city cycleway active travel project, and they gave us funding for the youth foyer, which will deliver important housing infrastructure for young people at risk of homelessness.

Road infrastructure—this is something that the former coalition government did not understand—is not the only infrastructure that we need as our city grows. We need community infrastructure, housing infrastructure, health infrastructure and education infrastructure, as well as transport infrastructure. Transport infrastructure also means public transport and active travel. The ACT government will continue to advocate for the infrastructure that our city needs.

This motion only tells the community that if the Liberals have their way, they will not support light rail stage 2 to Woden, despite their commitment to support it at the election. In fact, earlier today—twice, earlier today—the Leader of the Opposition spectacularly failed to commit to support building light rail to Woden. When it comes to light rail, the Canberra Liberals simply cannot help themselves. They have never supported light rail in Canberra, and they never will. Things were supposed to be different under a new opposition leader, yet it is clear that she cannot control the

conservative elements in her own party, as they continue to stand up against progress in this city.

Only our government can deliver the big infrastructure that is built for Canberra. We are the only side of this place with a vision for the ACT's future—the only parties with a plan to make sure that Canberra stays one of the world's most liveable cities. We have committed to light rail at multiple elections. We have taken it to the people, and we are getting on with the job of delivering on our promises.

As we promised Canberrans we would, we are starting with the raising of London Circuit, and we are building stage 2A to Commonwealth Park on the way to Woden. The ACT government will continue to invest in the road infrastructure, active travel infrastructure and public transport infrastructure that our city needs as we grow, so that more people can move around more efficiently, more easily and, importantly, safely. We will continue to work with the commonwealth, and continue to advocate to achieve those outcomes. We will not be supporting this motion today.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.00): I rise in support of Ms Lee's motion today, because we think roads are important. When you first read Ms Lee's motion you could be forgiven for thinking that the Liberals are suggesting that Labor does not think that roads are important. I do not think that is correct. I think Labor does understand that roads are important. We all know the Greens hate roads; they just hate them. They would get the bulldozers and rip up the roads, plant some gardens or turn them into bike paths! But ACT Labor do place some importance on roads. They would love to be spending money on roads, but what we are seeing is the whirlpool effect of the tram project, because when they started planning for stage 2 the government had no idea that it would cost them over \$3 billion. Now they are staring down the barrel of a project that they have committed to, but they are not really sure how they are going to pay for it. They do not know.

What we are seeing playing out here, with this promised road funding, is a process that is set to be replicated in many different ways, some of it on public display and some of it behind closed doors, as we lurch forward down this track, because the project has blown out to a cost which is almost impossible to appropriate for. So whatever funding can be siphoned into this project, from wherever creatively it can be siphoned, that is where it will go!

We saw it early on in the piece with the Asset Recycling Initiative money from the federal government. Ms Berry, who struggles to follow some of the documents, is adamant that money from the Asset Recycling Initiative did not get funnelled to light rail. We know it did. Jon Stanhope knows it did. The voters know it did. Everyone who read the ARI agreement that I tabled in estimates hearings knows that it is the case. That document was very clear. It very clearly articulated that all the assets, the entire proceeds from the sale, and the federal government top-up, went straight to light rail. We are talking about ageing public housing complexes and some other assets. Line by line, it articulates that those funds went to light rail.

Now what the government is saying is that Canberra's motorists should have to pay for those funding decisions. When we say pay for it, we mean in a number of ways. At the most extreme level that results in tragedy because, at the finest point, road

upgrades are about road safety. We have seen the road toll rising here in the ACT. We have seen the impact that it has on individuals and on families and on the whole community. But they also have to pay for it with increased travel times.

Mr Steel has made some fascinating comments about road funding. For the past six years he has been carping about the lack of infrastructure spending from the former Liberal government. He has been doing a bit of here today. I have heard him in this chamber, I have heard him in the media, and it has been reported to me from out on the streets, suggesting that the feds need to cough up more; they need to spend more on roads and infrastructure.

He welcomed the \$85.9 million when it was announced. He was all smiles. It is my understanding that, when it comes to the Boboyan Road money, the Steel office encouraged a number of rural landholders to either start petitions or write to the federal government requesting the funding that was given as a part of this package. Six months ago this funding was desperately important, according to Mr Steel, and now it is pork-barrelling. How does that work? You guys were so critical of what you described as the lack of infrastructure spending from the Liberal government. But when they commit to anything it is pork-barrelling. Is the Monaro Highway upgrade pork-barrelling? Is there even a little bit of bacon, just a sliver, maybe even like shortcut bacon? Is there any pork in that?

I have spoken to Mr Seselja about the discussions between the two governments in regard to this spending. I talked to him about the assertions from Mr Steel that the south-west corridor package had very few deliverables. He pointed out to me that it was a flexible package for the ACT government. He indicated that discussions had taken place about the growing population in Molonglo, about what pressure this was putting on the parkway and the Glenloch Interchange.

I have jotted down notes from our conversation. He said that when it comes to Molonglo, both levels of government agreed that: “This is the growth area. This is where we have got growing traffic pressure and this is what we have to address.” He indicated to me that it was a very similar process to the early stages of the Monaro Highway process. It was a very similar process to the one that has led to the Monaro Highway upgrades.

Mr Seselja said to me that if this was such a bad decision then it is remarkable that there was no pushback from Mr Steel. There was none. He said to me that, in all of the discussions that he had been involved with on this funding, there was not a peep from Mr Steel or anyone from ACT government. He said that, granted, most of his conversations with Mr Steel were actually at press conferences, but he did recall one Zoom meeting and he said there was no mention. If this is so porky, if this is not what the government wanted to do, why was it not raised? Why did someone from the ACT government not suggest that somehow these funding decisions were misplaced?

I also find it interesting that when it comes to the commencement of construction of light rail stage 2A, Mr Steel has on two occasions today in this chamber—and he has done it on a number of occasions elsewhere—indicated that it has commenced because we have started to raise London Circuit. When we did the business case we

did not include London Circuit because it was not part of the project. That was something that you were going to do anyway. You were going to do that anyway. It has got nothing to do with light rail. Indeed, we have exchanged questions in the past where you have indicated to me: “No, that has nothing to do with light rail. We are just doing that because we need to do it.”

I think what we are seeing here with this movement of funding, too, is the ideological divide between Labor and the Greens, because Mr Steel knows that the Greens will never genuinely support funding on roads. I wonder why these concerns were not raised with the federal government. To everyone who is sitting in traffic, coming from Molonglo to the city over the next decade, from Woden and from Tuggeranong, please remember that these decisions were made.

But do not worry too much if you are in Molonglo, because I note that the district strategy for Molonglo sees the light rail line going out to Molonglo. It has a very clear pathway there. Given that stage 2 is set to reach Woden by 2034—and, I am guessing, stage 3 to Belconnen by 2050 and stage 4 to Tuggeranong by about 2070—I think we should see light rail in Molonglo by 2095. You mark my words: in 2095 you can say, “There was no point us worrying about that funding, because we can catch the tram.”

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.08): I would like to thank Ms Lee for moving this important motion today. Like many Canberrans, I was shocked to hear about these three road projects funded by the federal government that have been scrapped here in the ACT. The previous \$85.9 million investment in road projects is the exact same money allocated by the federal Labor government to stage 2A of light rail. Originally, the government tried to say, “No, no, no. It is not that one is being stopped to pay for the other. No, no, no. It is just a coincidence.” Obviously, that is not the case at all. We heard about it in the federal estimates hearings.

There are many parts that concern me. The minister insists on talking about the new funding for light rail. It is not new funding. It is not new money. It is money that the federal government was already giving for a different purpose. It is not new money at all, and it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. Paul, in this instance, is the government’s ideologically-favoured project. Peter’s side of the equation, for me, is the residents of Tuggeranong, who want to go about their business each day. They are the ones who are being robbed. They are the ones who will suffer, time after time, because these roads upgrades in the area, the Tuggeranong Parkway one, would have significantly benefited the residents of Brindabella.

As we have heard, in many ways they are probably going to be amongst the last to get the benefit of light rail—if it ever comes to Tuggeranong. It is going to be cold comfort to them that they did not get these road upgrades because 50 years down the track they got light rail. Those people who would have benefited from those road projects over the coming years quite possibly will not be alive or will not be travelling into the city or elsewhere for work by the time light rail comes to Tuggeranong.

I share the concerns that were raised, for example, by the President of the Tuggeranong Community Council, Glenys Patulny, as she spoke to the *Canberra Times* on 29 October. She said:

It's disappointing because it could have an effect long-term. Any increase in [population in] Molonglo, the traffic is going to affect people coming from Tuggeranong.

As you go along the Parkway, you get traffic feeding in from the other areas, such as Molonglo. We have seen that on other roads as well: Parkes Way, where other roads feed in, and up Yamba Drive and Adelaide Avenue. The traffic may be moving quite well and then, when a whole lot of traffic comes from another area, such as the fast-growing area of Molonglo, that is when you are going to have increased traffic pressures.

The road projects that could have had such a benefit include the Boboyan Road, south of Tharwa, which is a crucial road for emergency service vehicles during bushfire season. It is a road where improvements have long been advocated for by local residents. It is in dire need of an upgrade. That has been scrapped.

We could have seen improvements to Athllon Drive as well, a corridor which is used by 40,000 vehicles a day. The minister has told us that work is progressing. About time! It has been promised and talked about for a very long time. No doubt there is going to be another big announcement before the next election in two years time—a re-announcement about the duplication of Athllon Drive, even though we have talked about it and promised it in other elections up to now.

The funding would have included improvements to the Tuggeranong Parkway. I think Mr Parton has already referred to this. It is often the scene of accidents. We do see quite a lot of accidents there. We have seen some chevrons painted on the road. I am not sure how much that has helped, except to give you a little bit of amusement as you are driving along and counting the chevrons. Perhaps more to the point, the kangaroo fencing may have made a difference in traffic accidents along the Tuggeranong Parkway. These road infrastructure projects could have made such a difference to the lives of people not just in Tuggeranong, in my electorate of Brindabella, but coming in from Molonglo as well, as the traffic pressures increase from Molonglo.

It is about safety. It is about getting to work or where you want to go safely, and getting home again. It is about getting there perhaps a little bit quicker, not in terms of speeding but in terms of safer infrastructure, and about not having potholes all the way along the Tuggeranong Parkway, which is what we are seeing at the moment. It is about getting people where they need to go, safely and quickly. You can spend more time with your family, doing the things that you love to do, when you get safely and quickly home again. That is what they are all about, these infrastructure projects.

As Ms Lee's motion highlights, these cuts are especially disappointing, given that the ACT this year is experiencing its highest road toll in 12 years. Getting people home safely to their loved ones, and in good time, should be a really high priority for this government. We need safe roads, more than ever before. I commend Ms Lee's motion to the Assembly.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.14): The Greens will not be supporting Ms Lee's motion, because this motion does not support Canberra's transport system, it will not help Canberra's congestion or liveability, nor will it deliver real climate action when we desperately need it.

I will start with a recap of the history of the funding this motion covers. Federal funding of \$85.9 million was allocated to road projects in the ACT. But much of that funding was not funding the ACT had requested nor was it funding that had been strategically and carefully considered in view of the ACT's transport needs. It looked an awful lot like funds that were poorly scoped and hastily pledged ahead of an election, with no policy background, no consideration of the ACT's transport needs and no view to climate action.

The bulk of the funding was the proposed \$50 million for the south-west corridor upgrade. In the ACT, \$50 million is a lot of money. I would typically expect a lot of careful policy work ahead of a new announcement for \$50 million. Is that what we saw? No.

The first anyone heard of this south-west corridor project was on 5 October 2020, two weeks ahead of the ACT election. Former Senator Seselja announced \$50 million for this south-west corridor. There was no policy work and no details released with the announcement. The costings were submitted after the announcement was made. If you look at the 2020 ACT election costings from the Canberra Liberals, you can see that Alistair Coe submitted his costings on 14 October 2020, a few days ahead of the election. The work was vague and the dollar figures were not justified.

This was meant to be an ACT transport project, a major project, but it was apparently led by a federal senator in a policy void. I am going to read a select quote from the request for costings to show just how vague the bid was:

What are the key assumptions that have been made in the proposal? The package is expected to include the development of a corridor plan, and individual projects consistent with this plan that are prioritised and agreed between the Australian and ACT governments. Subject to planning outcomes, projects could include upgrades to the Tuggeranong Parkway, could include improvements to intersections and feeder roads along the corridor, or pavement rehabilitation along the Parkway.

This \$50 million bid was launched in the absence of proper policy work. It did not even specify which roads were needed nor why. The south-west corridor project was no project at all. It was simply a list of possible things created in a policy vacuum announced two weeks out from an election and costed a few days out from an election.

There are two other aspects of road's funding covered in this motion. The first is Boboyan Road. This is a regional road, and there is a clear need, with really well-developed policy, for these upgrades. But this project should be treated as it would be if it were in New South Wales. This Assembly passed a motion earlier this year for an 80-20 funding split for the road. That means we agreed to seek federal government funding for 80 per cent of the cost. Ms Lee has also agreed to seek this, as have the Canberra Liberals. So I am confused about what this motion means today. Have the Canberra Liberals abandoned the position that we should get 80 per cent of the funding from federal government?

The other aspect of this motion is about Pialligo Avenue. I have not yet seen the case made out as to whether duplicating Pialligo Avenue is our best and highest priority,

long-term goal. But Minister Steel has explained, really clearly, why duplicating Pialligo Avenue is a bad idea at the moment—that the duplication may need to be torn up and moved later if the airport runway is moved. It is a terrible investment for the ACT to build a road that we know we may have to demolish. It only makes sense if you are the company that might get two contracts out of it.

In any case, the ACT should not base our major transport and planning decisions on knee-jerk directions made by a federal senator in the absence of detailed policy work. We need to think about our needs and our available resources, and we need to build the best we can with what we have. We have to do this based on sound policy, and we have to do it in the context of the pressing problems that we have.

Over 60 per cent of our tracked emissions come from transport, primarily from cars. The IPCC is calling for transit-oriented development and much, much better public and active transport. United Nations recommends that 20 per cent of federal transport funding each year should be allocated to non-motorised transport.

Canberra's congestion is growing three times faster than that of any other mainland Australian capital. We know that building more roads does not fix congestion. More roads fill up with more cars. This is called induced demand, and no city on the planet has managed to build enough roads to beat this problem. We have serious problems with the cost-of-living, and that includes the price of petrol and diesel and the affordability of all of our transport. These problems could be eased with good access to public and active transport. This the background environment against which we have to make all these major project and policy decisions.

In the ACT we have a really clear transport hierarchy. Public and active transport are prioritised above private motor vehicle. The 2020 transport policy has quietly dropped this transport hierarchy, but it is still identified as an important goal in our 2025 Climate Change Strategy. It is there because it is sound policy. It does address our big problems, and we know it works.

I am really delighted that we are getting additional funding from the federal government for Canberra's light-rail system. When you look over the last decade, it is clear that active and public transport projects in the ACT have been underfunded by the commonwealth. It is time that we reverse that trend.

The federal Liberal government gave the ACT \$1.3 billion for transport between 2013 and 2022. A mere \$60 million from the Asset Recycling Scheme Bonus was given to the first stage of light rail, and only \$132.5 million given to light-rail stage 2A. The sums for active travel are much, much, lower. That is less than \$200 million out of a total of \$1.3 billion.

Of the transport funding the ACT has received from federal government, less than 15 per cent has been given to active and public transport. That does not match our goals in any of our transport policies. It does not match what the IPCC is telling us that we need to build now and for the future. It does not match what the UN says responsible governments should do. It does not address any of the big problems that we know we have.

The 2004 Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT sets really ambitious targets about what Canberra's transport mode share of journeys to work should be by 2026. We are looking at what proportion of journeys we think should be made by active travel. We have interim targets set to help us strive towards those goals, but we are not meeting those targets, because we are not following through with the real commitment that we know we need.

In 2001, 13 per cent of journeys to work were made by walking, riding or public transport. Our Sustainable Transport Plan says that by 2026 we want 30 per cent of those journeys made by walking, riding or public transport. We want to go from 13 per cent to 30 per cent. That is how we are going to fix congestion and that is how we are going to take real climate action. It is a huge leap—and, unfortunately, we are not getting there.

We were making progress until 2011, but since then we have not been. In 2021, those who walked, rode or caught public transport to work made up just 12.4 per cent of journeys to work. We are aiming for 30 per cent and we are meeting 12 or 13 per cent. Our mode share has actually gone down. We have become more car dependent, and we have become more car dependent at a time when we are saying we need more sustainable transport.

It is, frankly, little wonder when our investment in transport infrastructure is so heavily focused on roads. Roads cost a lot. They are really expensive. The 2022-23 budget set out \$286 million just in maintenance. That is not for building roads or duplicating them; that is just maintaining the roads we have. It is obviously essential that we maintain the roads that we have. Road safety and quality are incredibly important.

We had the wettest October on record in Canberra this year. We know that climate extremes will make maintaining our city more expensive and more difficult. We have to maintain the ones we have, and we have to think really, really carefully about what new roads we build, and where. We must always do so on the basis that public or active transport might be a better buy.

We also know that building roads that encourage high-speed driving is in itself a road safety issue. The best way to improve road safety is to do it from the start by design. When we build new roads, we need to design them so that we are having good traffic flow and we are slowing cars down, particularly when we have got vulnerable road users around. We have always got to remember that the best way to beat congestion is to give people fantastic choices so that they do not have to drive to every single place that they are going. Taking cars off the road is the best way to beat congestion, and designing our roads to be safe in the first instance is the best way to help safety.

I am really glad that we have got this \$85.9 million for public transport, but it actually will not touch the sides of what we are owed for decades of underfunding on ACT infrastructure. What should instead happen is that the commonwealth should be increasing funding to the ACT for infrastructure projects, particularly for active and public transport.

I spoke to my colleague Mr Davis about what opportunities he saw for greater investment in public and active transport in Tuggeranong. He told me about a bike ride he recently took with one of his constituents from the Tuggeranong Town Centre to the Lanyon Marketplace. His constituent pointed out a range of issues, including damaged traffic calming infrastructure, poor signage and a bike path that just ends in a dirt path.

Mr Davis also told me about one of his constituents in Gordon who has been trying to get covered seating at their neighbourhood bus stop for more than 10 years, and Mr Davis has told me he hears regularly from constituents who would like to see better footpath maintenance, more bus routes and more bike paths in Tuggeranong. This is what we need more funding for.

I thank Senator Pocock for championing the cause of the ACT in the Senate to receive its fair share. Using some of the calculations on his website, the ACT should receive \$595 million in infrastructure payments between 2021 and 2026. So far, we have received some funds already pledged and redirected to light rail. I support this redirection but I note that we are still not getting our fair share of commonwealth infrastructure funding.

Imagine what we could do with \$595 million—half a billion—in new public and active transport investment in the ACT. We could have world-class city-wide bike and path networks. We could upgrade our bus fleet as quickly as we need to do it. This amount of new funding, if redirected to public and active travel, would be a gamechanger for the ACT.

I am really hopeful that my colleagues in the ACT Legislative Assembly will be supportive of the ACT getting our fair share of funding and for it go into public and active transport projects first, noting the chronic and historic underinvestment in infrastructure we have had in the ACT and noting that we have prioritised new road projects for private motor vehicles for such a long time.

Where we get federal funding for roads, it should be for projects that we have carefully scoped, that we have selected, and that we know we really, really, do need. It should be for roads that fit into our transport policy and fit into our long-term planning policy.

While the ACT Greens will not be supporting Ms Lee's motion, I would like to thank her for bringing it today, and I would like to acknowledge many of the legitimate issues that she has raised. I also appreciate the opportunity to discuss the historic commonwealth underinvestment in the ACT and the really amazing opportunities we have right now to kickstart genuinely and truly sustainable transport in the ACT. We have so much opportunity now if we make better choices than we have.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (4.26), in reply: I thank Mr Parton—well, you, Mr Deputy Speaker—and Ms Lawder for your support for my motion and your continuing advocacy for the people of Brindabella. That is always welcome.

I thank Ms Clay for her contribution. Of course, there were no surprises in the Greens position. I think that she should be commended for her newfound rigour in terms of

making sure that things are done properly: “Let’s make sure that we have a greater say in making sure we are supporting the projects that matter and there has been a thorough analysis.” That would be an honourable thing if it were not applied selectively! Where was all this rigour and request for a business case and a cost-benefit analysis and being transparent and upfront with the public about stage 2 of the light rail?

The fact is that the Greens are ideologically wedded to the tram whether or not it stacks up. So, whilst it is great to hear Ms Clay talking about, “Hey, let’s look at these projects and let us make sure we do all of the work and due diligence,” let’s make sure that is applied across the board. I think that that part of here contribution would have a lot more credibility if that were the case.

Mr Steel says all the right words, does he not? He says all of the right words, as is always the case when it comes to this Labor-Greens government. He said that it was about making sure that we fund “the right projects at the right time”. He also said that it is about clear deliverables and clear benefits and—with a straight face, even—he said, “Let’s not waste taxpayer money.”

All the words are there, but it is absolute and utter rubbish from this minister, who is stuck in complete paralysis when it comes to being upfront and transparent with the community so that we can all make an informed decision that it is indeed the right project at the right time, that it indeed has clear deliverables and that it does indeed have clear benefits. Despite years and years of the Canberra Liberals pleading with this minister to be upfront, to be transparent and to be accountable to the public about stage 2, until now, this minister has been absolutely unwilling or unable to do so. So it is all hypocrisy—and, once again, no surprises from a Labor-Greens government that are the experts at trying to gaslight the community.

When we are talking about the federal funding that was allocated to these road projects, it is all good now for the minister to turn around and say, “Hey it was all pork, and we never ever supported this,” but why did he not speak up at the time? That is literally his job. He had the great privilege of being around that negotiating table. But, instead, what we got was a big smile standing for the photo op to say, “Hey, we welcome this co-funding arrangement from the Australian government.” So it is about making things up as they go, and the Canberra community is not buying it.

We have industry raising serious concerns about the cancellation of important road projects, which will risk 773 local jobs and \$250 million for the local economy, and we have local residents—including in your electorate of Brindabella, Mr Deputy Speaker—raising concerns. Ms Lawder pointed out some of the concerns that she has heard from locals, and I have heard from local residents in Molonglo about the importance of these road upgrades. We have been contacted by parents and family members of those that have died on our roads this year. Road safety is a great concern and priority.

When you have a government that is so wedded to this tram that it absolutely refuses to see any other possible benefits of any other projects, you know that it is a government that is not making decisions in the best interests of Canberrans. This is a government that has long lost its way and became out-of-touch with the Canberra

community long ago. You do not need to look further than what you saw from this minister in the annual reports hearings recently, where he went on about, “Hey, we are going to undertake a business case and a cost-benefit analysis. But you know what? We are going to do it anyway.” So he can spruik all he wants about how this federal funding for these three road projects was all pork, but the Canberra community is not buying it.

What my motion calls for is for all leaders of the parties represented in this chamber to stand up for Canberrans and undo the damage that this ACT Labor-Greens government has been implicit in by doing a deal with federal Labor to take \$85.9 million from these important road upgrades.

As we heard, Labor and the Greens will do anything to make sure that they protect each other and stick to a project whether or not it stacks up. That is a real shame, because the people who will pay the price, literally and in the reverberating effects of those cuts in essential services, are the very members of the community that each and every one of us has pledged to serve. I hope that Canberrans remember this for a long time to come.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mr Cocks
Mrs Kikkert
Ms Lee
Mr Milligan
Mr Parton

Noes 14

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Mr Braddock
Ms Cheyne
Ms Clay
Ms Davidson
Mr Davis
Mr Gentleman
Dr Paterson
Mr Pettersson
Mr Rattenbury
Mr Steel
Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Vassarotti

Question resolved in the negative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Municipal services—footpaths

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.38): I want to draw the Assembly’s attention this afternoon to a consistent theme that the Canberra Liberals have identified about this Labor-Greens government. The government seems to operate, unfortunately, on a very reactive basis. I would like to highlight my disappointment in the fact that there

are three local members of my electorate who are also members of the government—Ms Clay, Ms Cheyne and Ms Berry—who could be raising issues quickly as well as changing services delivery, because they are, in fact, in government.

A particular issue I want to refer to is the poor state of service provision in the territory, particularly with respect to our footpaths. A few months ago, I met with an elderly constituent in Holt, who shared with me her personal struggle in navigating the footpaths into the Kippax group centre. I accompanied her on her walk. She requires a walking frame, with walking being part of her recovery regime and an activity she attempts every day. I saw firsthand the walk my constituent completes in simply leaving her home. She is forced to traverse seriously cracked paths and raised edges. Last year my constituent had a fall on one of these paths, damaging her shoulder. She, and the large community of vulnerable residents in Holt, walk these paths in significant anxiety, and fear injuring themselves every day.

I invite the local members, and indeed the minister responsible, to go and inspect these paths to see for themselves. I have written three letters to the minister on these particular paths and lots more letters—hundreds, in fact—on other infrastructure issues around our city. In July this year, when I first contacted the minister, I was informed that works would be completed within one to two years—suggesting that fixing the paths was not really that urgent. Upon receiving the minister’s response I wrote back urging immediate action as I know the truth of how dire these paths are. The eventual response I received last week finally conceded, upon reinspecting the area, that additional urgent safety issues had been identified. In the minister’s words, these urgent safety issues will be addressed within “a 12-month footpath replacement timeframe”. So it has taken from July this year until mid-November to get what appears to be a genuine, legitimate response that it may take another 12 months. In the meantime, these vulnerable residents are walking these paths to this popular group centre.

It is just not good enough! Residents should not have to factor-in untraversable paths on suburban streets when they injure themselves; nor should it take a massive effort and contacting a local member and getting several letters written to get the matter escalated. The residents of West Belconnen and Holt deserve better. They deserve a government that acts quickly and ensures that they do not live in fear or an anxiety that stops them from using a basic service. They must have safe and accessible pathways to their local shops.

Unfortunately—and I do come to the close of this speech—this Labor-Greens government has its hands tied by a structural deficit brought about by decades of economic mismanagement and procurement policy settings that are woefully inefficient. As I see it, this government has given up serving and focusing on the basic needs of Canberrans; indeed, they are asleep at the wheel.

I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Canberra Liberals will be committed to providing quality services that Canberrans need every day. Canberrans deserve those services to be delivered in a first-class manner. It is our commitment to meet the everyday needs of Canberrans, and make sure that this sort of sorry story is not a common one in Canberra.

Women—safety after dark

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) (4.43): Everyone has the right to feel safe and supported in their community. Unfortunately, research from Women’s Health Matters shows that even in public areas in the ACT that have low rates of reported crime, women feel unsafe due to the risk of assault or sexual assault, particularly after dark. As a member for Murrumbidgee, I am interested in hearing directly from women in my electorate about how safe they feel in their neighbourhood, particularly after dark.

While Weston Creek has the second lowest rate of offences reported to police in the ACT—beaten only by Molonglo Valley—it is whether we feel safe that changes where we go and how we get there. To provide a forum for women to share their stories and experiences with personal safety, I hosted a workshop in partnership with the Weston Creek Community Council in October. There were three key things I hoped to better understand—firstly, where in Weston Creek women feel unsafe; secondly, why do women feel unsafe; and, finally, what changes need to be made.

At the workshop, we identified a few key areas in Weston Creek where women feel unsafe after dark—such as underpasses, skate parks, and neighbourhood ovals. However, resoundingly, women from Weston Creek told me that they felt most unsafe in a specific space near Cooleman Court. So, what is it about these areas that makes them feel unsafe? Women’s Health Matters research tells us that ACT women and men feel safe or unsafe in public spaces for different reasons. Men worry about losing their property; women worry about losing their life.

Overwhelmingly, women feel safer in areas with good lighting and visibility, where there is less risk of hidden threats. Increased passive surveillance—seeing lots of people of different ages, abilities and backgrounds in a public space, or high visibility to passing traffic—improves awareness that someone might need help. A well-lit space with good visibility and other people around who can help if there is a problem, is the kind of space where women feel safe. The ACT government’s adjustments, such as improving lighting and ensuring footpaths are visible, well-maintained and have clear sightlines, can help an area feel safer. Encouraging the shared use of a space by people from a range of age groups and genders can help to revitalise an area and improve feelings of safety.

Our workshop group considered how effective the transformation of Haig Park has been to date and what lessons could be learned to help make Cooleman Court feel safer. One idea was the introduction of regular night markets. This could help to bring people together and foster a greater sense of community in the area. Conversations about urban design and women’s safety after dark are particularly important given the consultation on the Draft Territory Plan and district plans. I encourage everyone in Murrumbidgee and across Canberra to make your voices heard and tell us what needs to change in your local areas to help you feel safer. Feeling safe in your local neighbourhood matters. Public spaces that feel safe after dark enable greater participation in community life for women, making Canberra a more vibrant and

inclusive community. I would like to thank the Weston Creek Community Council for hosting the workshop.

Racing—harness racing

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.46): I rise this afternoon to speak in support of harness racing in the ACT. I attended the race meeting at the harness racing track in Mitchell on Monday night of last week, and I had a stack of conversations with a bunch of Canberrans, and some individuals from across the border, about the future of their sport in the nation's capital.

I have got to say, everyone I spoke to was absolutely gobsmacked at the Greens' lack of understanding of the funding model for the racing codes, and, additionally, at what they characterised as the cruelty from the Greens for trying to end their hobby, their pastime, or their employment. I can tell you, most of these people take the Greens' attacks very personally. They absolutely take offence at the inference that they do not care for their animals properly—that, somehow, their horses are not looked after.

I understand that most of the current debate has been about funding, but, certainly, if we go back and we have a look at statements that have been made in the past by the party, broadly speaking, there is an inference that people do not look after their animals properly. Let us actually focus on the horses—there is an inference that both thoroughbred and standardbred horses do not enjoy running really fast, but they do. They do.

I spoke to a number of trainers and drivers who are confused about exactly what the Chief Minister alluded to in the chamber regarding the proposition that the Harness Racing Club and the thoroughbred racing club would co-locate, because they know, as well as I do, that those conversations are not well advanced. Although it was put forward by the Chief Minister, and again at the recent hearings by Mr Steel as the minister overseeing racing, they know that it is, at this stage, just a pie in the sky thought bubble.

I spent some time down in the stables, where I could see a genuine emotional connection between horse and human. It was great to see John O'Sullivan manning the barbecue down at the stables as a service to those from near and far who had horses engaged in the meeting. I also did my best to supplement the income of the local bookmaker on the night—in that, although we had a number of transactions, they all involved me giving money to him, rather than vice-versa!

It was great to see Jenny from the Harness Racing Club in fine form working behind the bar. I had the best roast pork and gravy roll that I have ever had, with heaps of crackling. It was unbelievable! I just revelled in this slice of traditional Australia, that remains at Exhibition Park. May it remain there forever.

The clear message I have for the Greens from the punters, the owners, the trainers, the strappers and the high-vis-wearing regular Australians at the harness racing is: "Leave us the hell alone."

Perinatal Mental Health Week

MR COCKS (Murrumbidgee) (4.49): Two weeks ago, from 6 to 12 November, it was Perinatal Mental Health Week—an important time to raise awareness of mental health issues facing new parents. While Perinatal Mental Health Week was an important opportunity, it is important that new parents know there are supports and other people out there to support them always.

Evidence shows that one in five new mums and one in 10 new dads experience perinatal depression and anxiety. This is around 100,000 Australian parents each year. For those parents, a time they might have expected to be filled with joy and excitement can be turned on its head. Many of those I have talked to speak of feelings of isolation and fear and guilt. They tell me how it feels when you know that everyone around you seems to not get it.

So it is notable that this year the theme of Perinatal Mental Health Week was “We’re here, we get it”. This reflects the passion, the knowledge and the understanding of those people who care for everyone facing perinatal mental health issues. It also provides hope to all those struggling parents, because when we are struggling, we need somewhere to turn—somewhere like the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre in Weston Creek.

I was fortunate enough to visit the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre relatively recently, and I would like to personally thank Yvonne and Natalie for taking the time to show me around, and I really want to thank everyone who works at and is involved with the centre. Organisations like yours do so much to help parents in our community and to give them hope.

While visiting the centre, I also had the opportunity to meet Sarah Richards, a Canberra-based Indigenous artist who showed me her striking painting which will now call the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre home. The painting is entitled *You Are Not Alone*. I will do my best to describe the painting and the story that Sarah shared with me.

The painting represents the journey of a new parent adjusting to life with a child. It starts in a darker section, describing the time before a parent can connect with the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre and with the community. In the middle of the artwork, there is a representation of that connection and being welcomed into the supports the centre offers, but it is not the end of the journey. From here, the parent moves to a lighter section, beyond the interaction with the centre, to a place where the parent is equipped with the knowledge and the tools they need on their journey into the future, while remaining connected to a network that can support them.

The Perinatal Wellbeing Centre, and other organisations like it, provide truly valuable support for parents in our community. And I am grateful for everything they do.

Ginninderra parkrun

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) (4.52): At 8 am this past Saturday morning something occurred at Lake Ginninderra which was as unremarkable as it was remarkable. It was of course the Ginninderra, or Gindy, parkrun, which has been held almost every Saturday morning at 8 am, or 7.50 am to be precise, starting near the Townsend Place car park for more than a decade. A very common sight for many of us.

What was remarkable was that it was the 500th Ginninderra Parkrun. A day of celebration of a fun completely free community event that supports community participation, volunteering, exercise and inclusion every single time it is held. It is an event that welcomes all ages, all abilities, and insists on running for enjoyment, asking for nothing in return except to volunteer occasionally if you can.

The benefits are enormous and the statistics underline this. An average of 182.3 finishers per week at Ginninderra, almost 11,000 individuals who have finished the course with over 91,000 finishes in that time and 1,212 different volunteers. The course has changed four times, as I understand it, due to updated requirements of the overarching parkrun organisation with a view to improving safety each time. In the decade, or a bit over the decade, it has been interrupted by a hot air balloon landing and it has been cancelled one week due to flooding. The biggest interruptions of course were due to the pandemic, seven months in 2020 and three months in 2021.

Ginninderra parkrun was the original parkrun in Canberra. Ten months before Tuggeranong, which I know you participate in regularly, Mr Deputy Speaker, and one of the earliest in Australia—the sixth ever in Australia. To give context to that there are now 412. Among those 412 are Umbagog, Burley Griffin, Gungahlin, Mt Ainslie, Wagi Bridge, Coombs, Tuggeranong, Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan.

Ginninderra parkrun has been a staple of my life having always coincided when I am taking my dog to the dog park. I want to warmly acknowledge the volunteers and participants who bring an injection of vitality to Saturday mornings, no matter the time of the year nor the weather.

Congratulations to the current event directors Lara and Sal, as well as the event directors who have come before them and the many, many, many run directors and volunteers. May Ginninderra parkrun long continue in its consistency and its consistent inspiration.

Youth—voting rights in New Zealand

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (4.56): I rise to acknowledge big, big, news out of New Zealand overnight. A youth-led group in New Zealand, the Make It 16 New Zealand campaign, a group of young people took their government to court and won. The New Zealand Supreme Court ruled that maintaining a voting age of 18 was discriminatory and breached the human rights of young people. In response, the New Zealand Labour government has come out and said they will be drafting legislation to expand voting rights in New Zealand to include 16- and 17-year-olds.

What I find really interesting in this debate, Mr Deputy Speaker, is the amount of closet-expansion-of-voting-rights-supporters in the midst of the New Zealand Labour

Party who now, after a supreme court decision, are more than happy to join us in the streets rallying for youth engagement in our democracy and for youth empowerment in the vote. That is very exciting. I applaud the New Zealand Supreme Court. I applaud the New Zealand government and the New Zealand Labour Party for their leadership. It is worth noting though that New Zealand will not be alone. New Zealand will be joining the ranks of Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Malta, Nicaragua and Scotland, all of whom have enfranchised 16- and 17-year-olds in the vote in their countries.

Of course what makes this so exciting, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that we here in the ACT Legislative Assembly have an opportunity to do exactly the same thing. My ACT Greens colleague Mr Braddock and I have co-sponsored legislation that is before this Assembly as we speak to enfranchise 16- and 17-year-olds in the vote here in the ACT. Not only because of our strong values, guided by our political movement to enfranchise young people in the decision-making processes that impact on them but also because we have been listening earnestly to the voices of young people who have been lobbying for this kind of representation and inclusion in the vote for some time.

It is close to a year since Mr Braddock and I first tabled the bill and we have been out in the community talking to people about the bill, talking to people of what it means to improve and strengthen democracy by including more decision makers and holding all of us accountable to an even broader amount of the electorate. One of the things I find quite interesting is that I am pointed to Scotland regularly. The reason I am pointed to Scotland is there was a survey in Scotland prior to their expanding voting rights that found two-thirds of their population opposed expanding voting rights.

Two-thirds opposed, but they opened up the right to vote to 16- and 17-year-olds in Scotland and according to a report that came out afterwards:

What ultimately led to a huge increase in public support was if we actually lowered the voting age. In Scotland, in 2011, over two-thirds of people opposed lowering the voting age to 16. But following the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, when the voting age was first lowered to 16, support massively grew to over 50 per cent as people saw with their own two eyes the positive impact of enfranchising young people. This public support grew even further to over 60 per cent a year later.

Now we Greens have a habit of being unpopular right up until we are popular. It is never easy to say the evidence based progressive position before the majority have come on board. Such is our lot in life in Australia's political system, Mr Deputy Speaker. But we are proud to do it. I am proud to see that Scotland has gone through a not too dissimilar journey. I look forward to future opportunities in this place to debate and hopefully form a consensus view that every member of this Assembly is excited about holding themselves to account to 16- and 17-year-old Canberrans at the next election, that no one in here is afraid to put their policy positions or their record of votes and activism in this place up to 16- and 17-year-olds. I am sure that each and every one of you will be proud to present a policy platform that appeals to young Canberrans at the next election. Because our democracy is stronger, just like

New Zealand's is about to be, just like Scotland's has been, when more people, more taxpaying citizens who drive on our roads, go to our schools, work in our shops and restaurants, have a say on who sits in this place and what exactly they do with that awesome power.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.02 pm.