



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

TENTH ASSEMBLY

30 November 2022

www.hansard.act.gov.au

Wednesday, 30 November 2022

Leave of absence	4001
Petitions:	
Kippax Fair—parking—petition 39-22.....	4001
Belconnen—Margaret Timpson Park—petition 28-22	4002
Watson—off-leash dog area and improved amenities—petition 5-22 (Ministerial response)	4003
Motion to take note of petitions	4003
Kippax Fair—parking—petition 39-22.....	4004
Belconnen—Margaret Timpson Park—petition 28-22	4005
Kippax Fair—parking—petition 39-22.....	4007
Belconnen—Margaret Timpson Park—petition 28-22	4007
Employment—conditions and entitlements—update (Ministerial statement).....	4008
Youth—vaping products—update (Ministerial statement)	4011
Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—report (Ministerial statement).....	4017
Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022	4020
Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022	4023
Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment Bill 2022	4028
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill 2022	4031
Questions without notice:	
Whitlam—land release.....	4040
Schools—capacity.....	4041
Canberra Hospital—Fetal Medicine Unit accreditation.....	4042
Canberra Hospital—Adult Mental Health Unit.....	4043
Canberra Theatre Centre—redevelopment.....	4045
Canberra Hospital—birth centre	4046
Dhulwa Mental Health Unit—patient transfers.....	4047
Dhulwa Mental Health Unit—review	4049
Housing ACT—asset stock	4050
Transport Canberra—buses.....	4052
Light rail stage 2—construction costs.....	4053
Australian Capital Territory—statutory office holders	4054
High-risk weather season—preparedness	4054
Supplementary answers to questions without notice:	
Whitlam—land release.....	4057
Canberra Hospital—birth centre	4057
Transport—services.....	4058
ACT inland swimming spots—safety.....	4072
Adjournment:	
Valedictory.....	4078
Valedictory.....	4080
Valedictory.....	4081
Valedictory.....	4082
Valedictory.....	4083
Valedictory.....	4085
Valedictory.....	4086
Valedictory.....	4088
Canberra Women in Business awards.....	4089
Valedictory.....	4091
Schedule of amendments:	
Schedule 1: Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill.....	4093

Wednesday, 30 November 2022

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms Burch) (10.01): 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 today's sitting due to illness.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Kippax Fair—parking—petition 39-22

By Mrs Kikkert, from 536 residents:

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 the Assembly that:

- inadequate parking at Kippax Fair has been an issue for many years;
- the ACT Government's sale of a portion of the car park in November eliminated 66 all-day parking bays, worsening pre-existing parking shortages;
- the approved Kippax Masterplan provides the opportunity for another 450 underground parking bays for public use but has been stalled by government foot-dragging; and
- parking troubles at Kippax Fair have now reached crisis point, forcing shoppers away from the area and threatening the livelihoods of traders.

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

- resume public liability insurance for the recently closed car park at block 5, section 53 no later than 16 December 2022, allowing for it to be reopened for use until construction commences;
- realign the parking configuration of remaining car parks by 31 January 2023 to optimise the number of parking bays; and/or
- open a temporary car park to service Kippax as soon as possible.

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

Belconnen—Margaret Timpson Park—petition 28-22

By Ms Clay, from 268 residents:

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

Reason for this Petition

The following residents of the ACT draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the population of the Belconnen Town Centre is rapidly increasing, mainly as a result of the large number of high rise apartments that have been built in the last few years (with even more being proposed). The Belconnen Town Plan in 2016 proposed the further development of Margaret Timpson Park through the addition of children's play equipment and picnic facilities, but nothing has been done, despite the population increase. The old Belconnen Health Centre site has been a hole in the ground since the Centre was demolished a few years ago. Extending Margaret Timpson Park to include this vacant land will provide much needed additional green space for the use of Town Centre residents and the thousands of other Canberrans who visit the Town Centre regularly.

Requested Actions

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to utilise the vacant allotment (the site of the old Belconnen Health Centre) adjacent to Margaret Timpson Park in the Belconnen Town Centre to extend the Park. Belconnen Town Centre is experiencing rapid population growth due to recently built and planned high rise apartment buildings, without any improvement in local infrastructure and suitable green space to accommodate this population increase. The extension of Margaret Timpson Park would be a welcome and simple step in offering something to the community by way of improving local amenity, given the large increase in the number of Canberrans (particularly children) now living within the Belconnen Town Centre area.

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 response

The following response to a petition has been lodged:

Watson—off-leash dog area and improved amenities—petition 5-22

By **Mr Steel**, Minister for Transport and City Services, 29 November 2022, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Vassarotti on 20 September 2022 concerning the mowing of the off-leash dog area in Watson.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 20 September 2022 regarding petition 5-22, lodged by Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, requesting the inclusion of the off-leash dog area between Stirling Avenue and Antill Street in Watson on a regular mowing schedule, and the addition of rubbish bins in the area.

In response to the request for the area to be included on the regular mowing schedule, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) has added the off-leash dog area in Watson, between Antill Street and Stirling Avenue, to the City Services annual suburban mowing program. This area will generally be mown every four weeks during peak growing periods and every two to three months at other times of the year. I am advised that mowing was completed in the area on 13 September and 20 October 2022 of this mowing season.

Please note that the TCCS mowing program has been under significant pressure this season due to above average rainfall and high soil saturation levels, which causes rapid grass growth as well as a reduction in the available mowing days. This has disrupted the mowing program, however TCCS staff are striving to maintain the program as far as possible.

In response to the request for additional bins, TCCS provides bins in town and district parks, public areas of shopping and town centres, some popular lookouts, bus interchanges, fenced dog parks and some other high use/demand areas. Sportsgrounds also have bins available for use by groups that book the fields. However, bins are not provided at bus stops, most urban open space playgrounds and lower use parks. Where no bins are located, it is the ACT Government's policy that people using public urban open spaces are responsible for taking their rubbish with them and disposing of it in an appropriate manner. Maintaining clean urban open spaces requires a whole-of-community effort and cannot be undertaken by Government alone. TCCS implements a regular litter-picking program in this area however, if the presence of litter increases, installing a bin may be considered in the future.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Motion to take note of petitions

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

That the petitions and response so lodged be noted.

Kippax Fair—parking—petition 39-22

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.03): I present a petition signed by 536 ACT residents who want the parking crisis at the Kippax Group Centre to be fixed as a matter of urgency. I emphasise that these signatures were collected across only three days.

The 2019 Kippax master plan states that convenient and accessible parking at Kippax is of central importance. A 2014 study quoted in the master plan reveals that parking demand was then, “only one per cent below what is considered acceptable for peak car parking utilisation,” and added that, “it is important for this master plan to identify ways to increase and improve car parking in the centre to deal with future population growth”.

That parking survey was conducted almost nine years ago, and the Kippax master plan is now almost five years old. The future demand predicted in both documents is already here and steadily growing worse. The proposed expansion of the Kippax Fair shopping centre which was integrated into the government’s master plan includes an additional 450 parking spaces underground. If it had been allowed to proceed, this proposal would already have solved the parking crisis at Kippax. Instead, the redevelopment of the group centre has been stalled by years of government foot-dragging, including a decision in July 2020 to opt for a tender process. Expressions of interest for this tender closed 16 months ago but still there is no sign of progress.

In the meantime, it appears that the government has decided to fast track other developments at the Kippax Group Centre. Two weeks ago, a public car park with 66 all-day parking bays was sold off for development. In relation to this decision, the master plan clearly states that any redevelopment of existing car parks must “provide replacement public car parking”. It also states that “the existing provision of convenient and accessible car parking should be retained as development and redevelopment occur”, but the ACT government has violated its own master plan by providing no replacement parking to compensate for the loss of this now-closed car park.

Let me put this closure into perspective. According to the master plan, there were 552 public parking spaces in and along Hardwick Crescent. Eliminating 66 of these has slashed public parking at Kippax by 12 per cent, bringing an already bad situation to breaking point. There are now days and times when it is virtually impossible for shoppers to find any parking. Shoppers who cannot find anywhere to park drive away and take their business elsewhere. Traders at Kippax Fair report that foot traffic and sales have declined measurably since the car park was fenced off. There is a very real risk that some traders will not survive this loss of customers and revenue, especially as they approach the crucial Christmas shopping period.

The loss of 66 all-day parking bays also means that customers who require more than a short visit are arriving late to appointments or cancelling all together. Kippax Fair has about 100 workers on site and these staff no longer have sufficient places to park. Instead, they are forced to leave work intermittently to relocate their vehicles, sometimes needing to loop car parks a dozen times or more. Traders who are facing the failure of their businesses, and the good Canberrans who support them, are proposing three fixes to this crisis.

One, the new owner of the closed car park, who has done nothing wrong, has fenced the block off for public liability reasons, even though development of the site will not begin for 12 or even 18 months. If the ACT government resumes public liability insurance until construction begins, these 66 parking spaces could be reopened to the public. This needs to happen before Christmas.

Two, the Kippax master plan states that reconfiguring the orientation of existing public car parks could yield up to 20 per cent increase in capacity. This should happen over the slow summer period.

Three, if the government will not take these simple steps, it must open a temporary car park as soon as possible. Each of these requests is rational and doable. Failure to act urgently is irresponsible. I commend this petition to the Assembly.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (10.08): Ahead of the government's formal response, I can inform the Assembly that section 53, Holt, has recently closed for development, which is the subject of the petition. The Suburban Land Agency discussed the upcoming closures with the owners of Kippax Fair, and it was agreed that staff and long-stay customers could alternatively use the approximately 400 unrestricted parking spaces within 200 to 600 metres of the subject site on Moyes Crescent and at the Kippax cricket ground.

However, now that the unrestricted car park at section 53 has closed, small business owners have expressed concerns for staff who are unable to access unrestricted parking in those car parks adjacent to Kippax Fair. The Suburban Land Agency and Transport Canberra and City Services have contacted the owners of Kippax Fair to meet this week to propose some long-stay parking in the adjacent car park at section 89, Holt, to be used by staff.

We are looking forward to making some changes to parking arrangements in Holt to facilitate more long-stay parking for staff. For the information of members, there were 64 unrestricted parking spaces in the closed car park at section 53, Holt, which had a peak use of 29 spaces in the last parking survey, which was undertaken by TCCS in May 2022. The adjacent 117 space car park at section 89, Holt, currently has 95 two- and three-hour parking spaces, 16 Park and Ride spaces and six accessible spaces. The maximum occupancy of this car park at the last parking survey undertaken by TCCS in May was 84 per cent. I look forward to providing a more fulsome response in the government's formal response.

Belconnen—Margaret Timpson Park—petition 28-22

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.10): I would like to say a few words about the petition submitted by Mr Peter Humphries. It has received 268 signatures and it is about Belconnen Town Centre. I hear a lot of concern about our Belconnen Town Centre. We have a beautiful lakefront down there, and we have some great facilities, but we are developing really, really fast. We have a lot of apartments going up and a lot of people moving in, and there is definitely a feeling in Belconnen that our services have not kept pace.

This petition points out that the Belconnen Town Centre master plan in 2016 said that we should have a playground in that area, and we do not have a playground in that area. I have run a few questions through the parliamentary processes to find out more about this and the only answers I have got is that people can walk to John Knight Memorial Park. That is 1½ kilometres away. That is a really long way to walk if you are a three-year-old. It is not really the way we were hoping that the town centre would develop.

This particular petition is talking about the large hole in the ground and opportunities, and I understand that that site has been allocated. I think that there are a lot of people concerned about Margaret Timpson Town Park in general, and what our future plans are there, particularly when we are talking about facilities for young people and children, because a lot of families are moving into that area now. I think it would be great if we could get an update soon, but also get a bit more of a vision for what we are going to see in this Belconnen Town Centre. That would be very reassuring to a lot of people.

I would also like to note that I am really pleased to be in Belconnen. Belconnen Community Council is a really open-minded and progressive mob to work with, and they are not at all anti-development. There is genuine appetite to deal with the big problems that we have, which are housing affordability, climate change and where to put our people. I think there is just a bit of frustration that we are sometimes building housing, or building certain aspects, ahead of the game, without planning all the way through.

I will paraphrase one of the comments made by one of our Belconnen Community Council attendees at the last meeting I was at. She is in her 80s. Her primary concern was that she did not know where the 18-year-olds would be able to go out on a Friday night, and she did not know where the kids would go and play. I just loved that that was her major concern with development in the Belconnen CBD. I think there are a lot of people who are thinking about others, and hoping that we do a better job, moving forward.

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) (10.13): I want to thank the petitioners for raising the issue about Belconnen. I want to reassure Belconnen residents that your champions, Minister Berry and Minister Cheyne, have been making sure your voices are heard, including about the need for information regarding the site of the former Belconnen Health Centre.

In relation to block 45, section 54, Belconnen, there is currently a procurement process underway, so there is limited information that can be placed on the record, and limited information that is provided to government. However, I understand that the procurement and RFT is due to be finalised this financial year. Should a proponent be successful in this RFT process, they will engage in contract negotiations with the territory for sale of the site. As I said, there is an active procurement process underway that touches on part of the matters raised in the petition. With that caveat, the government will consider the petition in the usual way.

Kippax Fair—parking—petition 39-22

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) (10.14): I want to take a few moments to acknowledge both of those petitions, the views expressed within them and the many people that have signed both. I turn first to the parking petition at Kippax, and I thank Mrs Kikkert for organising that. I pay tribute to the many small businesses and community members who I have engaged with in the past few days about this; I very much appreciate them raising this with me directly and the proactive way that Minister Steel, TCCS and the SLA have engaged with me and my office since I made those representations over the past 10 days or so.

I am very heartened by Minister Steel's response this morning and the work that TCCS is doing to ensure that there is parking that respects and reflects the range of needs for Kippax, particularly that longer-stay parking for those people who are employed in or around Kippax Fair. I will be confirming with Minister Steel after this, perhaps, not only that Kippax Fair owners and tenants will be engaged with, but that neighbouring small businesses that fall just outside of Kippax Fair will also be engaged with.

Belconnen—Margaret Timpson Park—petition 28-22

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) (10.16): Regarding Margaret Timpson Park, again I thank Ms Clay and I acknowledge the residents who have signed this petition, which I do acknowledge is due to some levels of frustration that there has now been a hole in the ground for some time. That demolition did occur back in 2020. It followed agreement that the Belconnen Health Centre at that site had well passed its expiry date. It had been a derelict building. Indeed, for the residents who were around at the time that the building was present, it was an enormous hazard.

Since that time, the Territory Plan variations have been made, which have reflected the Belconnen Town Centre master plan, including that that site would be a site for housing—very modest housing. I wish to acknowledge that the consultation on that site resulted in the height limit for that site being reduced quite significantly, and the dwelling yield for that site also being reduced. I think the fact that this site has been considered appropriate not only for demonstration housing but for build-to-rent, is something that Belconnen Town Centre residents will, on the whole, welcome; but while ever there is an incredibly unsightly hole in the ground, there will be a sense of frustration.

So I am thankful to Minister Gentleman. I think we can certainly appreciate that when a tender or a request for tender is being evaluated, there are limitations in what the government is able to say or, indeed, progress. I hope that the response to the petition today has given some certainty to residents that this site has not been left without government engagement, but that there will be a resolution within this financial year. Thanks very much.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Employment—conditions and entitlements—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) (10.19): In response to the excellent motion brought on 3 May 2022 by champion of workers Mr Pettersson, I am pleased to inform members about what the ACT government has been doing, and continues to do, to materially improve the working conditions of ACT residents.

The government has a long history of protecting territory workers' rights—their rights to be treated respectfully, and to have fair pay and entitlements. We are also committed to promoting safe workplaces that contribute to wellbeing and enable workers to return safely to friends and families at the end of the working day. We are proud of this history, but we have not finished the work yet. We are not done yet, because it is at the core of our work in this place to help workers.

As I have mentioned in this place previously, I do not believe our commitment to workers in the territory can be challenged. The reforms are broad, and speak for themselves about the steps that we have taken to ensure that workers' rights are upheld and that employers are fulfilling their obligations. You will recall me speaking about these reforms in the Assembly, and although they will be familiar to you, it is worth mentioning them again here today and giving you some updates on our progress.

Secure work is good work. Secure work means knowing you will always have a job—full-time, part-time or casual—and the financial security and certainty that comes with it. This means less time out of work and longer contracts for those jobs that are not permanent, and support to take time off when you are unwell, and to rest and recuperate. Secure work is good for workers and their families, and it is good for business and our community, too. Secure work is work where workers' rights are protected, where being in a form of work that is not permanent does not mean that your rights and entitlements are reduced or are less important.

The ACT government has introduced a labour hire licensing scheme. This scheme commenced in May 2021, and to date more than 900 employers and businesses are registered as labour hire providers operating in the territory. This speaks to the breadth of labour hire practice and the importance of this scheme for the territory. The scheme ensures that labour hire businesses operating in the territory meet their workplace obligations. It requires them to demonstrate an ongoing compliance with industry standards and workplace laws and that they are suitable to be an employer and hold a licence.

Through labour hire licensing we are encouraging responsible practices in the industry and sending a very clear message about what good, secure employment looks like and what is and is not acceptable. It sets up a clear framework for preventing and responding to non-compliance. The government has also delivered the secure local jobs package that has set the standard for ensuring that government-funded contracts

are going to businesses that are doing the right thing. At the centre of this initiative was a recognition that government has a role to play in delivering better outcomes for territory workers—that through our purchasing power we can set expectations and mandate high standards for workplace safety, workers' rights and the delivery of quality goods and services.

In 2019, the government introduced the Secure Local Jobs code via the Government Procurement Act to set workplace standards for providers of goods and services to government. These include standards for pay and employment conditions; insurance, tax and superannuation; health and safety, including training and workplace induction; and collective bargaining, freedom of association and representation rights. Since its introduction, the secure local jobs package has changed the way the ACT government awards contracts and supports businesses that do the right thing by their workers. It strengthens the ACT government's procurement practices so our contracts are awarded only to businesses that meet the highest ethical and labour standards.

We are continuing to introduce new reforms to strengthen the secure local jobs package. On 1 February 2022 the Ethical Treatment of Workers Evaluation was introduced to strengthen ACT government procurement packages and ensure that contracts are awarded to businesses that meet the high labour standards our community expects. This additional evaluation allows the territory not only to consider compliance with expected workplace standards under the Secure Local Jobs code requirements, but also to consider whether potential tenderers pose any reputational risk to the government because of claims relating to forced labour practices. It embeds and evaluates compliance with the Secure Local Jobs Code and the Labour Relations, Training and Workplace Equity Plan within the government's procurement assessment criteria.

The Labour Relations, Training and Workplace Equity Plan is required by high-value contracts to provide a competitive advantage in the tender assessment process for employers that have exemplary workplace relations standards. It allows, for example, employers to demonstrate whether, and how, they minimise insecure work arrangements, and whether they offer training and career development opportunities for their workers.

The ACT government is proud to be a leading jurisdiction for portable long service leave coverage. The ACT's portable schemes currently cover the building and construction, contract cleaning, community sector and security industries. Long service leave recognises and rewards workers who have stayed with an employer, by providing extended, paid time off to spend with friends and family and pursue outside interests and to rest and rejuvenate. But these benefits are not available to you if you work in an industry where the pattern of work is to move between employers, or your work continuity is interrupted by time off work, such as to care for family members. The ACT government firmly believes that all workers should have the opportunity to access long service leave and that systematic inequalities of the traditional system should be adjusted.

In recognition of this, the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the Tenth Legislative Assembly states that the government will amend the portable long service

leave schemes to ensure that more workers receive fair entitlements as they move jobs in their profession. Work to investigate how to expand the schemes to more industries is another example of how, under this government, the ACT leads the nation on strong workplace relation reforms and equalising access to employment entitlements.

The government has commenced a review of long service leave entitlements under the Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act 2009, with a view to identifying other industry sectors for inclusion and ensuring that the portable schemes framework and design approach remain fit for purpose. The government has undertaken a public consultation on the scope of a proposed expansion, and is committed to making use of all legislative, policy and procedural tools at its disposal to improve workplace labour conditions and establish clear benchmarks of equity for all workers. Last week's bill is the start of that work.

This government has committed to reforms that ensure our work health and safety legislation continues to effectively protect the health, safety and wellbeing of workers. We have continued to pursue regulatory reform where it is needed to address new and emerging hazards. A current area of focus is on building stronger regulations to protect workers from exposure to silica dust. Silicosis is a serious, debilitating and preventable occupational disease caused by exposure to respirable crystalline silica, commonly referred to as "silica dust". It is found in materials widely used across the community, such as concrete, bricks, tiles, mortar and engineered stone. Activities such as cutting, grinding, sanding and drilling releases silica dust.

Strengthening work health and safety laws to specifically address silica dust exposure to protect workers is a national and local priority as we learn more about the harm it does and how silicosis appears to be a growing, but preventable, occupational disease. The National Dust Disease Taskforce report calls on governments to strengthen work health and safety laws to deal with the risks of silica dust exposure, stating that it is no longer acceptable to maintain the status quo. In the ACT, silica dust reforms are part of the reform agenda outlined in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the Tenth Legislative Assembly. They align with the ACT government's 2020 election commitment to strengthen workplace relations to protect tradespeople from exposure to silica dust. The government is progressing reforms that ensure effective controls are in place in workplaces across the ACT to manage the risks of silica dust exposure, and ensure that those working with products that contain crystalline silica have undergone the accredited awareness training.

The government has also pursued reforms in how workplaces ensure the psychosocial health and safety of their workers. Psychosocial health and safety is the combined influence of psychological and social factors on physical and mental wellness at work. It includes factors such as how work is managed to support wellbeing, relationships and work, and responses to bullying and harassment.

Just over a year ago, WorkSafe ACT launched the inaugural Strategy for Managing Work-Related Psychosocial Hazards. It guides action to build employer awareness and capability in identifying and managing psychosocial hazards, ensuring that incidents are reported, and that there is a regulatory action where it is needed. Importantly, this work places psychosocial hazards on an equal playing field with risks to physical health and safety. Key areas of focus are work-related violence and

aggression, and sexual harassment. We have also taken steps to ensure that incidents of sexual assault at the workplace are notifiable under our work health and safety laws. These changes, introduced in the Legislative Assembly in June 2022, will ensure that action is taken to prevent further violence or aggression in the workplace.

The reforms and changes I have spoken about have come as a result of the advocacy of unions. Those on this side of the chamber believe in workers. We put them at the centre of our work. And we know that to make change you need to work with workers and the union movement—because unions make us strong. In particular, I want to thank and acknowledge Matthew Harrison, the outgoing secretary of UnionsACT. He has been a leader who has brought our movement together, and has been instrumental in making the lives of Canberrans better. I will miss his guidance.

This government will always protect the rights of territory workers and strive to improve working conditions for all Canberrans. This is a government that stands up for the security and safety of working people—a government that will continue to pursue new reforms as emerging inequalities and risks arise.

I present the following paper:

Working conditions of casual and contract workers in the ACT—Assembly resolution of 3 May 2022—Government response—Ministerial statement, 30 November 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Youth—vaping products—update Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (10.32): Today I rise to provide the Assembly with an update on the actions being taken in response to the Legislative Assembly's motion about vaping product regulation and education.

On 3 August 2021, this Assembly unanimously supported a resolution brought forward by Dr Paterson, which noted the ACT's position and the national context regarding electronic cigarettes and called on the ACT to continue to develop programs to educate and inform Canberrans about the risk of e-cigarettes and prevent their uptake and use, as well as review relevant legislation to ensure that existing arrangements contribute to minimising the harm caused by e-cigarettes across our community, particularly to young people.

The motion also called on the ACT government to advocate to relevant commonwealth ministers and officials about the implementation of strong national measures for e-cigarettes and vaping products, and to report back to the Assembly on the progress of this work no later than the first sitting week of December 2022.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that significant work has progressed against this motion and that the ACT government is committed to progressing a range of initiatives aimed at educating Canberrans about e-cigarettes, as well as ensuring adequate protections are in place to minimise public health harm.

It is important to note that there is no international consensus on the most appropriate regulatory framework for e-cigarettes. The regulatory arrangements applicable to e-cigarettes vary considerably within and across countries, ranging from prohibition to minimal or no regulation.

A comprehensive review of ACT legislation governing e-cigarettes remains ongoing. However, we have identified that the ACT's legislative framework for e-cigarettes is broadly consistent with other states and territories. With the changes agreed through the passage of the Health Legislation Amendment Act 2022 last week, our legislative regime also provides a range of legal safeguards to protect young people from accessing and using e-cigarette products purchased from ACT retailers.

The ACT legislation already prohibits the promotion, advertising and display of e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories; the supply of these products to minors; and restricts sale to licensed tobacconists. Vaping in smoke-free areas is also already prohibited by the Smoke Free Public Places Act 2003 and Smoking in Cars with Children (Prohibition) Act 2011.

Despite there being legal controls in place to restrict the access and availability of e-cigarette products, our community has seen a sharp rise in the uptake of e-cigarette use. Stakeholder feedback and complaints received by the ACT Health Directorate and Access Canberra suggest that there is confusion in the community about the existing regulatory controls for e-cigarettes, their role as a smoking cessation aid and the health risks that might arise from recreational use.

To clarify the current regulatory environment for the Assembly, non-nicotine e-cigarettes are regulated as a smoking product in the ACT and can be sold only by licensed tobacco retailers to persons aged over 18 years. Retailers are prohibited from promoting, advertising or marketing these products. Where an e-cigarette product contains nicotine, it is regulated as a prescription-only medicine and its possession and sale are prohibited unless authorised under the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008.

All states and territories recognise nicotine vaping products as a prescription-only medicine under the Commonwealth Poisons Standard. This means that consumers require a valid prescription for the purchase, possession and use of nicotine vaping products across Australia. This includes both purchases made from Australian pharmacies and purchases from overseas online suppliers. In contrast to other countries such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand, Australia has taken a unique approach by limiting access to nicotine vaping products using a prescription-only model.

The ACT supports the Therapeutic Goods Administration's decision to apply this limitation. Limiting consumer access to nicotine vaping products under a prescription

model provides Australia with the necessary policy freedom to respond to developments in clinical evidence, helps limit access to the nicotine e-cigarette products for recreational users and encourages people to engage primary healthcare and community service providers for their smoking cessation.

While the ACT and commonwealth governments' existing tobacco and medicine laws limit access and availability to vaping products, particularly in the supply of e-cigarettes to young people, all jurisdictions have seen a sharp rise in e-cigarette uptake. The Australian Bureau of Statistics found that in 2020-21, 21.7 per cent of people aged 18 to 24 had used a vaping product. The Australian Secondary School Alcohol and Drug Survey will provide local and national insights into rates of e-cigarette use in young people. Unfortunately, the results of this survey will not be available until mid-2023 at the earliest.

In August 2022, the ACT Health Directorate commissioned formative research with young Canberrans aged 14 to 24 years to explore young people's knowledge and understanding of vaping and inform prevention approaches to reduce youth uptake of e-cigarettes. Early findings indicate an upward trend in e-cigarette use by young people in the ACT, with young Canberrans perceiving vaping as commonplace in their schools, local nightclubs and locations such as Civic.

The research indicates that young people can readily source e-cigarettes via social media channels, and young people are witnessing vaping dependence among their peers. This underscores the importance of public health efforts to prevent the uptake of vaping among young people and to provide vaping cessation pathways and support for those who want to quit.

The National Health and Medical Research Council, NHMRC, 2022 CEO statement on e-cigarettes concluded that the use of e-cigarettes can be harmful and that there are no health benefits of using e-cigarettes if you do not currently smoke tobacco. The NHMRC has also confirmed that e-cigarettes and e-liquids may expose users to nicotine and dangerous chemicals such as formaldehyde, acetone and heavy metals.

We know that across Australia e-cigarette products available for retail sale, even when labelled as nicotine free, have been confirmed to contain nicotine. This is worrying, given that nicotine is a highly addictive substance and, clearly, many e-cigarette products are specifically marketed to attract young people with appealing packaging and flavours such as bubble gum and chocolate.

The potential health impacts on young people who are using these products are concerning. Vaping trends seen across the country mean that there is a very real probability that Australian children are being exposed to nicotine and harmful substances without their knowledge, and potentially becoming addicted to nicotine.

A major review of global evidence conducted by the ANU and released in April 2022 shows that young non-smokers who vape are around three times as likely to take up smoking traditional cigarettes as those who are non-vapers. Nicotine use in children and adolescents can lead to lifelong addiction issues, as well as difficulties in concentration and learning.

On 4 May 2022, I presented the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which, among other things, proposed amendments to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1927 and the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008. With the passage of the Health Legislation Amendment Act last week, we are cracking down on e-cigarettes by ensuring that compliance testing regarding underage sales can include e-cigarette products, and better facilitate joint enforcement operations between the ACT and the Therapeutic Goods Administration for scheduled medicines such as nicotine.

These reforms, as well as ongoing actions and programs under the ACT's Drug Strategy Action Plan and the ACT Preventive Health Plan, signal the ACT government's strong commitment to improve public health outcomes and a strong response to vaping.

While the government will continue to explore and implement improvements to our local regulatory frameworks, local legislative reforms, in isolation, are unlikely to reverse the upward trend of e-cigarette use. Educational programs, health promotion and community engagement are essential to the success of any sustained reduction in e-cigarette uptake. These actions, wherever possible, should be undertaken in collaboration with all states and territories.

I have been and will continue to advocate with all Australian health ministers to take national action to reduce the impact of e-cigarettes on the community, in particular regarding factors that appeal to children—such as advertising and marketing, e-liquid flavourings, labelling requirements—as well as the importation of vaping products and the safety of e-liquids and nicotine salts.

The first face-to-face meeting of health ministers with the new commonwealth Minister for Health provided an opportunity to put e-cigarettes back on the agenda after the former Liberal government's party room scuttled meaningful action—undermining the good intentions of Minister Hunt, who was, I recognise, personally committed to addressing this issue. Now, with a federal Labor government—building on a world-leading track record in tobacco control from the last Labor government that introduced plain packaging—I am confident that there will be further progress.

All health ministers agreed that action to reduce the public health impact of e-cigarettes would be a key topic of action, moving forward. I note that the commonwealth government is already working with all states and territories in its review of several key pieces of legislation, which is encouraging, but more is needed. The draft National Tobacco Strategy 2022-2030, currently being finalised by all Australian governments, will be brought to the health ministers' meeting for agreement, and I will be looking to ensure that it has firm national action to reduce the impact of vaping in our community.

I again raised the need for coordinated action at our most recent meeting and got agreement from Minister Butler to bring back options for nationally consistent work at an upcoming meeting, most likely early in the new year. I will continue to ensure that reducing the impact of e-cigarettes remains front and centre at health ministers' meetings, along with colleagues across Australia who share my concern. I would

particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of my New South Wales colleague Brad Hazzard and his efforts in this area to drive policy work.

While nationally coordinated action is key, the ACT government has also recognised that schools represent an important setting to deliver e-cigarette prevention initiatives. That is why the ACT Health Directorate is working with the Education Directorate, the Catholic Education Office and independent schools to strengthen e-cigarette education and prevention strategies in school communities.

As part of this approach, a toolkit of evidence-based curriculum resources and educational materials on e-cigarettes is currently in development for years 7 and 8 educators and students. The toolkit, which is being co-designed with local teachers and students, is expected to be available to all secondary schools by term 2, 2023 and may be expanded and modified to suit other year levels as appropriate.

In addition to working with our educational institutions, the Health Directorate is developing a communication strategy for a public health campaign around e-cigarettes. This approach will be informed by the formative research undertaken with young Canberrans and campaigns in other Australian jurisdictions and around the world.

Finally, I would like to recognise Dr Paterson for her ongoing engagement and advocacy in this space. Dr Paterson's motion has helped continue the public conversation and brought the voices of concerned parents and families to the chamber. To them and to Dr Paterson I can confirm that I and the ACT government will continue to ensure locally that we are minimising the harm as much as possible from e-cigarettes and, nationally, that we are seeing coordinated, effective actions.

I present the following papers:

Vaping products—Education and Regulation—Assembly resolution of 3 August 2021—Update—Ministerial statement, 30 November 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.44): I would like to thank Minister Stephen-Smith and the ACT government very much for the significant work that has been done to address vaping and the use of e-cigarettes in our community, particularly for young people.

Before I brought my motion to the Assembly last year I was approached by an increasing number of parents and concerned members of the community who had significant and understandable concerns about kids vaping both in the community and in our schools. It was also brought to my attention by my son, who was grappling with peer pressure to vape, and his stories of his friends vaping. I thought how easy it was to acquire vaping products for a 13-year-old was quite shocking. This collective angst from parents in the Canberra community drove me to want to do something to address this situation front-on.

We have done so much over the past two decades to address cigarette smoking. It is astonishing to me that we have even allowed into Australia this product that, in itself, causes harm, and we have very little understanding of the long-term health implications. The latest and leading ANU research states that vaping actually acts as a gateway to cigarette smoking and nicotine addiction and that, thanks to the ease of purchasing, the attractive colours and flavours of vaping products, they are extra attractive to young, impressionable teenagers.

As the Minister for Health outlined, the early findings of the Health Directorate's research are very worrying, with 14- to 24-year-olds making it clear that vaping is perceived as commonplace in schools, local nightclubs and locations such as Civic. Research undertaken by researchers at the ANU in April showed that young non-smokers who vape are three times more likely to take up traditional tobacco smoking, and we need to make sure that this issue is being taken very seriously.

In 2020 the Australian Department of Health conducted a study on the use of multiple substances used by Australian school students. Of serious concern was the finding that around 14 per cent of students aged between 12 and 17 years had used e-cigarette products and 32 per cent had said they had used one in the past month. Almost half of students who vaped had never smoked tobacco before trying an e-cigarette. Around a quarter of these students who had used e-cigarettes before ever smoking reported later trying tobacco cigarettes.

In the over-18 dataset of the 2020-21 ABS data they found e-cigarette and vaping use was most common in people aged 18 to 24, with 4.8 per cent reporting they currently use a device, with 21 per cent saying they have used a device at least once. It does not matter what research you source, vaping rates among teenagers and young people is highly concerning. Particularly concerning is if we are to expect the same rates as teenagers and young people overseas both in the UK and US where up to two-thirds of young people are vaping regularly.

Vaping and e-cigarette products are incredibly easy to source by young people, which is why I was incredibly happy to see the Health Legislation Amendment Act 2022 pass last week, as it is an important step forward in providing a range of legal safeguards to protect our young people and prevent them from accessing e-cigarettes from ACT retailers.

The reason that vaping is so concerning is that the liquids sold that people vape or inhale into their lungs is, from all reports, highly toxic. I point you to a joint operation between ACT Health and the TGA in October last year where they raided and seized products from a number of retailers in the ACT and tested them. It was disturbing to find out that two out of three products seized had prohibited and dangerous ingredients in them. Two-thirds of the products seized contained one or more of eight ingredients that are prohibited by law, as they pose known health risks when inhaled. Six prohibited ingredients were found, including a flavouring agent which, when inhaled, can cause irreversible lung damage.

Nicotine vaping liquid is now prescription only. So it is illegal for Australian retailers other than pharmacies to sell nicotine vaping products without a valid doctor's prescription. However, this does not seem to impact the ease with which nicotine vaping products are able to be purchased in the community.

Again, to reference the ACT Health and TGA work, they found that two-thirds of the vaping products seized in the ACT were not labelled as containing nicotine but did. Children access these; so they could be inadvertently vaping nicotine without even knowing it. There are ever-increasing media stories of young people addicted to vaping. The Quitline released a statement recently that calls to the Quitline in respect to vaping are increasing in number rapidly.

So last year I put forward a motion calling on the ACT government to take action to prevent harm caused by vaping and e-cigarettes, particularly for young people in our community. This included the development of programs to educate and inform Canberrans, particularly younger people, about the risks of e-cigarettes and prevent their uptake and use; reviewing current legislation; and advocating for amendments to commonwealth legislation.

It is fantastic to see that this problem is not being placed in the too-hard basket, because standalone legislative change will have little impact. I am sure Canberra parents will be glad to hear, as I am, that ACT Health and the Education Directorate are working together to strengthen prevention strategies. The development of educational materials and the inclusion of e-cigarettes is an incredibly important piece of work. We teach young people in our schools about the risks of smoking, of unsafe sex, of drugs, of dangerous driving, and now we will also include the dangers of e-cigarettes.

Additionally, to have the government developing a communication strategy for a public health campaign is fantastic. This is such important work, and I would like to thank Minister Stephen-Smith and Minister Berry for working on this issue and for driving reform in the ACT. Minister Stephen-Smith, thank you for your work with colleagues at the federal, state and territory level and your continued advocacy on this issue.

Parents in Canberra can be sure that the ACT government is taking this issue seriously and that I will continue to advocate on their behalf to work in this space.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—report Ministerial statement

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) (10.51): I am pleased to present the 10th Bimberi Headline Indicators Report. This report has been tabled biannually for five years now and demonstrates the ACT government's ongoing commitment to both transparency for Bimberi Youth Justice Centre's operations and performance and the safety, health and wellbeing of the young people detained there.

The 10th report provides data for the 2021-22 financial year. It provides for continuing scrutiny of a range of indicators relating to the safety and care of the

young people in Bimberi and provides trend data to monitor performance against operational indicators.

The number of young people detained in Bimberi on an average day has increased slightly when compared to last financial year's average, up from 10 young people in 2020-21 to 12 young people in 2021-22. Expectedly, there has also been an increase in the total number of custody days served by young people when compared to the previous financial year.

Like so many other workplaces, Bimberi's workforce has had to endure the impacts of COVID-19 and a strong job market. A robust recruitment strategy has supported Bimberi in maintaining reliable workforce numbers. Three recruitment rounds have been held in 2022. This year, 13 youth workers have joined the Bimberi team with another seven currently undertaking their induction training.

Even with an increase in the number of young people in detention on an average day and an increase in custody days, the number of incidents remains stable and the number of assaults and the number of uses of force both decreased. There were no category 1 incidents in 2021-22 and there were 92 category 2 incidents—the same number as last financial year.

The number of assaults by young people against staff and other young people decreased, down from 16 assaults in 2020-21 to 11 assaults in 2021-22. The number of uses of force also decreased, down from 157 uses of force in 2020-21 to 108 in 2021-22. It is important to recognise that young people coming into Bimberi are often experiencing multiple complexities. Bimberi staff do an incredible job working with these young people to keep them safe in custody and support their rehabilitation.

We did see an increase in the number of operational lockdowns at Bimberi, when compared to 2020-21, up from 10 lockdowns to 22. The increase in lockdowns was due to COVID-19 impacts on the operations of the centre and staffing capacity. The lockdowns allowed for staff to have meal breaks while maintaining the safe operations of the centre. The number of lockdowns in 2021-22 is still significantly lower than 2019-20.

As I mentioned when tabling the 9th Bimberi Headline Indicator Report, in May 2022, the team at Bimberi has been working hard to keep young people in their care safe and minimise the impacts of COVID-19 on the centre and its operations. All young people entering Bimberi are being placed on health segregation while precautionary COVID-19 testing can be carried out by Justice Health Services. This has led to a significant increase in health segregations when compared to previous years. There were 82 health segregation directions made in 2021-22. In addition, there were two safety and security segregations made in the same period.

An important component of each young person's time at Bimberi is their participation in education, training, recreation and rehabilitation programs. During the 2021-22 financial year, 100 per cent of young people residing at Bimberi engaged in educational programs and participated in accredited programs, including Year 10, Year 12, Certificate II in General Education, Certificate II in Horticulture and Road Ready. The young people that I have spoken to out at Bimberi have told me every

single time I have been out there that education is one of their favourite things to do during the day and they really appreciate the work that goes into the education programs.

I would like to again thank the team at Bimberi for the work that they do every day. I am very much looking forward to joining them soon at their end-of-year celebration, to recognise the achievements of the young people in Bimberi and thank the staff.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to update the Assembly today on the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and the 10th Bimberi Headline Indicator Report.

I present the following papers:

Bimberi Headline Indicators Report—November 2022—

Report.

Ministerial statement, Wednesday, 30 November 2022.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the 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) (10.55): As the Labor Minister for Youth and Education, I want to take a moment today to acknowledge and give a special shout out to the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre, located at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

This school is part of the ACT Education Directorate's Flexible Education Program. The Murrumbidgee school provides a high-quality, inquiry led learning aligned with the Australian Curriculum. The programs give these young people the best possible chance of re-engaging with their education. The educators at the Murrumbidgee school are passionate about their work and take great care to provide this education in a trauma-informed way.

Young people have vocational education opportunities and can learn all kinds of new skills, depending on their interests. These can include literacy and numeracy, art, woodwork, music, and horticulture, to name a few. The school also has chickens, with a wonderful chicken coup built by the students and teachers, which Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith and I had the great privilege of opening. I know that this is also a great source of learning and companionship for the students.

To Andrew Kerr-Stephens, flexible education principal; Jo Monteith, deputy principal, flexible education; Sasha Posthuma-Grbic; Janine Inns; Jeff Hunt; Maddie Howard; Sarah Dyball; Darcy Martin; Bronwyn Collins; Brett Hobbins; and Brent Holgate—who make up the Murrumbidgee school team: thank you for all of the important work that you do for the students in your school.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022

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

Title read by Clerk.

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) (10.58): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Discrimination in any form is unacceptable. It excludes people from our community, it reduces social cohesion and it can have significant impacts on a person's psychological health, wellbeing and capacity to participate in society. We also know that a person can have intersecting protected attributes which can compound the stigma and harm associated with discrimination.

This government is committed to making Canberra a more inclusive, progressive and equal community. It is essential that our Discrimination Act is modern, fit for purpose and appropriately equipped to protect the right to equality for all Canberrans. But many aspects have not been amended since the act was introduced over 30 years ago. That is why the ACT government committed to review our discrimination law as part of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the Tenth Legislative Assembly and through the Capital of Equality Strategy 2019-2023. The reforms proposed in today's bill draw from the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council's 2015 final report into the review of the Discrimination Act 1991.

Importantly, they reflect the extensive feedback and the valuable insights provided by the community. As you may recall, I released a discussion paper for public consultation in October 2021 and I tabled the listening report summarising that feedback in the Assembly in April 2022. An exposure draft bill was developed, based on that feedback, and provided for further public comment from 1 June to 1 July this year. There was widespread engagement from the community, with the government receiving over 1,000 submissions. We received feedback on that exposure draft from a range of stakeholders, including peak bodies, community legal centres, advocacy groups, education associations, religious organisations and community members.

I am pleased to advise that a listening report summarising the feedback received on that exposure draft is now available on the YourSay website. This bill will directly impact some of the most vulnerable Canberrans, so it is vital that the reforms reflect the voices of our diverse community. We have listened and we have carefully considered all the ideas and comments provided during both rounds of consultation to refine the bill and to ensure that it meets the needs of all Canberrans.

This bill will better align the territory's discrimination law framework with the Human Rights Act and promote social inclusion and respect for diversity in our community.

The bill achieves this through three key areas of reform: expanding the coverage of the Discrimination Act, refining the exceptions and introducing positive duties.

Firstly, the bill expands the areas of public life in which discrimination and sexual harassment are unlawful. Currently, it is against the law to discriminate against a person at work; in education; when allowing access to premises; when providing goods, services and facilities; when providing accommodation; or in the activities of clubs holding liquor licences. While this coverage is broad, it has been unclear whether sport competitions or even certain government functions are covered by the act. This bill will rectify this uncertainty and make it clear that discrimination and sexual harassment protections apply to formally organised sporting activities and competitions and the administration of territory laws or ACT government programs or policies. Our discrimination laws will protect people in more situations.

Secondly, the bill amends exceptions to unlawful discrimination to be clearer, more user friendly and human rights compatible. Exceptions to unlawful discrimination recognise that differential treatment may be justified in certain circumstances, such as promoting matters that are in the public interest or protecting another person's human rights.

This means that when determining the boundaries of these exceptions—that is, the circumstances where it is permissible to discriminate—regard must be had to striking a balance between competing human rights. Balancing competing rights does not necessarily mean reaching an even compromise between the two. Rather, the goal of these reforms is to find an approach which accommodates and allows for both competing rights to be enjoyed as far as possible. Refinements have been made to the exceptions for domestic duties, insurance and superannuation, religious bodies, sport, clubs and voluntary bodies, and work. The bill also inserts a new exception for competitions.

Noting the extensive nature of these reforms, I will briefly outline how the bill will amend these exceptions. The reforms will strengthen protection for domestic workers. Domestic workers are among the most vulnerable employees. The exception has been narrowed to only permit discrimination when hiring someone to provide domestic duties if the discrimination is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in the circumstances. It does not intend to prevent a person from preferencing an individual with a particular protected attribute if there is a genuine reason to do so.

The bill narrows the exception for all insurance and superannuation. An insurance or superannuation provider may only discriminate if the discrimination is based on statistical or actuarial data. If no data is available, they may rely on other relevant documents. This exception is further qualified to require that it must also be reasonable to rely on the data or documents and any discrimination must be reasonable, proportionate and justifiable. Consumers will be entitled to access either the data or documents themselves or receive a meaningful explanation of the data or documents that an insurance or superannuation provider has relied on.

Another area where we have tightened exceptions is competitive sport. The existing exception for discrimination on the grounds of sex in competitive sporting activities

has been refined to require that the discrimination be reasonable, proportionate and justifiable. Importantly, the exception does not apply to children under 12 years of age. Sport for younger children is primarily a social and health activity where physical differences among players are less likely to impact the safety, fairness or competitiveness of a sporting activity.

This exclusion does not prevent sporting activities for children under 12 being organised by sex. The amendment is simply intended to provide flexibility for individual children who may wish to play in a particular team—for example, because it better reflects their gender identity or offers greater opportunities for development. This same exclusion applies under the commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and it will not be new for sporting organisations.

The exception for discrimination on the grounds of disability in competitive sporting activities has been updated to incorporate the language used in the equivalent commonwealth legislation and to require that the discrimination be reasonable, proportionate and justifiable.

We have heard the strong view of religious groups and people of faith in our community that the ordination and training of clergy and arrangement of religious observances are sacred and at the heart of the expression of their religious freedom. We understand that view and we have listened and we are retaining the existing exceptions for these matters. However, this bill will narrow other exceptions relating to religious bodies to better protect equality rights. A religious body will only be permitted to discriminate in employment or the provision of goods and services to the public if the discrimination is on the grounds of religious conviction and not on any other grounds. The discrimination must be necessary to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of adherence to the relevant religion and confirm to the doctrines, tenets or beliefs of the religion. The religious body must also have a publicly accessible policy that sets out how they discriminate in these matters. This requirement is about encouraging greater transparency and allowing both the community and the government to make informed decisions about whether to engage or contract with a particular religious body. It mirrors the approach that has been in place for religious schools since 2018 and has been working well. The exceptions do not apply to religious bodies whose sole or main purpose is commercial. There are no changes to exceptions for religious educational institutions.

The bill combines the exceptions for clubs and voluntary bodies. Discrimination is only permitted in the provisions of membership, benefits or services if the club or body is established for the benefit of a class of people sharing a protected attribute and the person does not have this attribute and the discrimination is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable.

In relation to exceptions concerning discrimination in work, the bill requires employers seeking to discriminate on the basis of genuine occupational qualification or inherent requirements of a position to demonstrate that this is reasonable, proportionate and justifiable in all the circumstances. These exceptions have been expanded to cover all protected attributes. This bill adds an exception to allow discrimination on the grounds of age, in a competition.

A key feature of the bill is introducing two positive duties that encourage duty holders to think proactively about their obligations under the act. The bill inserts a positive duty to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate a person's protected attribute, unless making this adjustment would result in unjustifiable hardship. This duty is a standalone ground of complaint and applies to duty holders under the act and to all protected attributes. The bill also inserts a positive duty for organisations, business and people with organisational management responsibility in these entities to take reasonable and proportionate steps to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and unlawful vilification.

This shifts the responsibility away from individual complainants and helps tackle systemic discrimination before it happens. It complements new rules requiring employers to report sexual assault incidents to WorkSafe ACT, passed in the Legislative Assembly last week, which were led by Minister Gentleman and, of course, the respective federal work reforms. To ensure that the boundaries of these duties are clear, the bill also provides that the duties do not apply to the extent that a duty holder is able to rely on an exemption or exception. I recognise that this is a shift, particularly for businesses and our smaller organisations. It is for this reason that this positive duty will commence for government entities after 12 months, and after three years for all other duty holders, including businesses.

This government is committed to making Canberra a place where everyone is welcome, feels included and belongs. This bill will mean that our values are matched in our human rights framework. Canberrans will continue to be able to have an accessible, easy and free way to enforce these rights through the Human Rights Commission's complaints mechanism.

Ensuring that exceptions are only allowed where really needed and expanding the scope of protection to more areas of public life are important changes to promote the right to equality. But perhaps the most profound reform in this bill is introducing positive duties to eliminate discrimination and to make reasonable adjustments for all protected attributes. This is a fundamental shift, moving away from a purely reactive approach to addressing discrimination to requiring positive steps to embed equality in all aspects of public life. It is a change that will make a real impact on improving people's lives and supporting the inclusive community we all want in the ACT. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Corrections and Sentencing Legislation 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) (11.12): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 to the Assembly today. The bill makes important changes to ACT legislation and continues the government's work to improve the administration of corrective services for those in custody and serving their sentences in the community. The bill reflects the ACT government's commitment to continuous improvement and to promoting a safe and peaceful community in the ACT.

As we are all aware, there are diverse challenges in the provision of correctional services, and various competing priorities to manage. The bill strikes an appropriate balance between offender rehabilitation and ensuring victim safety, as well as the need to uphold the paramount safety of everyone at a corrections facility and maintain the dignity and human rights of an individual detainee.

I acknowledge that the bill is a significant bill and that it both promotes and limits multiple human rights protected under our Human Rights Act. The explanatory statement includes detailed human rights analysis against the Human Rights Act and explanations as to why identified human rights limitations are proportionate and justified in the circumstances.

I note that the amendments in this bill come to fruition following careful consideration and balancing of the human rights of an offender and a victim of crime, and of a detainee and the collective at a correctional centre. The bill contains eight amendments and together they seek to improve the administration of the corrective services system and outcomes for the justice system as a whole.

The bill creates clear authorisation for the entirety of correctional centres to be declared smoke free by the Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. Making correctional centres completely smoke free aims to improve health outcomes for both staff and detainees, and work is underway to ensure that the necessary supports are provided to make the transition to a smoke-free environment.

The bill supports the safe and secure custody of detainees and those physically at a correctional centre by limiting the introduction and circulation of contraband, such as drugs or weapons, that can produce a range of potential physical and mental harms. There are several amendments in the bill relating to searches that address this.

The bill also enhances an offender's ability to move interstate and freely within the ACT by providing a structured framework to allow interstate community-based sentences to be transferred to the ACT and to ensure that minor interactions or infractions of good behaviour orders do not result in potential court sanctions.

Furthermore, the bill streamlines and improves administrative processes and provides legislative clarity in response to modern technology inventions. It achieves this by minimising delays to intensive correction order breach inquiries. It also removes any doubt that it is an offence to introduce prohibited material into a correctional centre by any means, including by remotely piloted aircraft or drone. The amendment to strengthen laws to combat the potential usage of drones to deliver prohibited items to

correctional centres was brought about by Mrs Kikkert, the shadow minister for corrections, in the Corrections Management Amendment Bill 2021. I want to thank Mrs Kikkert for working with us to bring about this change.

I will now explain some of these amendments in more detail. By law, New South Wales is currently the only jurisdiction formally recognised in the ACT as a corresponding participating jurisdiction to allow for interstate community-based sentence transfers between New South Wales and the ACT. Informal arrangements for interstate transfers are in place between the ACT and all other jurisdictions. The informal arrangements operate based on the receiving jurisdiction's discretion and pose unduly onerous travel requirements for the offender and create administrative inefficiencies for the courts and ACT Corrective Services.

The bill amends the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act and regulation so that all states and the Northern Territory can be formally recognised as participating jurisdictions, enabling the ACT to transfer and receive offenders with community-based sentences and orders throughout Australia, accompanied by a structured assessment process. The effect of the amendment is that the sentence becomes enforceable in the receiving jurisdiction, as if it had been imposed in that jurisdiction. It promotes freedom of movement by allowing people to serve their sentence interstate for a multitude of reasons, such as the proximity to family and community, employment conditions or to mitigate risks of harm or violence. The scheme also allows a person to serve their offence in a jurisdiction they normally reside in, if they should commit an offence interstate.

I recognise that there are concerns about this amendment's implications for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, and victims of crime more broadly. As a safeguard to minimise such risks, the amendment provides authority for an assessment process to be developed by Corrective Services to determine a person's suitability to be transferred to the ACT, including to have regard to victim-survivors' safety. This assessment process will be based on existing national eligibility criteria and will be finalised in consultation with stakeholders. To further strengthen victim safety, the declaration of states and the Northern Territory as participating jurisdictions in the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Regulation will be subject to delayed commencement to allow additional time for the assessment process to be finalised and notified as a notifiable instrument.

Section 102 of the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act currently requires corrections officers to report to the sentencing court on each occasion that they form a belief, on reasonable grounds, that an offender has not complied with their good behaviour order obligations. The provision does not confer any discretion on a corrections officer to respond to a breach, however minor, in any way other than referral to the sentencing court.

The bill amends the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act to enable community corrections officers to exercise limited discretion in determining how to respond to an offender's breach of their good behaviour order obligations. The amendment will enliven once the temporary emergency COVID-19 provision at section 102A expire. The amendment adopts elements of section 102A in recognition that there may be instances where it is appropriate to allow community corrections officers to utilise a

measure of discretion that takes into account the context of the behaviour weighed against the desired rehabilitation outcomes. This ensures that principles of restorative practice for offenders within the criminal justice system can be upheld and their rehabilitation fostered.

The amendment also provides administrative oversight to ensure there is consistent and transparent supervision and enforcement of good behaviour orders, having regard to community and victim safety. The ACT government acknowledges that breaches of good behaviour orders, however minor they may appear, may constitute a pattern of violence and result in an escalation of harm to victims of crime. As such, the amendment ensures that community corrections officers must report a breach of a good behaviour order to the sentencing court, unless certain circumstances have been met. These circumstances will be detailed in the discretion framework, which will be established by a notifiable instrument.

The amendment also confirms that discretion cannot be exercised by community corrections officers if officers can ascertain that the conduct of the breach could be the subject of criminal charge. The proposed framework for exercising the discretion will provide further structure around when and how an officer may apply discretion and the factors for consideration, including the type of information that can be shared with the offender; the nature and type of offences committed by the offender; the type of breach that may be subject to discretion; the offender's history of compliance with their good behaviour order obligations; and whether the offender has a reasonable excuse for their non-compliance.

The amendment incorporates various safeguards regarding the exercise of a corrections officer's discretion. This includes requiring an officer to record all breaches, regardless of whether the breach is reported to the sentencing court; provide a warning to the offender about the breach, including grounds for believing that there has been a breach; and for all prior non-reported breaches and information related to why the non-reporting action was taken to be provided to the sentencing court when a breach is referred. As an additional safeguard, corrections officers will only be permitted to use the discretionary power on commencement of the discretion framework. As the discretion framework is in the process of finalisation, the amendment will be subject to a delayed commencement to align with the notification of the discretion framework.

Searches on admission are covered specifically under section 70 of the Corrections Management Act, for the purpose of assessing a new admission for immediate health needs as well as for safety and security reasons. Amendments introduced after the original act was enacted have caused confusion regarding the authority provided through section 70. The amendments in this bill clarify the operation of these provisions.

Searching detainees upon their admission to a correctional centre is prudent, as that individual has been outside of the custody of corrective services. The amendment is required to clarify the intent of section 70 to authorise the search of detainees during the admissions process without an individual decision regarding suspicion or prudence. This ensures that a thorough assessment of detainees can be carried out, in particular with regard to their immediate physical and mental health, safety and security, and risks and needs. These searches also help correctional centres to

understand whether the detainee poses a risk to the safety of others in the correctional centre, due to any items they may bring into the centre.

Other forms of search currently available under the Corrections Management Act do not adequately allow for a proper assessment to be undertaken on admission. It is worth noting that, over the past 18 months, strip searches in general have been reduced in the AMC by almost half. This is great progress, but we will not rest on our laurels, so I have asked the commissioner to continue finding ways to further reduce the number of searches by using technology. The amendment incorporates a statutory requirement for a review of the search provision after two years following its commencement, with a report due to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly six months after the review commences.

I also note that the amendment does not change a corrections officer's responsibility, as an officer of a public authority, to consider the human rights of detainees. Importantly, the amendment does not preclude other forms of less intrusive search, or a combination of searches, from being used to search a detainee on admission—in particular, individual circumstances ahead of the statutory review, should the Director-General determine that an equally effective and less restrictive search can be conducted. In this instance, relevant policies and procedures will guide corrections officers in the exercise of their judgement.

There are also safeguards currently in place to maintain the dignity of the individual being searched, to the extent possible and to minimise the infringement of human rights, and these safeguards have not been impacted by the amendments. These have been outlined in more detail in the explanatory statement. Not performing adequate searches creates a risk to the welfare and wellbeing of detainees and non-detainees. The proposed amendment is responsive and proportionate to safety and security risks and ensures that detainees have human rights and that rights to privacy and humane treatment are not unreasonably limited.

Overall, this bill strikes a fine balance between liberty and security, which are fundamental responsibilities of government. In relation to the amendments about community corrections, these amendments balance the ACT government's priority to foster offenders' rehabilitation and victims' rights to justice and safety. Meanwhile, the amendments relating to the administration of correctional centres balance the rights of searched individuals and the paramount priority of ensuring that everyone within the correctional centre is safe and secure.

In concluding, I wish to acknowledge that, in developing the bill, many stakeholders affected by the proposals have offered invaluable contributions. Their input has significantly shaped the amendments that I have just outlined to the Assembly, and I wish to thank each and every stakeholder for their contribution. The government remains committed to working with our community to develop modern, empathetic and responsible laws relating to the administration of our corrections system. This bill's amendments represent an important addition to our pursuit of this goal. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

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

Title read by Clerk.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong-Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.28): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. This bill marks a significant step forward in meeting the commitment in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the Tenth Legislative Assembly to remove no cause terminations from the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. Even more significantly, this bill proposes to remove no cause terminations without introducing end of fixed term tenancy terminations, which are essentially another form of no cause termination. In doing so, the ACT will be the first and only jurisdiction in Australia to remove all forms of tenancy termination without a cause. I am proud to stand in this Assembly today to present this important bill.

In addition to the removal of no cause terminations, this bill progresses several other important reforms. The bill will prevent landlords and agents from soliciting rent bids from prospective tenants. It will confirm tenants' rights to grow food and to compost. It will also introduce changes to support the future introduction of minimum housing standards for rental properties.

Tenancy reforms always attract a high level of public interest, due in no small part to the broad impact they can have on our community and the large number of renters in our community. Due to the housing and rental crisis we face, these reforms will have a significant positive impact on the lives of many Canberrans. As such, the government has sought the community's views on how best to implement the changes proposed in the bill at every step of the way.

These reforms have been the subject of two rounds of public consultation on both the broad policy and the bill itself, and many more hours of targeted and collaborative consultation with key stakeholders. As has been detailed through the two listening reports published following public consultation, the government heard from and engaged with a broad range of stakeholders, including tenants and landlords, the community sector, legal advocates, real estate agents, government agencies and non-government bodies.

Consultation began in early 2021 with targeted stakeholder meetings. Following this, the first round of public consultation occurred through the release of the community consultation paper via the YourSay website in August 2021. The feedback received on the consultation paper informed the development of a public exposure draft bill, which was then released to provide a further opportunity for Canberrans to comment

on the details of the reforms. Following the public exposure draft consultation, additional targeted consultation with key stakeholders was conducted to further refine the proposed amendments contained in the bill. In many ways, the development of this bill has been a community-wide effort. That is illustrated by the quantity and quality of engagement we have had from our stakeholders throughout the consultation processes undertaken. I would like to take this opportunity to thank community members and key stakeholders who contributed their time and valuable expertise when engaging with these reforms.

The government has heard over a long period of time that the ability of landlords to terminate tenancies without cause has a profoundly negative impact on tenants in the territory. Tenants have argued that the no cause termination clauses undermine housing security, as it means they can be evicted without having breached their tenancy agreement or without being provided any reason whatsoever as to why their tenancy is being ended.

Perhaps more importantly, tenants have also argued that the mere fact that without cause terminations are lawful acts is a disincentive for them to assert their rights, due to the fear they will be evicted. This bill aims to strengthen security of tenure and to give tenants the confidence to assert their rights without having to fear they will be evicted if they do so. Importantly, this bill proposes to remove no cause terminations without introducing end of fixed term tenancy terminations, which are essentially another form of no cause termination.

In Queensland, when the government there introduced no cause evictions, they still allowed no cause evictions for period tenancies. This led to the Real Estate Institute of Queensland recommending that property managers issue every tenant with a notice to leave at the same time as they are offered a new lease, as a way of circumventing the state's new no grounds eviction laws. We are not doing this in the ACT. We are ending no cause evictions; period. We will be the first and only jurisdiction in Australia to remove all forms of tenancy termination without a cause.

I received correspondence and representations during the consultation on this bill from landlords, including those who were strongly supportive of ending no cause evictions. I also received representations from landlords who expressed concerns about these changes. I remind those landlords that under the existing legislation landlords can still evict tenants for breaching their tenancy agreement, not paying their rent or damaging the property. Landlords can also still evict tenants if they wish to sell, renovate or move into their homes, or for a suite of other reasons.

The bill also introduces a new termination provision where one party to a tenancy agreement threatens, harasses, intimidates or abuses the other party. This provision will allow the impacted party to apply directly to ACAT for a tenancy termination order. Under this change, we will improve tenants' rights by ending the ability for renters to be arbitrarily evicted from their tenancy properties without a legitimate reason, whilst still enabling landlords to manage their properties effectively under existing and new termination provisions.

In developing the bill the government has also recognised that there are some members of our community who may be disproportionately affected by tenancy

termination. A reasonable and proportionate test for tenancy termination has been included for tenants in public, community or subsidised housing. This means that if the commissioner for housing, or community housing and subsidised housing providers, seek to terminate a tenancy on any of the new grounds proposed to be introduced in new schedule 2 to the act, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal will be required to determine whether termination is reasonable and proportionate in all the circumstances. This is an important human rights safeguard for those tenants who may have additional vulnerabilities that should rightly be considered before a tenancy is terminated.

Turning to the reforms in relation to rent bidding, as many people are aware, securing a rental property in the current market is becoming increasingly difficult, as demand for rental stock continues to exceed supply. For some prospective tenants, rent bidding has become more commonplace as a tool to assist them in standing out from the rest of the pack. Sometimes prospective tenants offer rent bids voluntarily. However, there may be circumstances where tenants feel pressured into offering rent bids even though doing so may create financial pressure for them. It is the latter situation this bill seeks to address.

To ensure that tenants are not unduly pressured into rent bidding, the bill makes it an offence for landlords or their agents to invite rent bids from prospective tenants. To further support this change, the bill also requires a landlord to advertise a fixed rental rate for the premises. This may either be a single fixed rental rate or several fixed prices to account for any inclusions that may come with the premises, such as a car park, storage cage or furnishings. This change will continue to allow a degree of flexibility for landlords in how they advertise their properties, but it ensures that there is transparency for tenants. It also prevents landlords from indirectly inviting rent bids by offering a price range.

Along with the parliamentary and governing agreement commitment to remove no cause terminations, an additional commitment was to create a presumption that landlords will permit tenants to grow food and to compost in rental properties. This bill meets this commitment and further strengthens tenants' rights by giving them greater say in how they use the property that they will call home.

This bill makes it easier for tenants to grow food and to compost by clarifying that these activities constitute minor modifications under the act, as long as the tenant does not disturb existing vegetation or plants. This means that a landlord will not be able to refuse consent for these activities without seeking approval from the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In this way, tenants will be supported to make their rental property feel like their home, while landlords will retain some discretion to refuse consent, with appropriate oversight from the tribunal. In the event that any damage is caused to the property, the tenant will be required to make good on such damage at the end of the tenancy, in accordance with the general rules applicable under the act.

The final key reform area in this bill is the inclusion of changes to the act to support the future introduction of minimum housing standards. I recently announced a minimum standard for ceiling insulation for residential tenancies that will be phased in from 1 April next year. The changes proposed in this bill support the effective implementation of the new ceiling insulation standard and any other minimum

housing standards the government decides to introduce in the future. For example, the bill includes provisions to require landlords to state in rental advertisements whether the premises meets any minimum standards that are in force. It supports landlords to meet minimum standards by giving them a right to access to the premises to undertake or inspect any works required to meet the minimum standard.

It also proposes remedies for tenants where the premises do not meet any minimum housing standards. Specifically, tenants will be able to seek a rent reduction or compensation for any period in which the premises does not meet the standard. Alternatively, tenants will also be able to apply to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal to end the tenancy if their rental property does not meet the minimum standard. These changes will help to ensure that minimum standards for rental premises can be implemented effectively in the ACT so that rental homes meet community expectations and are safe and habitable for all tenants.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere gratitude to all those who engaged with us during the development of this bill. The continued collaboration and feedback received has been incredibly valuable and has resulted in a bill that I am confident will meet the needs of Canberrans who rent, as well as those who own or manage a rental property.

Housing is a human right. Everyone deserves a safe and secure home to live in. Given the housing and rental crisis we face, it is more important than ever to ensure that the tenancy system gives renters safe and secure housing. These tenancy reforms that I introduce today, in particular ending no cause evictions, will strengthen renters' rights and security of housing. I am proud to introduce these nation-leading reforms today. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill 2022

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

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (11.41): I rise today to speak on the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill 2022.

This bill seeks to implement a number of recommendations from the 10-year review of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act of 2010. The act requires that a periodic review be undertaken and that the findings of that review are reported to the Legislative Assembly.

The report of the review was presented to the Assembly in November last year. I note from the bill's own explanatory statement that, in developing the bill, the government consulted with current and past members of the Climate Change Council, the Office for Climate Action, traditional custodians and the South Australian government.

Whilst we welcome this consultation, we are concerned that apart from the consultation with traditional owners, which is extremely important of course, there was little consultation with any other external stakeholders outside of the government's own tent. Sadly, this seems to be common practice. The government's preference for consulting predominantly with themselves demonstrates, yet again, they are not really interested in listening to broader views.

Whilst the Canberra Liberals generally support the provisions in this bill, following our own consultation with climate change advocates and stakeholders, I am proposing a number of amendments to provide greater oversight on ACT climate action, with a view to improving our performance in this space. I will address those when we get to the detail stage.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (11.42): Obviously, Ms Lee has foreshadowed amendments in the detail stage. I will indicate that the government will not be supporting those amendments.

On the substance of the bill—clearly the original bill in 2010 positioned the ACT as a world leader on climate action. Through legislating our ambitious net zero and interim emissions reduction targets, the territory has provided a clear signal to industry and the community of our intent to achieve a sustainable and equitable energy transition.

In the detail stage we can debate each of Ms Lee's amendment. The government is happy to do so; but, to be clear, we will not be supporting them. I will go into the detail of that once we consider the in-principle stage.

I particularly want to acknowledge that this bill is important and timely to debate, given the very significant renewal of activity at a national level to achieve our goals as a nation. It is worth noting that the ACT's contribution has continued to be nation leading as a result of this legislation that was opposed by the Canberra Liberals in 2010.

I commend the bill to the Assembly and look forward to the further discussion in the detail stage.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (11.44), in reply: The Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010 has been fundamental to the territory's action on climate change, providing clear legislation that facilitates successful policy development and analysis.

The four objects of the act are: to set greenhouse gas and renewable energy targets; to provide for monitoring of and reporting on progress made to meet these targets; to facilitate government's development of policies and programs to meet these targets and to address and adapt to climate change; and to encourage private entities to take action to address climate change and recognise the entities that take action.

Under section 26 of the act, as the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, I was required to conduct a review of the operation of the act as soon as practical after its tenth year of operation. As Ms Lee has noted, in 2021 the act was

reviewed independently by Aither Consulting. By way of background, Aither were contracted to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the Act in achieving its objects from 2010 to 2020, including a section-by-section review, with analysis of the contribution of each part of the Act and its subordinate legislation and its connection to other key ACT legislation.
- Assess the appropriateness of the Act in achieving the intended outcomes to 2030 and beyond.
- Identify and recommend changes to the Act (including the Objects of the Act itself) so that it can achieve the intended outcomes to 2030 and beyond.

The findings were clear:

... the Act has gained wide support and has successfully achieved its targets to date. The Act remains appropriate to the next review in 2030. The objects themselves also remain appropriate for the future

The Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill 2022 integrates a number of the recommendations that came from the 10-year review of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010.

It is important to reiterate that the review did not identify the need for significant changes to the act. The changes further strengthen the act's capacity to remain effective in the future and to ensure that the ACT continues to remain a global leader in addressing climate change.

I will remind the Assembly that there are four key parts to the act: part 2, which is the ACT's emissions reduction and renewal energy targets; part 3, which is the functions of the minister; part 4, the Climate Change Council; and part 5, sector agreements.

The updates regarding the ACT's emissions reduction and renewable energy targets section of the act ensure that our emissions reduction targets will be upheld and met, while promoting government transparency in the most credible way possible. This is despite the acknowledgement that targets will become more difficult to achieve.

This kind of outcomes-focused legislation requires us to effectively monitor and report on the outcomes and understand their impact. Any opportunity to uphold and increase our accountability to community was accepted by government and integrated into the amendment bill. Included in this is the amendment that the bill limits offsetting activities to within Australia. This reflects concerns over the reliability and environmental impacts of international offset schemes.

To safeguard and ensure that future ministers uphold their core functions under the act, certain functions were emphasised to ensure they are given the same priority in future years as they are currently afforded. The three main functions of the minister are: to promote action to meet the ACT target and the other targets mentioned in part 2 of the act; to develop, adopt, or promote policies and programs related to climate change and adaptation; and to consider and recommend amending a territory law, including the

act or a government policy or practice, if the minister reasonably believes an amendment is necessary to achieve the objects of the act.

The role of adaptation throughout the act was made more prominent in the bill, as is consistent with the objects of the act. This was important as we know the existing amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have locked in some level of climate change, which necessitates that climate action involves not only mitigation activities but also adaptation activities.

The Climate Change Council's membership required more expertise than is currently listed by the legislation. Previously, the council has not fully harnessed the value of knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It was important to be able to formalise this value and embed this into legislation.

This bill has a positive impact on the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Amending the council membership to include an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person increases the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation and the promotion of the interests of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in decision-making processes related to climate change policy.

Despite the sector agreements not having been utilised since the act's establishment, the changes were minor and are aimed to help encourage their use in the future if needed. We want to keep a number of tools available to encourage community and private sector engagement in emissions reduction activities.

I am proud to be the minister in charge of undertaking the 10-year review of the act and turning the results of the review into the amendment bill presented here. The bill represents only minor updates to an act that has enabled successful policy development and outcomes for the ACT since 2010.

There are further amendments to be made to this act, but they are a separate issue. The Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Natural Gas Transition) Amendment Bill 2022 was presented on 4 August this year, as members will recall. This bill, pertaining to our government's recent announcement to prepare Canberra to electrify in order to transition away from the use of fossil fuel gas by 2045, will be debated separately. I flag here, to be very clear, that there are the two separate bills before the Assembly at the moment.

The amendments discussed today focus the ACT on continuing its action on climate change through the ambitious and world-leading targets we set, and the open and transparent monitoring and reporting we undertake on these targets. The amendments continue to enable us to develop nation-leading policies and programs to meet these targets alongside private entities, who we encourage to take action to address climate change.

I think it is fair to reflect that the ACT has been very successful so far. As our greenhouse gas inventories have shown, we have met the 2020 target. We are on track to go beyond that—we have seen the more recent inventories—and I will release a new inventory in the coming weeks. We have made significant progress. These amendments today go to the process side of how we do that. They continue to

reinforce that commitment to action in reducing emissions and undertaking adaptation and let the community having a good line of sight on what those activities are. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Clauses 1 to 7, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Proposed new clause 7A.

MS LEE (Kurrajong-Leader of the Opposition) (11.52): I move amendment No 1 circulated in my name, which inserts a new clause 7A [*see schedule 1 at page 4093*], and table a supplementary explanatory statement to the amendments.

Clause 7A will introduce a requirement for the minister to report annually on the cost effectiveness of government actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as the cost per time of greenhouse emission reduction activities. The intent of this amendment is to enhance our understanding of what works well and what does not when it comes to emissions reduction.

Feedback that I have received from the community, from stakeholders and sometimes from the minister himself in fact is that meeting our 2025 emissions reduction target of 50 per cent to 60 per cent below 1990 levels will be a challenge and it will be a challenge going forward. Providing clear information to the community not only about how we are progressing toward achieving our targets but the effectiveness of specific measures in decreasing our emissions as well as their cost effectiveness is a critical tool in designing and assessing successful climate policies.

I think it is very reasonable to expect that policy measures taken with a goal of achieving outcomes would be assessed to ensure that they are working as intended. This holds true for climate action also. I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.54): Ms Lee has a number of amendments. I will make an overarching comment which is that I have had a careful look at them and they are ideas the government has contemplated. We are not supporting the amendments but I have detailed reasons for each and I will come to those as we get to them.

On this first amendment I understand the cost for tonne of abatement is a useful measure in many circumstances. The government certainly does consider it when bringing individual measures forward but it is also not relevant to every measure. For example, the long term nature of many of our emissions reduction efforts and the complexity involved in estimating or measuring abatement is not always feasible. So it is about weighing up the various impacts of a particular measure.

Work is underway in the ACT government to develop systems for estimating the cost per tonne of abatement. This will provide useful information for assessing potential options. There are many different factors to consider in weighing up policy and program options. The cost of abatement is one of these but there are many others such as social impacts, community resilience and broader environmental impacts. In terms of the work that is underway, it is not yet ready and the government is not in a position to legislate a requirement for that to be put in place. But the government will be pleased to provide an update to Ms Lee and to the community more broadly when that work is more developed.

I do think that placing emphasis on this one consideration of cost per tonne abatement in the ACT is unnecessarily limiting. We will, however, continue to progress our work on better understanding and estimating the cost of abatement options.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (11.56): As Minister Rattenbury has outlined, and this is a principle the Labor Party supports as well, we acknowledge calculating the cost per tonne of greenhouse gas emission reduction activities is an important tool in assessing potential climate action policies but it is only one of a number of tools in considering the effectiveness of government actions.

We believe legislating the requirement to report this measure is not a practical use of resources. Particularly, this approach is not an effective means of assessing the benefits of adaption measures which are crucial to enhancing the resilience of Canberra's built and natural environment in the face of a change in climate. These sorts of outcomes do not necessarily have an emission reduction benefit but clearly have other benefits.

The government undertakes a holistic approach for undertaking climate action and decision making including consideration, obviously, of financial implications. But we also need to reflect the ACT's wellbeing framework and we need to consider aspects such as health, safety and living standards. So a broader approach is necessary. I do not reject outright clearly and as Treasurer I have a particular focus on the costs and the best pathways forward but it cannot be the only thing that we assess or report on.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (11.57), in reply: Whilst it is heartening to hear Mr Rattenbury and Mr Barr say it is an important measure it actually confuses me even more that they are not supportive of this. I understand that both ministers have stated that it is not the only measure and nor have I ever pretended it to be. So I would not have thought that it would be a stretch of the imagination to ensure it is included, given both ministers have stated that it is important and Mr Rattenbury himself has undertaken to keep me advised of the progress in this regard. So that has been incredibly disappointing. I just want to put on the record that it was never the intention that it is the only measure, that is a misconception.

Question put:

That amendment No 1 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7	Noes 14	
Mr Cain	Mr Barr	Dr Paterson
Ms Castley	Ms Berry	Mr Pettersson
Mr Cocks	Mr Braddock	Mr Rattenbury
Ms Lawder	Ms Burch	Mr Steel
Ms Lee	Ms Cheyne	Ms Stephen-Smith
Mr Milligan	Ms Clay	Ms Vassarotti
Mr Parton	Ms Davidson	
	Mr Gentleman	

Question resolved in the negative.

Proposed new clause 7A negatived.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Proposed new clause 8A.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (12.02): I move amendment No 2 circulated in my name, which inserts a new clause 8A [*see schedule 1 at page 4093*].

Clause 8A would include a prescribed function for the council to provide advice on actions taken in the Territory to address climate change. This will enable the council to provide feedback as it sees fit to the minister on the efficacy of climate action. This is an important step that would empower the council to be proactive in assessing the effectiveness of the government of the day's climate policies and providing alternative suggestions if necessary.

The Climate Change Council comprises experts in this field and their input into the effectiveness of climate action can only serve to strengthen the government's approach to climate policy. Although the council might have some things to say that this Labor-Greens government might not want to hear, frank and fearless advice in this space specifically tailored to Canberra and our unique circumstances would no doubt be invaluable. I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (12.03): The government will not be supporting this amendment. I do not disagree with the comments Ms Lee made, but the act actually already reflects the very points she has made.

Firstly, I think the drafting is awkwardly placed. Section 17(1) where Ms Lee proposes to insert this additional text, talks about the main functions of the council and it highlights the two key platforms of climate action, that is, firstly mitigation and secondly adaptation. As a matter of drafting I do not think it fits there.

Secondly, when you go further down in the legislation at section 17(3) it says, “Without limiting subsection (1), the matters on which the council may advise the minister include the following matters:” It then lists off subparagraphs (a) to (g). So there are an enormous range of areas in which the council is invited to give the minister advice, including on actions to achieve energy efficiencies, actions or strategies to increase renewable energy use, to achieve the targets mentioned in part 2. That is paragraph 17(3)(c). Then there are a number of other areas including actions taken or strategies implemented by private entities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.

In terms of Ms Lee’s view that the council might have advice the government does not want to hear, I can assure you the council is very forthright in their views. They have mixed views. We have real expertise on that council and we have excellent discussions. Then there is, of course, subsection (18) of the legislation that says the minister consider council advice, “in exercising a function under this act the minister must consider any relevant advice given to the minister by the council.”

So I think Ms Lee’s point is correct, the council is a very valuable one and their advice is important. They have a great deal of expertise and I believe the legislation addresses the point Ms Lee is seeking to make. So the government does not believe this amendment is necessary.

Question put:

That amendment No 2 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 14

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mr Cocks
Ms Lawder
Ms Lee
Mr Milligan
Mr Parton

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Mr Braddock
Ms Burch
Ms Cheyne
Ms Clay
Ms Davidson
Mr Gentleman

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Proposed new clause 8A negatived.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Proposed new clause 9A.

MS LEE (Kurrajong-Leader of the Opposition) (12.09): I move amendment No 3 circulated in my name which inserts a new clause 9A [*see schedule 1 at page 4093*].

Clause 9A would include an obligation for the minister to consult with the relevant committee of the Assembly on appointees to the Climate Change Council prior to appointments being made. This is an important amendment because it would involve all of us in this place more closely with climate policies and climate action for our city. It would also bring a higher level of oversight to the process. Climate action is in front of most Canberrans minds. It is incumbent on all of us in this chamber to ensure the Climate Change Council is set up for success and able to provide the strongest and best advice to government. I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (12.10): This amendment, as Ms Lee indicates, requires committee consultation on Climate Change Council appointees. I advise the Assembly that section 227.2(c) of the Legislation Act of 2001 explicitly provides that Assembly consultation is not required for a person being appointed to a statutory position if the only function of the position is to advise the minister.

As the only function of a Climate Change Council is to advise the minister, it is appropriate that these are ministerial appointments and they do not require Assembly consultation. It is certainly not appropriate to create a new process or requirement that is specific to the Climate Change Council and the government cannot support an approach where every single Ministerial Advisory Council would need to go through an Assembly approval process. Government cannot function in that way. We cannot support this singling out of the Climate Change Council and we would not support the principle that Ministerial Advisory Councils with the sole purpose of advising the minister, need their membership approved by the Assembly.

Question put:

That amendment No 3 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mr Cocks
Ms Lawder
Ms Lee
Mr Milligan
Mr Parton

Noes 14

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Proposed new clause 9A negatived.

Clause 10.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (12.13): I move amendment No 4 circulated in my name [*see schedule 1 at page 4093*].

This is a very simple amendment. Clause 10 provides the definition and process for appointment by the speaker of the relevant Assembly committee referenced in clause 9A.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (12.13): Given we have just voted against the previous clause, this is redundant. So we will not be supporting this one either.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Remainder of bill, by leave, taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.14 to 2.00 pm.

Questions without notice

Whitlam—land release

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, how did the Suburban Land Agency determine the pricing for the latest Whitlam land ballot, where the median block price is \$770,000 at 480 square metres?

MS BERRY: I will take some of the detail of that question on notice. However, land is priced and valued according to market.

MS LEE: Minister, can you rule out your government's land release policy as a factor in why—or at least one of the reasons—land prices are so high?

MS BERRY: I think this is an issue that the whole country is experiencing. We understand that. Land supply is one of the factors affecting affordability of housing. We understand that. Here in the ACT we have never stopped developing land. We have continued to develop land at the pace we did previously, as we keep referring to—prior to COVID and prior to the various tax adjustments that were made federally. The approach that we had in the ACT was to continue, even when land was not being purchased. We had up to 600 land purchases available, which sold within two weeks after the COVID period.

This has been the case across the rest of the country. Now we have a housing minister and a Treasurer who are actually interested in addressing the housing affordability crisis in a range of different ways. We will continue to work closely together so that we can address that as a nation, including here, within the ACT.

MR CAIN: Minister, when will the next Suburban Land Agency release for single blocks take place, where will the land be? How many blocks will be offered?

MS BERRY: I will take that question on notice.

Schools—capacity

MR HANSON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Education.

Minister, I refer to reports that schools in Canberra's north and west are scheduled to become overcrowded. A five-year forecast of enrolments has identified 19 public schools, most in the ACT's north, where demand will approach or exceed the available teaching space, with a 17 per cent increase in demand expected. Minister, how will these schools cope, when they are all currently overcrowded, understaffed and under resourced?

MS BERRY: I absolutely disagree with the premise of the last part of Mr Hanson's question about schools in the ACT being under-resourced or understaffed. That is certainly not the case, and I reject the premise of that part of his question. Yes, of course, we are seeing growth in the ACT, and it should be no surprise that there are children who are in our primary schools right now who will be teenagers one day. And that means that we will have teenagers in our school system, who currently are primary school students, who will then enter into our high school system. I have repeatedly referred in this space to how education plans for growth within our schools—

Mr Hanson: I have a point of order. My question is not asking for an explanation of when the children will become teenagers; it is asking how these schools will cope. The minister has not been directly relevant to that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister still has time in her answer, so she is in order.

MS BERRY: As I was saying, I was referring to the work that the Education Directorate does with the Australian National University to understand where there is growth so that we can make adjustments across our system, whether that is new schools or growing our existing schools, and whether or not we need to change public enrolment arrangements across the city to adjust where students can attend school.

That has been the case in this city since the beginning of time—since well before self-government—about managing growth within our schools and within our community. It is an exciting time for our schools that we are experiencing such growth within our public school system across the city, and we want to make sure that our public schools meet the needs of every family, and that every family has a space within their local public school.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you rule out using hallways, staff rooms and libraries as teaching spaces, as has already happened in many other schools across the ACT?

MS BERRY: Again, I reject the assertion in Mr Hanson's question. However, there will be occasions—I cannot rule it out—where there might be chances for spaces to be used temporarily for teaching and learning opportunities. That has been the case for a while, and it will continue to be the case. However, as the Education Directorate and the ANU work together on projections—and we have really precise projections for up to five years now—about where our students will be going to schools across the city, we will be able to make adjustments where that is the case. We have seen that across the city, and we have also seen now growth within areas like Gungahlin—some of the highest growth areas within the country—where we are building new schools. We are building new schools in Strathnairn, in Molonglo and in Whitlam.

MR COCKS: How many schools could be built or expanded with the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on the tram?

MS BERRY: That is a bit of a silly question, as well. In my view—

Mr Hanson: Why? It is not a silly question at all.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, the question has been asked; allow it to be answered.

MS BERRY: In my view schools are built based on where children live and where families need a local school within that area. And then adjustments are made should there be a need for that in areas of high growth—for example, schools in Gungahlin and—

MS LEE: I have a point of order. We were not talking about where the resourcing or the funding will be spent. The question from Mr Cocks was very straight forward. That was: how many schools could be built or expanded with the hundreds of millions being spent on the tram? I ask the minister to be relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister is relevant to the question. She is talking about school expansions and schools maintenance.

MS BERRY: Just to finish of my answer to that question—which, as I said, I think is a bit silly—we have built light rail and new schools at the same time.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, if you want to ask a question you should seek the call, not mutter across the chamber.

Canberra Hospital—Fetal Medicine Unit accreditation

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Health Minister. In August I asked the health minister about training accreditation of the Fetal Medicine Unit and the response was CHS were actively recruiting for a subspecialist. I asked for a follow-up on this issue on 23 November and this position had not been filled. The minister also pointed out that a lot of staff are taking leave. Minister, how long have CHS been advertising for a subspecialist at the Fetal Medicine Unit and why can you not fill the position?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take the question on notice. I note the question I took on notice last week still has some time to run until I am required to provide an answer to that. I did provide some additional information after question time on the day last week. Obviously this is a highly specialised position so there are a range of recruitment measures that will be underway. In some cases it has taken some considerable time to recruit to specialised positions for a range of reasons including sometimes, even when we identify an appropriate person and recruit them, they actually take time to wind up their previous job and relocate to the ACT. It seems very likely in this case we would be recruiting from outside the ACT. Potentially we could even be recruiting from overseas. These processes do take time but it is underway.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, how many staff are on leave in the Fetal Medicine Unit and what affect is this having on the service?

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

MR COCKS: Minister, does it concern you that your hospital seems unable to fill an important position that has been advertised for at least a quarter of the year?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Cocks for the question. He has obviously not been in this space for very long. These are specialist positions and it is not unusual, as I have just alluded to, that some of these positions do take time to fill, particularly where there is a scarcity of those skills in Australia and there are a range of—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, point of order. The minister has explained she has not been able to recruit somebody. We have already heard that. The question is whether she is in anyway concerned by that?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, sit down. She is answering the question. She is in order.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Obviously it would be better if we had someone in place at this point in time. I am always concerned when we have positions vacant we would have liked to fill, but I also understand there is the reality of a scarcity of people and labour in these particular specialised areas. It is really important our recruitment processes are followed and we ensure we get the best person for the job.

Canberra Hospital—Adult Mental Health Unit

MR COCKS: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, last week on 23 November you were asked:

... prior to the patient death on 13 November, were you aware of any safety concerns for patients and staff at the adult mental health unit?

Your answer was “no”. However, the Canberra Health Services occupational violence staff incident report, financial year 2021-2022, as at 15 June 2022, states that “there were 170 occupational violence incidents” in that unit—topping the list.

Were you made aware of any of the incidents that occurred at the AMHU? And, if so, did you ask whether there were any safety concerns?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for your interest in workplace health and safety at AMHU. It is always of concern when there are occupational health and safety incidents in the workplace, and we work very hard to make sure people are able to do their jobs safely while delivering the best possible care for patients. There are a number of processes and training programs that are ongoing to make sure that staff are as well equipped as possible to be able to deliver patient health care safely. This is something that we talk about—

Ms Lee: Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order. The question Mr Cocks is asking Ms Davidson is very straightforward: were you made aware of any of the incidents that occurred at the AMHU? I understand that she is talking about the processes in place, but the question specifically goes to, “Were you made aware?” I ask that the Minister be directly relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Davidson, answer to that point of the question in the time you have remaining.

MS DAVIDSON: As I was saying, the programs and training that are provided to staff at AMHU are something we discuss regularly with CHS. It is one of the ways in which we ensure staff are as well equipped as they possibly can be to deliver the right level of patient care as safely as possible—

Mr Cocks: Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order on relevance. You have asked the minister to be directly relevant. She is still speaking on processes rather than her awareness of those incidents or safety concerns.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, you have a short time left: to the question.

MS DAVIDSON: As I was saying, in relation to the conversations about safety concerns, this is why we talk about training procedures and programs that are in place. *(Time expired.)*

MR COCKS: Minister, when you took over the portfolio of mental health, did your predecessor inform you of any concerns or issues related to the safety of staff and/or patients in mental health wards at Canberra Hospital?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for your ongoing interest in staff workplace safety. When I took up this position, I was thoroughly briefed as the incoming minister by CHS, and that covered quite a range of issues, including work health and safety training programs and how we are taking care of staff. It is appropriate for them to be able to provide the level of detail that is required. Those conversations are revisited regularly to ensure that work is continuing well, as it has been.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, did you make any inquiries into the safety of the Adult Mental Health Unit when you were made aware of safety concerns about Dhulwa, the ACT’s other mental health unit?

MS DAVIDSON: Yes.

Canberra Theatre Centre—redevelopment

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for the Arts. Minister, can you please provide an update on the progress of the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment Project?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Dr Paterson for the question. The new Canberra Theatre will, of course, be the centrepiece of the revitalisation of Civic Square and surrounds to create a vibrant Canberra civic and cultural district.

In the recent 2022-23 budget, the ACT government committed \$28.477 million over the next two years to progress the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment Project to develop the planning and the preliminary design of the new Canberra Theatre centre, including expansive stakeholder and community consultation.

The Canberra Theatre Redevelopment Project issued a request for expressions of interest in September this year to find a design and technical partner to provide a range of advisory services, including but not limited to architecture and urban design, theatre design, acoustics, town planning, heritage, engineering and sustainability, as well as cultural advice and stakeholder engagement.

This EOI process produced an impressive result, with 21 submissions received from various national and international consortia. Of these 21 submissions, three consortia have been shortlisted to participate in the next phase of the procurement process to tender for the project by developing concept designs for world-class performance spaces that will create outstanding audience experiences and deliver excellence in urban design and architecture right here in the cultural heart of the nation's capital.

DR PATERSON: Minister, what national or international design experience do these three shortlisted tenderers bring to the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment Project?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Dr Paterson for the supplementary. Architectus, DesignInc and Hassell have been named as the three shortlisted tenderers to participate in the next phase of the procurement process. These three organisations have a demonstrated track record of delivering exceptional design and architecture projects with international significance. As a consortia, each of the shortlisted tenderers are partnering with international architects to develop world-class concept designs for our premier performing arts venue.

Architectus proudly lists the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art and the redevelopment of the heritage listed State Library of Victoria as part major projects. It has partnered with international theatre designers Arup as well as Danish architects Henning Larsen, who lead the design work in Iceland for the Harpa Concert Hall, Reykjavik, and the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen.

DesignInc, who recently completed work on Phive, Parramatta's new civic hub and library, has enlisted the expertise of Zaha Hadid Architects, the international firm responsible for Beijing's Galaxy Soho.

Australian international firm Hassell is the architect responsible for the Sydney Theatre Company and will collaborate with international multidisciplinary design studio Snohetta, known for their work on the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet and the Times Square redevelopment.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how will the next phase of the procurement process be undertaken?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. These three consortia are now developing designs, with the current phase of the procurement process expected to run until the first quarter of 2023. Following an evaluation process, it is expected that the successful consortium will be selected from the three tenderers and appointed as the ACT government's design partner by mid-2023 to develop and deliver detailed Canberra Theatre designs.

The successful tenderer will work closely with Major Projects Canberra during the design phase to provide opportunities for stakeholders and the community to engage and provide input into the final design. We expect that the design, public consultation and approval processes will take around two years and will inform planning for the project's construction phase.

A renewed Canberra Theatre Centre will deliver a major new theatre and reimagine the current facilities to support the presentation and production of international, national and local performances, concerts and events. This landmark project directly supports Canberra's ambition to be recognised as Australia's arts capital.

Canberra Hospital—birth centre

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, I have heard that two of the five birth centre rooms at the Canberra Hospital are currently being used as COVID isolation rooms. While I understand that this might have been important during the peak of the pandemic, one of the things that women say is so important about the birth centre is being able to give birth in a home-like environment, and that is something that the birth centre rooms provide. Can you tell me how many women on average each month are on the waitlist to use those rooms, and how many women are on the waitlist to access midwife-led continuity of care services?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Clay for the question. On the issue of the closed birth centre rooms, I did raise that immediately. That was something that was raised at the 30th anniversary of the birth centre dinner that Ms Clay, Ms Davidson and I all attended. I did raise that with the executive director of women, youth and children that evening, and I was assured that that was not, in fact, the case.

As we talked about last week, Ms Clay, it is really important to differentiate, in that the birth centre is not a model of care. There is some work going on in relation to ensuring that those women who are booked into and commence birthing in the birth centre are able to stay in the birth centre, even if their need for care is escalating. I think that is really important, to ensure that people giving birth remain in a safe

environment rather than being moved into a birth suite, unless that is absolutely necessary, or unless they need to go into theatre.

The birth centre is not a model of care, so I cannot give you a waitlist for the birth centre, because it does not have a waitlist, as it is a physical location. I can tell you, in terms of the waiting list for continuity of care, that there are approximately 350 women on the waitlist for continuity of care models, ranging from six to 36 weeks pregnant. Approximately 30 to 40 women per month indicate a preference for continuity and are not able to access this choice, at least up-front. Once the allocation of places on the continuity model has been exhausted, women do remain on the waitlist until they are 36 weeks pregnant. The digital health record is giving the team better visibility of those people who are on that waitlist.

MS CLAY: Minister, are all five of those birth centre rooms available for births and being used for births at the moment?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: That is my understanding, but I will seek some further information from Canberra Health Services and come back to the Assembly—fingers crossed, at the end of question time.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, knowing that midwifery-led continuity of care is best practice, what percentage of ACT women currently access a midwifery-led continuity of care model?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Braddock for the supplementary. I think I provided this information in my response last week to Ms Clay’s question. The answer is that, in the ACT, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report *Maternity models of care in Australia, 2022*, the ACT provides whole duration of maternity period continuity in 38.1 per cent of pregnancies, which is the third highest in the country, and well above the national average of 31 per cent. Of course, the ACT government is committed, through the Maternity in Focus strategy, to more than 50 per cent of women and pregnant people having access to this model of care by 2028.

Dhulwa Mental Health Unit—patient transfers

MR COCKS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Justice Health. I refer to concerns raised by the ACT Human Rights Commission, reported in the *Canberra Times* of 27 November, about the transfer of non-forensic mental health patients to Dhulwa. The Human Rights Commissioner said that transferring these patients “appears to contravene the spirit and objects of the Mental Health Act, insofar as people with a mental disorder or mental illness should receive assessment and treatment, care or support in a way that is least restrictive or intrusive to them”. Minister, had anyone raised concerns with you about people being inappropriately transferred to Dhulwa before that article?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for the question. The process for someone being transferred into Dhulwa is something that I have discussed with CHS so that we can better understand how those decisions are made and what processes are in place. That is something that needs to take into account the person’s clinical needs—

Ms Lawder: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Ms Davidson.

Ms Lawder: Standing order 118 says that the answer to a question “shall be concise and directly relevant to the subject matter of the question”. The question was not about decisions to transfer people. The question was whether anyone had raised concerns with the minister about people being transferred, not the process of transferring them. I ask you to direct her to be relevant to the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: I took the point of order very early in the answer. Minister, you have nearly a minute left; to that area of the question, please.

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you. As I was saying, when a decision is made about transferring someone to Dhulwa, that needs to take into account a range of complex clinical care needs relevant to the model of care for where they are being transferred to. We do sometimes have contact from people who are—

Ms Lawder: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Point of order.

Ms Lawder: The minister is still not answering the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. I think you were getting there, Minister, so please do.

MS DAVIDSON: We do sometimes have contact from people who are concerned about whether a family member has been admitted as an inpatient—*(Time expired.)*

MR COCKS: Minister, why is the government using a secure mental health facility intended for convicted offenders for people who have not been charged or convicted of an offence but have serious mental health issues?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for the question, Mr Cocks. If you would like a briefing on the model of care for the Dhulwa facility, we can provide that. That will probably help you to better understand the types of clinical care that it provides to people and the fact that not everyone who is admitted to Dhulwa is going to come in through the same pathway or necessarily have the same contact with the justice system prior to receiving care in that facility.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, perhaps you would care to explain to the Assembly what is the role of Dhulwa?

Ms Lee: Madam Speaker, a point of order. Is that relevant? I seek your advice about whether that is a relevant question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, please. It is relevant. The questions were about people being admitted. It is about the provision of care in that unit. It is an appropriate question.

MS DAVIDSON: That is actually a very timely question. The role of Dhulwa is quite important within the landscape of mental health services for inpatients in Canberra. As we all know, on 2 May of this year I announced an independent inquiry into the legislation, the governance and the clinical frameworks at the Dhulwa mental health unit. That inquiry, which was supported by forensic mental health experts, is due to provide its final report to this Assembly soon. I expect that in reading the final report of that inquiry there will be things for us to consider about where Dhulwa fits into the landscape of mental health inpatient services in Canberra and the role of forensic mental health services in our city. That is something that I think is an important conversation for our community to have.

Dhulwa Mental Health Unit—review

MR COCKS: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, in May you announced an independent inquiry into the legislative, workplace governance and clinical frameworks at Dhulwa. On the CMTEDD website it says:

The Chair will provide a preliminary report inclusive of initial findings to the Minister for Mental Health no later than 12 weeks after commencement of the Inquiry and a final report no later than 6 weeks after delivery of the preliminary report.

Minister, we are now 30 weeks into this 18-week inquiry. Do you not have the final report? When will you be able to release it?

MR BARR: Under the Inquiries Act, the report comes to me. I will be releasing it tomorrow.

Mr Cocks: I could not hear that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Barr, can you please repeat your answer, for the sake of Mr Cocks.

MR BARR: Under the Inquiries Act, the final report comes to me. I will be releasing it tomorrow.

MR COCKS: Minister, why have you failed to support nurses by not ensuring this report could be released earlier this year, when you, as the Minister for Mental Health, were quoted, on 1 June, as saying, “Nurses were clear that any review must be done quickly.”

MS DAVIDSON: For an inquiry that is independently chaired, and that includes support form forensic mental health experts, and that had to the number of

submissions that it took, it has been an effective use of time to be able to get to the point where the report is going to be tabled tomorrow. I am very much looking forward to being able to start work on implementing the recommendations and working through how best to do that with the unions involved, with CHS and with the workers involved, and being mindful of the fact that we are talking about care for people who are very unwell. We want to be able to provide them with the best possible clinical care. All of that does actually take a bit of time. To have announced in May that this was going to happen, and being at the point where we are able to table the report tomorrow, is actually quite a good use of time.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, will you guarantee that the entire report will be tabled, and that you will not bury it, like the heritage report we heard about yesterday, given that the Greens continually talk about transparency in government?

MR BARR: It will be tabled in accordance with the Inquiries Act.

Housing ACT—asset stock

MR PARTON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, I refer to the Asset Recycling Initiative agreement with the commonwealth which directed money to the light rail project. As part of the agreement, your government agreed to keep the number of public housing dwellings in the ACT above 10,848. In the chamber last week you specifically referred to it, you said “the agreement required that there be no diminution over time of housing.” According to the 2021-22 annual reports, the number of public housing dwellings has fallen to 10,723 which is indeed 125 fewer than the figure you agreed to as an absolute floor number of dwellings. Chief Minister, how have you allowed your government to drop the total stock over 100 properties below the agreed stock level?

MR BARR: If Mr Parton read the further detail of the Asset Recycling Initiative he would understand it has an expiry date as well. The rationale for there being a number lower at this point has been well canvassed by the Minister for Housing. We are undertaking an extensive renewal program. At this point in the program cycle there are fewer houses but in time there will be more.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, is it the case then as you have just stated, that the only reason you kept public housing above this level was to get the money for the tram, and once you had it you were happy to let it fall under that figure?

MR BARR: No, Madam Speaker. What the government has done is invest in the renewal of our public housing stock and—and!—invest in public transport. Two things your side of politics would never do.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, when will the number of dwellings get back above the 10,848 that you promised as part of the agreement with the commonwealth?

MR BARR: Again, the agreement with the commonwealth was for a defined period of time.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members!

MR BARR: The project investment in the building and renewing public housing program, together with the additional funding the ACT government has put it, and building on that, for the first time in 10 years, commonwealth funding is—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Hanson: Point of order. Relevancy.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat Mr Barr.

Mr Hanson: The question is when will the dwellings get above 10,848 and I ask the Chief Minister to answer that question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Chief Minister is indeed answering that.

MR BARR: The combination of the additional investment from the ACT government through the renewing public housing program, the additional budget funding we have provided plus the injection of capital that is coming from the commonwealth—

Mr Hanson: When? When? The question is when. So when does that happen?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, quite enough.

MR BARR: —will mean that over coming years—

Mr Hanson: Over the coming years.

MR BARR: Over the coming years, as the new housing is built, the total number of public housing dwellings in the territory will rise. Meanwhile, we have also been working with the community housing sector to see the total number of social housing properties increase as well. But again, only this side of the chamber is supportive of these sorts of policies—

Mr Hanson: You cut the number of public houses!

MR BARR: Because the Liberal Party has cut funding for housing in this country over 10 years in its time in office federally. We now have both levels of government working to expand affordable housing.

Mr Parton: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat Mr Barr. Mr Parton.

Mr Parton: On a point of order of relevancy. This question has nothing to do with federal Liberal policy.

MADAM SPEAKER: Sit yourself down.

Mr Hanson: He cut the number of public housing dwellings—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson I did not ask for your opinion and you are warned. Mr Barr, are you finished?

MR BARR: I have completed, thank you Madam Speaker.

Transport Canberra—buses

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services, and it pertains to the 35 orange and blue Renault buses we touched on yesterday in here, which must cease service at the end of December.

Minister, specifically, at that point at the end of December, once the Renaults are retired, how many buses will remain in the entire fleet?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. It is in the four-hundreds. I am happy to take that on notice and come back with a more specific answer for Mr Parton on the number of buses we will have in the fleet.

At this point in time, we are replacing the existing bus fleet that is aging. We set out that renewal program for the fleet in our zero emissions plan for Transport Canberra, and we are following that plan. It starts with 34 diesel buses. It then continues on to the compressed natural gas buses, which have a hard-year end of life. Then we will, of course, start replacing the rest of the diesel bus fleet over time, as we bring in more zero emissions buses, and we are out for procurement at the moment delivering on our election commitment to purchase 90 electric buses.

MR PARTON: Minister, how many of the buses that are supposed to be replacing the old Renaults are, as of today, already in the ACT, and how many are still to arrive?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. I know he is excited! I am too! The 12 electric buses are literally days away from arriving ready to start to be put into service—ready for next year. As I explained yesterday in the answer to Mr Braddock’s question, the buses have started to be finished in Adelaide. These are the Scania buses that are being constructed.

Ms Lee: Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order. We are also very excited to hear about the buses. Aside from that they are “days away”, Mr Parton’s question was very specific: how many, as of today, are here already, and how many are still to arrive? I ask that the minister be relevant.

MR STEEL: Madam Speaker, I was addressing that point very specifically. And I do want to make a clarification. Yesterday I misspoke. The buses that have already been finished in Adelaide—coming from Scania—came from Sweden, not Spain. Spain is where our light rail vehicles are being manufactured. They come over to Australia—that is the chassis—and then Scania, with their partner companies, are putting on the bus bodies. They have been completed.

TCCS staff are going out there over the next week or so to check whether those buses meet the specifications before they are then brought into Canberra ready to start service in the new year. Things are progressing. The Liberals hate it. The Liberals hate the fact that we are committed to transitioning our bus fleet to low and zero emissions buses. We are getting on with the job. I am looking forward to making further announcements over the coming days and weeks about those new buses entering service to deliver quieter, cleaner, more comfortable services for Canberrans.

MS LEE: Minister, I ask you to, again, confirm how many of the buses that are supposed to replace the old Renaults are in the ACT today? If the long-awaited promise of delivery by the end of the year does not happen, are there sufficient buses to fulfil the current timetable?

MR STEEL: I refer the member to the answer to the last question. I have said they are in Adelaide. Before they come up here, they are getting the final checks—before they move over to Canberra. The hypothetical that Ms Lee put is out of order.

Light rail stage 2—construction costs

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, the Doma Group have signalled major delays and cost blowouts to their Foothills development in Campbell because, since the project was originally announced, building costs have risen by at least 25 per cent, meaning that they are unable to secure finance. Have estimated construction costs for stage 2 of the tram also risen by at least 25 per cent in the last two years and will that result in major delays and cost blowouts, as it has for most other construction projects around the nation?

MR STEEL: There is no doubt that, at the moment, as we deliver major infrastructure projects in the government, civil works and private sectors, there has been cost escalation that has been occurring. Of course, we go through procurement and test the market when we deliver these projects. That is the process that we are in at the moment for a range of different infrastructure projects in the territory. We are of course committed to getting on and delivering those. If the opposition are suggesting that they should be scrapped, then they should announce that policy to the Assembly.

MR PARTON: Minister, has the government identified a threshold cost for stage 2 at which point it is considered unviable? If not, why not?

MR STEEL: We are going through a procurement process at the moment. The government will consider the outcomes of that procurement process.

MS LEE: Will the government blindly proceed with stage 2 of light rail, whatever the cost?

MR STEEL: The government is committed to bring light rail down to Woden, and we are getting on with the job. Construction has already begun, with many of the contracts already signed, including the delivery raising London Circuit, the new five

light-rail vehicles and the 14 being retrofitted for the extension of our Mitchell depot. We are getting on with the job of delivering our election promises. The opposition should be upfront with the community with their position on light rail. Why can't you say you support it?

Ms Lee: A point of order, Madam Speaker. This is question time, and the minister should be relevant to answering the question as opposed to calling for us to release our policy.

MADAM SPEAKER: Have you concluded your answer, Mr Steel?

MR STEEL: I have.

Australian Capital Territory—statutory office holders

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, in the parliamentary and governing agreement, appendix 2, paragraph 5 refers to a review of statutory office holders. Can you please provide an update on progress on this item?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Braddock for the question. Yes, a team within Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development has undertaken an initial desktop review of independent statutory office holders across Australian jurisdictions. This review will be further informed by consultation with stakeholders in early 2023.

MR BRADDOCK: Chief Minister, when do you think the results of this review will be released?

MR BARR: It is on track for a resolution in fiscal year 2023-24.

MS CLAY: Chief Minister, how do you ensure that the ACT government respects the independence of statutory office holders?

MR BARR: Over the years, a number of statutory office holders have been placed under the purview of the Assembly. This question of whether more should be is the subject of the review. We will need to look carefully at each of the statutory positions and make a determination as to whether they best sit as officers of the Assembly or whether their existing governance and statutory arrangements are appropriate.

High-risk weather season—preparedness

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, what is the high-risk weather outlook for the upcoming holiday season?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Pettersson for his interest in the safety of Canberrans during our hazard season. As many are aware, the Bureau of Meteorology has officially declared a La Nina event for this season. La Nina events increase the chances of above average rainfall for northern and eastern Australia over spring and

summer. Over the past 12 months, and even recently, we have seen wet weather affecting large areas of eastern Australia, which have experienced flash flooding and minor riverine flooding, intense storm activity and damaging winds as well.

Here in the ACT we have seen periods of intense rainfall activity and damaging winds. As we move into the summer period, it is expected that the ACT and the east coast of Australia will continue to experience these conditions. The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, AFAC, in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology, released its seasonal bushfire outlook this week. The outlook indicates—

Ms Lee: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Minister.

Ms Lee: In all seriousness, questions are meant to be asked of ministers who have control of portfolios. I did not see weather as part of Minister Gentleman's portfolio.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question was around fire season preparation.

Mr Barr: On the point of order, Madam Speaker: what we have just witnessed as a pattern of behaviour is obviously not listening to the question, but seriously, that is about as frivolous a point of order as we have seen in question time this year.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Barr. The question was clearly about—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

Mr Barr: I might need to withdraw, Madam Speaker. Mr Hanson has certainly provided something even more frivolous.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: I realise that we are getting to the end of the year, members, but please. Mr Gentleman, you have the floor.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks, Madam Speaker. I wanted to talk about the work that the ESA has been doing to prepare for the season. There is not much time left for this answer, but I will try and do that. We have looked at expecting normal fire activity in the season, rather than higher fire activity.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how is the ESA preparing for the high-risk weather season?

MR GENTLEMAN: The ESA is undertaking both internal and external preparedness workshops with key stakeholders, including the delivery of an incident management program and an operational exercise program to suitably qualified personnel. The operational exercise program provided two tabletop and discussion exercises for ESA

execs and senior incident management personnel. This was designed to undertake a more thorough program of incident management practices, to elevate the outputs of the ESA incident management team to include a greater focus on planning.

I recently had the pleasure of attending an incident planning exercise at ESA headquarters, where I was provided with a unique opportunity to be part of the exercise and witness firsthand the preparation and planning activities that members of the ESA and PCS undertake. Through that personal experience I have every confidence in the work being undertaken by these agencies to prepare for and respond to natural hazards. As a Canberran, I am confident that we will all be well supported by our emergency services during the high-risk weather season.

The ESA is also working hard to increase community awareness, through the Be Ready campaign. This campaign invested in integrated media placement and utilised digital, radio and print advertising to encourage the Canberra community to complete their emergency service plan. On 29 October members from across our four emergency services took part in the Be Emergency Ready day, which saw members from across the Canberra community visit sites to learn how they can be prepared for the season. This day was also the first opportunity for the ACT Rural Fire Service to display their newly launched Australian fire danger rating system.

DR PATERSON: Minister, can you please explain how the Australian fire danger rating system works?

MR GENTLEMAN: It was launched on 1 September by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, AFAC. It has been implemented across Australia as the first commonly used system to display potential fire danger. The system describes the potential level of danger a community could face, should a fire start—much different than it used to before. The fire danger ratings are used before the fire starts.

The ESA has been part of the national project to update the AFDRS, including both the public-facing signage and the science behind the ratings. The new system has fewer levels and uses logical colours and terms to improve people's comprehension of both the system and the personal risk. This nationally consistent system is expected to improve cross-border operations and interstate sharing of firefighting resources. Additionally, consistency will reduce confusion for both international and interstate travellers, and those living in border regions as well.

Our city, as I have tried to say, is well prepared, better prepared than ever before, and this is because of the hard work of our staff across government and of course our volunteers. There is, however, only so much preparation that can be done by directorates and agencies. I encourage the community to be prepared as well. It is a shared responsibility. I encourage all Canberrans to visit the ESA website at www.esa.act.gov.au to learn more about the new fire danger rating system and how they can be prepared for the high-risk weather season. Together, we can all play our part in keeping our community safe.

Mr Barr: Sunny days ahead, Madam Speaker. I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice

Whitlam—land release

MS BERRY: I would like to offer some more clarity around the value of land sales provided by the SLA. The ACT government is bound by section 246 of the Planning and Development Act 2007 and must not grant a lease for land other than for payment of an amount that is not less than the market value of the lease.

Market value is determined through advice from a minimum of two independent property valuers who are members of the Australian Property Institute. The independent property valuers rely primarily on sales results from the government and private estates, along with current market conditions, to determine the market value for each block.

Land prices have increased over the last 12 months across Australia and in all states and territories. It is widely attributed to a period of low interest rates, as we have talked about before, as well as high household savings, coupled with COVID-19 and the additional support packages provided by the federal government.

The ballot system used for new land releases is a fair and transparent way to sell residential blocks to the public as it provides everyone interested in the opportunity to purchase a property with an equal opportunity to do so. As block prices are publicly available, buyers have knowledge of those prices throughout the entire process. I am also advised that the registration data from the most recent ballot suggests that less than 20 per cent of all registrants identified as builders or investors, while almost 30 per cent of registrants indicated that they were first homebuyers.

Canberra Hospital—birth centre

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: In regard to the question Ms Clay asked me about closure of birth centre rooms, I can advise that one room in the birth centre has negative pressure capability and has been used to safely care for birthing mothers with COVID-19, following infection control guidelines. This room is available for use at all times by women birthing in the birth centre when it is not in use for these quarantine or isolation requirements. There is a second room adjacent to the negative pressure room which is generally kept free, if the negative pressure room is in use, due to its close proximity and, again, in the interests of infection control. Under current infection control guidelines, this is not a definite requirement; it is only a precaution.

Of course, we do have two hospitals that have maternity capability. I can also advise that the number of rooms available in the birth centre at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce is not currently affected by isolation requirements, and the rooms have not been utilised for women with COVID-19 for more than six months, at the time that I received this information, and are fully utilised by the continuity of midwifery program.

Transport—services

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (2.55): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes:
 - (a) the Government ignored its own 2016 travel survey which indicated that the majority of Canberrans wanted direct buses to the city by redirecting most of those services to terminate at the tramline;
 - (b) prior to the commencement of Stage 1 of the tram, it was possible to get on a direct bus from every suburb in Gungahlin to Civic, except for the suburbs that weren't actually populated at that stage;
 - (c) on the commencement of tram services, Gungahlin lost the:
 - (i) 200 Red Rapid bus;
 - (ii) 202 Express bus from Gungahlin to the city;
 - (iii) 251, 252, 254, 255 and 259 Xpresso routes from Gungahlin suburbs to the city;
 - (iv) 56 service from Palmerston;
 - (v) 57 service from Franklin; and
 - (vi) 58 service from Harrison; and
 - (d) that services from the inner north and Belconnen that went to the city were redirected to the Dickson interchange, namely the 30 and 31 services from Kaleen and Giralang and the 39 service from Watson was changed so drastically that it ceased being a viable option for commuters;
- (2) further recognises:
 - (a) once the Stage 1 tram was opened, the travel time to Civic from many suburbs that once had direct buses routes increased;
 - (b) since Light Rail Stage 1 services commenced, the percentage of Canberrans as a proportion of the growing population, that use public transport has not increased, even before COVID hit; and
 - (c) there are currently many southside suburbs that have direct routes to Civic; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to guarantee that:
 - (a) direct bus routes from suburbs south of Lake Burley Griffin to Civic will be protected, will be maintained and not cancelled when the Woden tram commences, and that commuters will not be forced onto the tram; and
 - (b) the public transport travel time from any suburb south of Lake Burley Griffin to Civic will not increase compared to the time it takes today, and doing this by keeping the direct bus routes as is, once the tram to Woden commences.

Ministers who I clash with in my shadow portfolios all know that I take my job pretty seriously. I am focused on holding the government to account; I am focused on

creating and prosecuting an alternative policy position; and I am focused on outcomes. Certainly, here on this side of the chamber we are focused on broad outcomes, but we are also focused on outcomes for individuals, because it is important that we think about individuals.

It did not take me long, as the shadow minister for transport, to arrive at the conclusion that, under this minister, public transport policy and implementation have very little to do with actual, genuine public transport outcomes. And that is what this motion is about, Madam Speaker. Just imagine for a moment that Canberra's public transport policy was actually focused on genuine public transport outcomes, because that is not the case at the moment. Mr Steel will speak to this motion and assure us that it is, but we are not sure that that is the case.

As of today, our public transport policies focus on building a legacy project for the Chief Minister, and they focus on fulfilling the Labor-Greens power-sharing agreement at any cost, because money is no object. It does not matter how much money you spend. For the CLAG, it does not matter how much money we borrow, because we will be paying it back with somebody else's money. They focus on signalling virtue to a group of people who believe that this parliament should be operating in a global space.

This motion gets back to what should be the core purpose of the transport directorate; that is, getting people where they want to go in a timely manner, when they want to get there. And shouldn't that be the main aim of the government in the transport space? Of course, it should be. It is not at the moment.

This motion calls upon the government to guarantee that the direct bus routes from southern suburbs to Civic will be maintained if and when the tram gets to Woden. Isn't that just a tad pre-emptive, people? I do not think it is pre-emptive. It is not, because it is based on form, and it is based on history. We know that, prior to stage 1 of the tram commencing its operation from Gungahlin to Civic, virtually everyone in Gungahlin had a relatively direct route to Civic. Once the tram arrived, the direct bus routes vanished. Although the people of Gungahlin were sold a dream of better public transport outcomes with the arrival of the tram, for many people, those better outcomes did not eventuate.

Some people got better outcomes, but most of them did not. Once the tram started its operation, the people of Gungahlin lost the 200 rapid bus, the 202 express bus, the 251, the 252, the 254, the 255 and the 259 Xpresso routes because the government was hell-bent on forcing those people onto the tram.

I am not going to lie; there are aspects of that which make sense. Once you have built the infrastructure, surely, it should be used. But the reality for individuals, the reality for so many of the residents of Gungahlin, is that their public travel times increased because of the tram. I know that there are some instances where frequency has improved, and I think that is a good thing. I think that is a great thing. But for many residents of Gungahlin, their travel times increased.

That situation will be exacerbated on the south side because the tram will dramatically increase the travel time between Woden and Civic as compared to the bus. Mr Steel

always says that we are not comparing apples with apples, and I get that. He says that it is a direct bus—an express bus, pretty much—that goes from Woden to Civic, and under the tram we will have all of these additional stops. But you are robbing Peter to pay Paul there, aren't you, because it means that, for everyone who is funnelled onto the tram, it takes increased travel time to get from Woden to Civic.

I have done Woden to Civic on the bus in under 14 minutes. Of course, we are talking about a much longer time on the tram. When you add in the time required to change from bus to tram, then change again from tram to bus on the way home, the increased daily time in public transport travel time will be sufficient to pass the threshold for many that would push public transport users back into cars.

We do not want to see that. Public transport policy should not be about densification, it should not be about selling apartments or capturing lease variation charges; public transport policy should be about public transport outcomes.

As is the case with a number of motions that I have brought into this place around the tram, those opposite know that within this motion there are some areas of merit. But it would be politically blasphemous for them to agree with any of it because the tram is now a religion which nobody is allowed to question in any way. Anyone who dares to tell the truth will be excommunicated from the church, like that heathen Jon Stanhope.

For Labor and the Greens, the tram has become an addiction. As with many addictions, they just crave more and more of it, to the point that they do not have enough money to support the habit. The people of the suburbs know too well that this government is stealing from them to support the habit, and they know that it will only get worse.

We know that the minister will argue that the commencement of the tram service to Woden will lead to the better utilisation of bus services on other routes. I would say to the minister: we have heard all of that before. We heard it in the lead-up to stage 1. We were told, prior to the commencement of stage 1 of the tram, that services would improve on the south side, and they have not.

I note that in some areas of the north side you can point to increased frequency. I knock on a lot of doors in Tuggeranong, and the trashing of the bus network in the south ranks as the fourth most likely thing for a constituent to raise with me at the door. Given the very small percentage of people in the south who are currently using the bus, that figure is amazing. I would say that the minister has some serious work to do to convince people from Tuggeranong to get back on the bus. I would also suggest that he certainly will not be in the position of trying to convince them to get on the tram, because we all know that it will not get to Tuggeranong until at least 2060.

I want to use my personal public transport journey from Theodore as an example. As things stand at the moment, I would walk for two or three minutes to the terminal on Chippindall, and I would take the 79 to Calwell; that bus would take about eight minutes. From there I would transfer to the R5. It takes me straight here; it drops me out at the front—37 minutes for that particular leg of the journey. The total time is well under an hour, probably slightly under 55 minutes.

Under a stage 2 tram scenario, I would take the 79 to Calwell, but the R5 would take me to the Woden interchange. I am assuming, based on form, that it would take me to the Woden interchange. That is a 22-minute ride, additional to the eight minutes to get to Calwell and the Calwell transfer. So we are up to 37 minutes. We have the additional transfer time to the tram, which will then take very close to half an hour to get me to Civic. My 55-minute journey has been pushed out to around an hour and 10 minutes, if not more. We are talking about adding an extra 2½ hours travel time per week for me. That does not sound like a great public transport outcome to me.

People in the south have been thoroughly neglected by this government in the public transport space, and I am here to make sure that it does not happen in the future. I signal to the minister that we will be heavily focused on this particular issue, as I know Ms Clay will be, because I know that Ms Clay is very keen for public transport outcomes to become better for people.

Mistakes have been made in this space in the past, and I want to make sure that those mistakes are not repeated. I noted this morning, because I got a Twitter notification, that the *RiotACT* story on this had been put up. I clicked on it, and I saw that there were five comments. I thought, “Here we go.” But I was quite pleased that the comments were all in favour of the motion. I do not think Ryan and his crew are on there yet. Ken Behrens—probably not his real name—says:

History has shown that the government will cut bus routes to force people into LR. They won’t be running 4a, 5s and direct services from Weston Creek along Commonwealth Avenue. 4s and 5s will terminate at Woden. The Weston Creek services will be redirected to Woden or connected somewhere else. Frankly, I can’t imagine too many people electing to get off their bus and onto LR if they can stay on the bus and reduce their travel time.

Ken Behrens goes on to say:

Mr Parton is flogging a dead horse and he probably knows it. I expect he’s hoping that the media will start asking the government some serious questions, but that hasn’t happened ...

That is what Ken Behrens said in the *RiotACT*. Chewy14 says:

An open and transparent government would have already released these details.

But we all know that isn’t the case in the ACT, which is why the opposition is using these ... tactics.

Tactics designed to get the government to admit the obvious truth, that the light rail to Woden will take significantly longer to travel the distance and most buses will need to be redirected through to the interchanges to funnel people onto light rail.

Those currently using the express buses should be resigned to slower and more complex public transport options.

It is not just me saying this. It is up to the minister and the government to assure people that this will not be the case. Rob says:

As former Labor chief minister ...

Rob does not say which one; I do not know whether it was Katy Gallagher or who it was. He says:

As former Labor Chief Minister ... told ABC radio ... \$80 million for prisoner reintegration and \$238 million annually for hospital and health has disappeared, sucked into the vortex that is light rail funding.

That is according, third hand, through Rob Chalmers, to this former Labor Chief Minister, whichever one it was. Daryl Jones says:

This headline is very clickbait. Parton raises good points, ACT govt cut public buses in Gungahlin to only then reinstate them after public backlash, he's asking (very rightly so) that the same mistake not be made again.

If it's going to take an extra 5-10 minutes to commute by tram, why bother? The bus is a better option.

That is a smattering of the comments that appeared on that *RiotACT* story when it was published earlier today. I would like members to seriously consider the things that are put forward in this motion, and I hope that we can arrive at a sensible point of agreement.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.08): No, we will not be supporting the motion. The ACT government has committed to delivering an integrated public transport network. It is in our Transport Strategy, and it is ludicrous to propose that we retain an old bus network without taking into consideration a new mass transit corridor once it is developed.

Having an integrated public transport network means that we take into consideration all transport modes, including light rail, buses, active travel, rideshare and private vehicles. This is further evidenced through our development of a multimodal network plan, which will help us to identify modal priorities and gaps in the integration of transport modes, using the movement and place framework that we have identified in the Transport Strategy.

As I have said so many times now, the government will be extending light rail to the south side to create a mass transit spine from Gungahlin through to Woden and beyond, through our city-wide light rail network. This will ensure that Canberrans on this first extension, with stage 2 to stage 1, can travel to key destinations, including employment centres north to south, along the line in a single trip without transferring between modes.

Not only will the extension of light rail to Woden provide south side residents with the same high-quality, frequent, reliable service that we have already provided Canberrans living on the north side; it will also allow our north side residents to access the extensive employment centres along the light rail stage 2B alignment, including Barton, Deakin, and Woden and beyond.

The line will be integrated with rapid and route bus services. In the future additional light rail lines are planned to other town centres and destinations, extending the benefits of our existing line on stage 1, stage 2 and beyond.

The ACT government will consider changes to the bus network when we are closer to light rail stage 2B becoming operational. Changes to the bus network will be made through evidence-based decision-making using various data sources at that point in time, but not limited to public transport patronage data, household travel survey data, customer feedback, and integration with other transport modes.

Mr Parton claimed that travel time has increased following the introduction of light rail stage 1. But he forgets to remember that it only takes around 24 minutes to travel from Gungahlin to the city on light rail, whereas the old red rapid bus service used to take between 35 and 40 minutes. It is no wonder that we have seen an increase in the number of people wanting to use light rail on the stage 1 route since the old rapid service—which was rapid but did not deliver the same benefits as light rail—was there.

The changes we made to the bus network following the introduction of light rail have allowed us to continue to improve services across the entire bus network. Under the current bus network, Canberrans have access to more than 800 additional services each day during the week, when compared to the network operating pre light rail. It is estimated that the introduction of light rail has also allowed us to redistribute nearly 3,500 kilometres of bus services to improve the overall bus network.

As much as the Liberals try, they cannot argue that light rail stage 1 has not been incredibly successful. It is now a central part of our public transport system. It provides a frequent, convenient connection for the people on Canberra's north side, significantly reducing both the number of cars on our roads and the harmful emissions that they create, as well as congestion on the roads. We have seen that on Northbourne Avenue.

Around 20 per cent of all Canberra's public transport trips are taken on light rail. This is a key point, so I will repeat it: across our entire public transport network, 20 per cent of our passengers travel on the 12 kilometres of light rail track between Gungahlin and the city.

Contrary to Mr Parton's motion, the ACT government did see an increase in public transport patronage following the introduction of light rail across Canberra. Just prior to the impacts of COVID, we had recorded public transport journeys increasing by over 10 per cent across the ACT, and that is comparing weekly journeys in February 2019 versus February 2020.

There is a difference between passenger boardings and journeys. A boarding is recorded every time a passenger gets onto a public transport vehicle, whereas a single journey is recorded based on a customer's total travel from start to end, which may include multiple boardings when they have caught more than one service.

To be clear, the 10 per cent increase that we recorded was measured by passenger journeys, not boardings. The opposition cannot argue that this increase is due to an increase in passengers transferring between services. It is obvious that light rail has been a major catalyst for more people choosing public transport.

If Mr Parton requires any more evidence, I would draw his attention to the last finding from the 2021 light rail survey, which identified that over 43 per cent of light rail passengers had not used public transport in the ACT before light rail commenced operations. That is a staggering number. Those statistics send a clear message on the positive impact that light rail has in attracting people to use public transport.

That is not even taking into consideration the significant urban regeneration of the corridor that has occurred as a result of the project. People want to live and work near light rail. They want to use light rail more than buses. Buses never delivered those benefits when we had the red rapid, and they will not deliver the same benefits on the south side, either.

Unlike the current rapid 4 and rapid 5 bus services, the future light rail route to Woden will have stops along Adelaide Avenue and Yarra Glen, and will provide nearly 20,000 adjacent residents with access to a rapid transport service into the city and to Woden—

Mr Parton: It's 20 minutes slower.

MR STEEL: for those residents to access in places like Yarralumla, Deakin, Curtin and Hughes. It sounds like Mr Parton is proposing that we retain the current bus service following the introduction of light rail stage 2B. If that is the case, he obviously has not considered how residents living in those adjacent suburbs would access the new light rail stops without having a frequent and convenient bus connection.

The ACT government will continue to provide public transport users with direct bus services from the south side to the city. I am not disagreeing with that. I have always said that on the public record. We will look at the new network closer to the time of operation, but we do expect that there will still be direct services from the south side, just like we have the peak bus services from Lanyon—the 180, the 181 and the 182. I am sure that those will continue. I am sure that there will be direct bus services to the city from places like Weston Creek and Molonglo. But we will consider the integration of the new network once we are closer to the point of operation.

It is ridiculous to propose that the ACT government retains the exact same network as it operates currently, and not make any changes whatsoever or improvements to connect with other transport modes, including light rail, active travel and park and ride. There may be further developments in the city between now and the commencement of operations that will need to be considered in our new network and timetable going forward.

Mr Parton said that he stood up for some of our bus services from the south side. He mentioned a couple. But it was the Liberals who fought against the introduction of the R5 service, which runs all the way from Calwell through to the city, through places

like Erindale. That was a new service that was put on by our government directly as a result of the buses that were freed up from the light rail stage 1 route, and that has directly benefited Tuggeranong residents. It is one of the best patronised bus routes on the south side. That is exactly the sort of improvement that we will continue to make—providing more rapid, reliable services to people on the south side as we go forward, as we have shown in the past.

We want to make sure that Tuggeranong has access to the light rail system in the future. We expect that, in a couple of weeks time—maybe a couple of years; it has taken a little bit longer perhaps than we expected, for the Liberals to put out their media alert and then retract it, and to make an announcement on light rail—they will announce a third mode of transport in Canberra, possibly trackless trams—we do not know, Madam Speaker—and betraying the south side. What would that do to the public transport system? It would create massive transport interchange penalties. It would create massive inefficiencies in the system by needing to have more depots. It would not deliver the same high-quality service on the south side that has been delivered on the north side.

We will deliver the vision of a single transport spine from Gungahlin through to Woden and beyond, so that people can go all along that spine and access the many employment hubs and recreational facilities. We will provide that vision. The Liberals want to smash that vision. They do not want to see stage 2 built. They need to be up-front with the community on the south side.

Mr Parton, in his reply to my speech and to those of others today on his motion, should stand up and be clear to the community about whether he supports light rail stage 2. But all we have heard from him is what Mr Parton does best, which is attacking light rail and crying over spilt milk.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (3.19): I am really glad that we are talking about public transport again. I appreciate Mr Parton's genuine concern about this issue. He regularly brings forward motions. I have done some work in this area, too.

Public transport really matters. We need to get more people moving by public transport and we need to get fewer moving by private car. Climate change and congestion are two of the biggest reasons, but we also need to give people accessible and convenient transport so that they can get to where they need to go.

I am really glad that we are talking about this, but I am disappointed by this motion from Mr Parton. It is not an accurate representation of what is going on. Good policy requires good data, so I will put some corrections on the record.

This motion calls for the duplication of our public transport system to Woden. We do not yet know what, if any, links we need to duplicate, so I am not sure why anyone would run out ahead of the project and call for a full duplication. I am also a bit puzzled to see this call from Mr Parton. The Canberra Liberals have spent a lot of time talking about the fact that we are spending too much money on light rail. I am genuinely confused about why Mr Parton is suggesting that we increase our spend by committing to a full duplication of the system ahead of any needs assessment.

First, I want to have a bit of a chat about the data. We have taken our data from census data, from BITRE, the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics, and from state and territory data. I think Mr Parton's data is mostly coming from *RiotACT* below-the-line comments, and I suggest expanding that a little bit.

Mr Parton notes in his motion that public transport mode share is not increasing in the ACT. He is right to talk about that, but his reasoning about why is false. He seems to be saying that the introduction of light rail, or the introduction of network 19, caused a drop in public transport, and that is simply not the case. Our public transport usage has plateaued in Canberra for some time. That occurred before COVID. That occurred independently of COVID. For a long time we seemed unable to entice more users onto our system, and it has been a problem for decades.

Data from BITRE shows that Canberra had more public transport usage on route buses in 1985 than it did in 2013. That certainly matches my recollections of Canberra. My dad was a senior public servant. He caught the bus to work. My friends do not. But light rail has fixed that problem. In April 2019 light rail started running. It was a resounding success almost immediately. In Gungahlin it is more obvious than anywhere else. The daily average number of journeys by bus and light rail in Gungahlin in the third quarter of 2019 was up 29 per cent on the previous year. Before light rail we had low public transport use; immediately after its introduction, public transport usage leapt by 29 per cent. That is a big tick for light rail.

In February 2020, Minister Steel announced clear evidence that our patronage on Canberra's public transport network was growing. He said there were 36 per cent more journeys made on public transport for the 2020 Multicultural Festival than for the 2019 festival. He also reported higher public transport usage at the start of 2020, including crowding on the R10 from Molonglo.

In April 2021, Minister Steel announced further results of the new integrated light rail and bus network. He said that, before COVID, we had an average of 15,047 passenger boardings each day, which was higher than expected. Ninety-four per cent of customers were satisfied with light rail, and services had to be increased to accommodate demand.

The Clay office is not simply reading from Minister Steel's press releases. We have interrogated this data. As I said before, we have looked at the census data, we have looked at BITRE, we have looked at state and territory data, and we have looked at other sources. We have been out talking to people, we have conducted research, we have spoken to our constituents and we have spoken to stakeholders.

Where light rail has been introduced, we now have a thriving public transport system. We have a positive change of direction after what was a really long period of stagnation. Surveys of light rail users show that more than 43 per cent had never used public transport before catching light rail. These are the people we need to reach. I want Belconnen and the whole city to share in this as soon as possible.

Mr Parton's motion seems to say that network 19 and light rail resulted in a decrease in public transport patronage before the pandemic. That is simply not true. The figures

do not show that. There was a change in public transport behaviour and it was a result of COVID, so let us dig into that.

First of all, let us look at the context. Let us look at the other jurisdictions which suffered decreases in public transport during COVID. In south-east Queensland during COVID, their best public transport usage was only three-quarters of their normal usage. In August 2022, they only had 73 per cent of people using public transport compared to their pre-pandemic levels. In comparison, their light rail system did pretty well. Their patronage was 95 per cent. Public transport usage dropped in south-east Queensland during COVID, but light rail bounced back quicker.

The data from Sydney and Melbourne tells the same story. In July 2022, in Sydney, public transport patronage levels sat at an average of 70 per cent of pre-COVID levels. In March 2022, in Melbourne, public transport usage was only around 63 per cent of pre-COVID levels. All around the country, public transport usage dropped during COVID, and it has not yet returned to pre-COVID levels. At different points in time during the past two years, people either could not use public transport because of lockdowns, or they were cautious about using it because of the ongoing pandemic, and confidence is still low. That is a story that has happened all over Australia and all over the world.

What has been happening here in the ACT as a result of COVID? In August 2022, the ACT Transport Recovery Plan refresh saw us at 70 per cent of pre-COVID levels of patronage. That is in line with other major cities. It is in line with south-east Queensland at 73 per cent, with Sydney at 70 per cent and with Melbourne at 63 per cent. It puts us at the top end of that. It is part of this national trend that saw a drop in public transport usage during COVID. We are consistent with what happened elsewhere. It had nothing to do with light rail or network 19.

What else can we learn from the data? We have seen some areas with lower decreases here in the ACT than they saw elsewhere, and in some areas we have seen an increase during COVID. This bounce-back only happened in the inner north of Canberra and in Gungahlin, the districts that have light rail. For the inner north of Canberra, it has actually increased. It went up to 9.2 per cent of journeys to work in 2021. Thank you, light rail. Gungahlin dropped, but it was a smaller drop in usage compared to everywhere else in Canberra and compared to other jurisdictions around Australia. COVID dropped public transport usage. Light rail has helped it to bounce back.

This is particularly stark when you look at the suburbs in Canberra that do not have light rail. Before the pandemic, Woden had higher levels of public transport usage than Gungahlin. Now Gungahlin has higher usage than Woden. Imagine how many more people will have access to great public transport in the Woden Valley and the inner south when Curtin, Hughes, Yarralumla and Deakin have direct access to public transport on the Adelaide Avenue-Yarra Glen corridor. Frankly, I cannot wait until we get light rail out to Belconnen, so that we can get this benefit, too.

The data that Mr Parton's motion relies on simply is not correct. I am happy to have a chat afterwards and give him our sources, and show him how we have put these numbers together. It is absolutely clear in our office that light rail and network 19 did

not drop city-wide public transport usage. COVID dropped public transport usage; light rail has helped to restore it.

I would like to chat next about the “calls ons” in the motion. Mr Parton wants a guarantee of a direct bus system that duplicates stage 2 of light rail. The Greens cannot support this, either. It does not make sense to commit to such an expensive undertaking without seeing whether we need it and whether people want it. The Liberals are constantly saying they are worried about the costs of light rail and this motion would increase those costs—and for what?

I hear the concerns of those who worry about journey times. We need to give people public transport that they want to use, so we certainly have to watch that really carefully. But we know that, going forward, all journey times to and from the city will increase because of congestion, and our congestion is increasing three times faster than other Australian mainland capitals. Light rail will help that.

Mr Parton referred to ACT government surveys, and I am not sure which one he is looking at. We are looking at the ACT government’s 2016 report *Keep Canberra moving—what you have told us*. That survey tells us that journey time matters. It says that the largest barrier to public transport use is that it takes longer to travel by bus to get to where people want to go.

Let us unpick that. In 2016, when that survey was done, the ACT government ran a network that had very long bus journeys. Many buses travelled for well over an hour end-to-end, snaking through every suburb and stopping frequently at many stops. This meant that the whole city had lots of coverage, but it also meant that frequency, reliability and journey time struggled. The longer the runs, the more the chance for delays, the more traffic the bus might encounter over its long journey, and each small thing added up to a large delay. The newer bus network is focused on shorter, more direct and frequent journeys with less risk about reliability.

Buses that share the road with cars will always face problems with reliability and with frequency. Buses get stuck in the same traffic that cars are stuck in for most of their run. They hit the same lights. They are delayed by the same accidents and collisions. Reliability is also an issue with our ageing buses. With such a large fleet, it is not uncommon for there to be buses out of service. Our overall bus reliability is pretty good. It is at 99 per cent. But some of our weekend services are far below that. It is pretty notable that Canberra’s buses often run late, with on-time running at only 76 per cent.

Our light rail does not suffer from any of these problems. Canberra’s light rail service’s reliability was 99.9 per cent, with very little late running. Light rail does not get stuck in traffic. That is one of its key benefits. The 2016 poll found that frequency and reliability were significant barriers to the uptake of public transport, and since then we have found these issues are significantly reduced when light rail is delivered. The actual uptake of light rail bears this out. More people are using it.

Direct buses are also not always the best buses. It depends on your situation, where you want to go and what you are doing. A direct route might suit you if you are using public transport for commuting to a nine to five job in the city, and if there is a direct

bus that happens to go from near your house and arrive to near where your job is. It does not suit those who do not live near a direct route. It does not suit people who are trip chaining. It does not help parents who are taking their kids to school. It does not help retirees going to medical appointments or people with disabilities going to the shops outside peak hours.

Our network needs to cater for a wide variety of people and we need to include them all. We need to set up a really good, integrated system and we need to involve the community in those discussions, as well as involving great advocacy groups like PTCBR. We need to monitor what people say, how they use our public transport and where the problems are. We need to be responsive and we need to do a lot of other things to make our public transport better.

We do not need to set up a completely parallel duplication and we certainly do not want to pay for one. I do not know whether we will need to duplicate some direct bus services mirroring light rail; we might. But it is not good transport planning to commit to a full duplication right now. It would be an irresponsible use of limited resources. There are other things we need to spend that money on.

We need a fully electric fleet. We need more buses. We need hourly weekend services. We need to fix our footpaths and bike paths so that people can get to their stop. We also need to roll out light rail as soon as possible. We need that network to extend from Gungahlin to Tuggeranong and then all the way out to Kippax and Ginninderry, and that is how we will see greater uptake of public transport in Canberra. So why commit funds to something we do not yet know that we need when we have so much that we absolutely do need?

Our two biggest districts for journey to work public transport ridership are now Gungahlin and the inner north. That is because of light rail. Let us build on that success and give more people this great option. Light rail is running on 100 per cent renewable electricity. It reduces our emissions, it reduces congestion and it helps people get to where they need to go.

I thank Mr Parton. I welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can improve our public transport system. I will continue to advocate for a gold standard public transport network for the whole city. The Greens will not be supporting this motion.

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) (3.32): Light rail should be part of a transport network that also includes buses, active travel and cars. The light rail component is a very efficient way to move large numbers of people between two points, such as thousands of people from the Woden Town Centre to the city for office work or to study at ANU or to access the shops and services there.

According to the 2021 census, a total of 4,212 people live in Woden and work in the city or the inner north, and an additional 2,010 people live in Woden and work in the Parliamentary Triangle. So there are more than 6,000 people every day just from Woden heading north to go to work.

We do not yet know exactly what stage 2B is going to look like, but we know that, if we can get light rail all the way to Mawson, for example, then park and ride and bike lockers there will make it easier for people in some Tuggeranong suburbs, like Wanniassa, Kambah and Fadden, to incorporate light rail into their regular commute. The way that this would work is by seeing light rail as part of a transport network. It is not the only answer; it is a choice that you make available to people, along with having buses and active travel.

For people who are paying \$16 to park all day in the Parliamentary Triangle or paying \$13 to \$19 to park all day in the city, that cost saving of not having to drive their car is really important. There are 854 people who live in Woden and work in the Parliamentary Triangle who earn less than \$2,000 a week and there are 1,981 people who live in Woden and work in the city or the inner north and earn less than \$2,000 a week. If they were able to make light rail part of the transport network that they are using, that is really important in the context of the rising cost of living for those people.

But, really importantly, as Jo Clay was saying earlier, it also gives us more flexibility in our transport network. It frees up buses for suburban network services. It also frees up road and parking space for those people who need to drive their car, and it is really important for people for whom the current hub-and-spoke bus network design does not meet all of their needs.

For people who are going from one suburb to another rather than to a town centre or the city, if we have more buses available then we can help those people more with a more flexible network in future. For people who do a lot of trip chaining, where they might make stops on their journey, you have to look at the total transport network and how buses and light rail are part of that. That planning is really important, and it is very important that we do not commit ourselves to what exactly that might look like before people have had a chance to look at the data and understand how that fits into people's lives.

Light rail is also about making more choices available to people. In a personal example, I do not actually like having to drive to work every day. So, on a day where I do not have to drive, I would actually prefer to combine active travel with mass transit. At the moment, what that looks like for me is getting on something like the R5 with my skateboard, so that on the way home if I am not feeling like I want to stand around and wait an extra 10 minutes for the bus that goes closer to home, I can catch, say, the 59 and ride my skateboard from Deakin back to Hughes, which has some very nice footpaths that have been resurfaced regularly and well maintained.

In the future, that could be light rail that I am using there. That not only is good for my physical activity but also means that I can enjoy being able to use my time more effectively on the bus or, in future, the light rail, rather than sitting in traffic on the road. I might pop my headphones in and listen to music, I might be reading my email, or I might be getting the online shopping done while I am on my way home. It could be any one of a number of things that are all much better than sitting in traffic and looking out for other cars on the road.

So, when light rail comes on the southside, I will keep cruising—can't stop; won't stop moving! It is like I've got this music in my headphones saying it's going to be all right!

So I will not be supporting Mr Parton's motion today.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (3.37), in reply: In closing, I am a bit disappointed that I did not get support, but never mind. Let us talk about patronage numbers. The data from the Bureau of Stats and other places suggests that, as of now, our public transport patronage is lower today than it was before light rail commenced. That is a fact. Irrespective of whatever external factors you want to refer to, that is a fact. And, certainly the needle has not moved, based on the figures as of today.

Mr Steel continues to say that they are committed and they are getting on with the job of building light rail. He was asked about this in question time today. What he is saying is: "It does not matter what it costs. It is of no consequence. We are going to do the business case, but I do not know what we will use it for. We might just use it for toilet paper or something. We are building this thing, irrespective of what the cost is. It does not matter what it costs; we are just doing it."

Mr Steel was asked about this in the chamber today. He would not answer the question in question time on whether there was a threshold cost for the government when it comes to stage 2. From memory, he said that the government was in the design and eventually procurement process and that those things would be considered. Apologies if I have got that wrong, but I think that is what he said. I do not have access to *Hansard* yet, but that is my recollection of what he said. So, again, what he is saying is, "It does not matter. Whatever it costs, we are doing it."

My understanding of how the light rail will improve public transport benefits, based on what has been said in this chamber, is that light rail frees up more buses to get you out to the suburbs, among other things. We talked about the reliability and the fact that it is there, but we are talking, according to Mr Steel, about freeing up more buses to get out into the suburbs. That is certainly the line that the PTCBR group is taking. Again, the minister said that the big improvements to service came from freeing up more buses.

I would say to the minister: here is the deal. You do not have to spend \$3 billion on a tram. You do not have to create traffic chaos for a decade to free up more buses. I will tell you how to do it. The best way to get more buses is to just get more buses. That is the best way to do it. You do not have to build something else to get more buses.

Also, let me tell you this: for the money that you are spending on stage 2 of light rail, you could actually double the size of your bus fleet and they would be all electric. Of course, you would not need that many buses. We could have buses going directly to our door on that. But you could have more than 800 on the road, 400 of which would be fully electric.

So, if you are genuinely concerned about public transport outcomes and if you are genuinely concerned about emissions reductions—I do not know if you guys have

noticed, but there is apparently a climate emergency—and you want to get more people out of their cars into fully electric services in the quickest possible time, that is one way to do it. I am not necessarily saying that that is our position, but I am putting it forward as an option—because this is a place of ideas. This is a place of ideas, and I am just putting it forward as an option, in that you could do that.

I think that the most important thing about this motion, in all seriousness—and I think even Ms Clay would agree with me on this—is that it places firmly on the political radar that journey times from the south are pretty important and that we will be focusing heavily on it. I note some of the detail that Mr Steel has offered today. I wanted to go to that event on Friday night, but I did not want to cramp your style.

Mr Steel interjecting—

MR PARTON: The journey times from the south are very, very important and we will be focusing heavily on those. It is very important to us that whatever changes are made in this space give heed to those concerns.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 14

Ms Castley
Mr Cocks
Mr Hanson
Mrs Kikkert
Ms Lawder
Mr Milligan
Mr Parton

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Mr Braddock
Ms Burch
Ms Cheyne
Ms Clay
Ms Davidson
Mr Gentleman

Dr Paterson
Mr Petterson
Mr Rattenbury
Mr Steel
Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Vassarotti

Question resolved in the negative.

ACT inland swimming spots—safety

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (3.46): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) in Australia, one in three drowning deaths occur in rivers and creeks;
- (b) drowning deaths have increased 15 percent from 2021 to 2022 and have increased 24 percent over the past 10 years; and
- (c) the summer months of December and January are peak months for drowning deaths in Australia;

- (2) further notes:
 - (a) migrants are at a far higher risk of drowning when compared to the general population;
 - (b) following the drowning death of beloved local Afghan man Najeeb Rafee in 2019, community groups like the Refugee and Migrant Swimming Project have been calling for the ACT Government to improve safety measures at inland waterways; and
 - (c) the Royal Life Saving Society is currently producing a report on safety equipment across Canberra's river-based swimming spots; and
- (3) calls on the Government to:
 - (a) within six months of the date of the Royal Life Saving Society report, publish a plan to address risks arising from identified safety equipment shortages at ACT inland swimming spots, including emergency phones where there is no reception;
 - (b) review signage and safety information at popular inland swimming spots to ensure it is accessible and clear;
 - (c) provide greater public education about swim safety that is accessible in a variety of languages; and
 - (d) report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day of November 2023 on progress.

Residents of our landlocked national capital have always been eager to seek some cool relief during our hot, dry summers, and our inland rivers and waterways have invariably provided that. Canberra has many beautiful places where we can swim, relax and cool down; however, that can pose safety risks.

The flat, still surface of an inland waterway can give a false sense of security. Currents, undertows or submerged objects, even in seemingly tranquil waterways, can prove to be very dangerous. It is important to be aware of the dangers and always take care around water. Remember that water conditions which may have been suitable one day can change hourly with the current.

Inland waterways are also not patrolled by lifeguards and, should someone get into trouble, there may be no-one to assist and, if they lie beyond mobile phone coverage, it can be even harder to be able to call for help when needed. When enjoying inland waterways, it is important to understand the hazards and risks involved to keep yourself and those with you safe. Some of the dangers may include strong currents and fast-flowing water, submerged objects such as rocks, snags and tree branches, slippery banks and uneven surfaces and changing seasonal patterns and floodwater.

I would like to thank and applaud the efforts of the Royal Life Saving Society for their excellent work and advocacy in terms of the safety around inland waterways. They have found that 25 per cent of drowning deaths occur in rivers and creeks. Of those, 37 per cent involved alcohol; 81 per cent of all drowning deaths in rivers and creeks were male; 72 per cent of the people who drowned in rivers and creeks lived within 100 kilometres of where they drowned; and most of these deaths involved people aged in the age bracket of 18 to 45 years.

I would now like to tell a story about a young man called Najeeb. In October 2020, just days before he turned 25, Najeeb Rafee was enjoying a swim at a popular swimming spot at the Cotter. Najeeb had suggested a family outing there to cool off and to take everyone's minds off the recent death of an uncle back home in Afghanistan.

Najeeb, along with his family, had sought a better life and escaped persecution from the Taliban, fleeing Afghanistan in 2009. He and his family came to call Canberra home. So significantly did Najeeb embrace his new home that he was recognised for his community service by the ACT government in 2019.

Like many migrants to Australia, Najeeb could not swim, but he had bought floaties and a blow-up raft to help protect him in the water. But, unfortunately, at about 5 pm Najeeb fell from the raft. Najeeb's parents and uncle, who were also unable to swim, jumped into the water and valiantly tried to save their son and nephew. His cousin left the river, driving 20 minutes back down the road, to get enough reception to be able to call 000. His other cousin stood on the road, desperately trying to flag down passers-by.

By the time the paramedics arrived, Najeeb's father needed to be resuscitated. Najeeb was taken to hospital in a critical condition, where he stayed in intensive care for 10 days. The day he was taken off life support would have been his 25th birthday. In a cruel twist of fate, Najeeb had been booked in to begin swimming lessons the Friday after his death.

The tragic way that Najeeb died and his generous spirit, gave his loved ones an idea: a swim school, in Najeeb's honour, to teach people like him about the water. Thus formed the genesis of the Refugee and Migrant Swim Project. This local Canberra based group, formed by four of Najeeb's friends—Annie Gao, Clare McBride-Kelly, Andrew Nolan and Liam McBride-Kelly—decided to get together and do something tangible to help change that trend. They created the not-for-profit Refugee and Migrant Swimming Project to honour his memory. They provide free, culturally safe and trauma-informed swimming and water safety lessons to Canberra's refugee and migrant community, because deaths by drowning are preventable with access to appropriate swimming and water safety lessons.

While swimming programs for children exist in schools, Canberra has long been the only capital city in Australia that has had a specialist swimming program for adults from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The program caters for participants with no swimming experience and is developed in partnership with the Gungahlin Leisure Centre, Royal Life Saving ACT and the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services.

The core program centres around 10 swimming lessons delivered in the Gungahlin Leisure Centre and one water safety lesson at an outdoor waterway. English lessons are also provided before each lesson, teaching swimming and water safety related language.

The project's founders are now calling on the ACT and federal governments to fund that program in perpetuity, as the community donations that have so far relied on will

not be sufficient to make it viable in the long term. They have also—and pertinent to this motion today—been asking for lifesaving public infrastructure to be installed at the Cotter Bend, such as emergency flotation devices and better signage to adequately flag dangers. In addition they want to see mobile phone coverage expanded to cover the Cotter Bend, where five people have drowned in the past five years.

Najeeb's story is eerily familiar because every six days a person who was born overseas dies by drowning. Swimming skills and water safety knowledge among overseas visitors is known to be less robust than for those of us who grew up in Australia.

An increase in new residents from a range of countries and cultures in recent years has important implications for drowning prevention strategies to ensure that everyone recreating in and around Australia's rivers and creeks remain safe. On average, 288 people drown in Australia each year, with around one in four of those people being born overseas. Of those overseas born deaths, most were men and most drowned in rivers while swimming.

Royal Life Saving Society research shows some unique risk factors for drowning among people born overseas, and there are different subgroups that may require specific approaches to drowning prevention. There is, therefore, a need for tailored water safety strategies to target multicultural communities appropriately using clear messaging that is both culturally sensitive and educational. This requires specific information and at the transient populations that sometimes come through Canberra.

For people new to Australia swimming and water safety lesson may not be an immediate priority when settling. Even if families want to start swimming and water safety lessons, barriers exist to access in these programs, including financial, transport, child care and lack of culturally appropriate facilities and programs, something that I was discussing in my last PMV. Some people may have never been in the water before, let alone visited a public swimming pool or could have a fear of water and of drowning. Therefore, they may not have the knowledge, awareness or skills to adequately help themselves or others around the water.

In Australia, children have the opportunity to learn swimming and water safety skills and are exposed to water-based activities through their school years. Adults are less likely to access formal lessons or safety programs to learn the essential knowledge and skills to keep themselves and their families safe around pools, beaches and other water bodies. Water and beach culture are part of the Australian experience, but what if you did not grow up here and/or did not have the opportunity to learn these skills?

I would like to give a shout out to a program run by the University of New South Wales which in October this year won the AUSTSWIM 2022's state and national awards for community education program of the year. The University of New South Wales Health Promotion Unit, in partnership with Medibank, the UNSW Fitness & Aquatic Centre and Coogee Surf Life Saving Club, have designed a water and beach safety program that provides eight lessons aimed to teach international students to keep them safe. This is provided at a heavily discounted rate to each and every single international student that comes through the University of New South Wales.

During the first two terms of 2022, 88 students completed the program. Confidence in the water at the start of the program varied, with most of the students describing themselves as scared or nervous. Following the program, their confidence increased and the majority felt much better equipped to be able to safely enjoy the recreational opportunities that swimming provides. I think this is an example of a program that could work very effectively here in the ACT where we have so many international students attending so many universities.

In closing, I bring this important issue to the attention of the Assembly because, as we go into this time of year, it is important that we can cool off safely and enjoy our time with friends, family and loved ones without any further tragedies.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (3.57): I thank Mr Braddock for bringing this important motion to the Assembly today. The Canberra Liberals are keen to encourage ACT residents and visitors to make better use of our bountiful outdoor resources in the district. We want to see greater participation in both sporting and leisure activities for the betterment of our health and wellbeing. Certainly, the waterways around Canberra are great drawcards for picnics, swimming and entertainment activities.

Unfortunately, inland swimming spots present increased risks of dangers and problems, as they are mainly natural structures, generally without manufactured improvements. There is usually a lack of visibility of depth and of rocks, branches and other hidden dangers. Significant variations in temperature are common in inland waterways, and can cause distress. Flow rates are extremely variable and can confuse even competent swimmers. So, it is of little wonder that children, poor swimmers, older people, less fit people, and visitors who are not aware of Australian inland water conditions, can experience problems.

In my early working life I spent many years as a water skiing instructor on the Murray River, and I was very aware of the constantly changing water conditions and the increased need for vigilance at certain times. Even on a smaller scale, ACT waterways exhibit similar issues, particularly in the rivers. The lakes have added burdens of weeds and toxins, including blue-green algae. Canberra waterways have seasonal restrictions for swimming activities, as water temperatures are too cold during about seven months of the 12 months in the year.

Now, all of these issues demand extra vigilance, and this can mainly be achieved by better education, information, facilities and signage. So, I support the call in Mr Braddock's motion today. I see merit in extending this process to provide public information and warnings where necessary when water conditions become dangerous for swimming. The levels of danger should also relate to the capabilities or levels of comprehension by all classes of swimmers. This is not restricted to new migrants or those unfamiliar with local water conditions. We too often see reports of drownings, and swimmers being caught up in rips and other dangerous conditions in oceans and saltwater environments; the message for improved awareness of those dangers is just as important for the inland waterways.

Given the popularity of local ACT swimming spots, it should be easier to focus information campaigns and signings on those areas. I certainly want to see greater usage of the ACT's natural environment, but it has to be done in a safe manner. Far

greater public education and information is essential. Accordingly, I am very pleased to support Mr Braddock's motion here today.

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) (4.00): I thank Mr Braddock for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. It is a timely reminder, as we move into warmer weather, about the importance of safety in our reserves and waterways that surround the bush capital.

Canberrans have personal responsibility to consider their personal safety when seeking to use the ACT's natural waterways for recreation. Similar to many Australian beaches, these natural waterways are unpatrolled and unsupervised. Hazards may be present, and weather and conditions can change quickly and with little warning. Many of these natural waterways are located in areas where communications are limited or not available. Emergency assistance may be difficult to contact, and may take some time to arrive. So the risks at these locations are difficult to treat, and the government has limited responsibility and capacity to treat these risks. The ultimate responsibility rests with the individuals using these natural waterways to assess and manage their own risks. The advice is clear: learn to swim, check the conditions, and consider the risks before entering these natural waterways. If in doubt, do not go, or consider using a supervised commercial pool in Canberra.

This year we have received a large amount of rain in our region. This may also add to the risks of swimming in our waterways. Those waterways are carrying a lot of water at the moment, and the flows are quite high. It is also important to stress that water safety is not just about swimming. Anyone who enters the water—whether it is in a boat or a flotation device, or through other recreational activities like fishing—should be aware of the dangers that it can present.

Prevention is better than cure. Education around general water safety, learning to swim, first aid and CPR, saves a lot more lives than signs do. The *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2022* identified that in the ACT one death occurred as a result of drowning in our waterways. This was a 75 per cent decrease on 2020-21, and a 50 per cent decrease on the 10-year average.

Minister Berry is leading some excellent work with the Royal Life Saving's refugee and migrant swimming project. The minister has recently announced recipients for the 2022 sport and recreation grants program, and is funding support of \$5,500 to the Royal Life Saving group in support of the refugee and migrant swimming project. I note the importance of this program as a legacy from the tragic drowning at one of our most popular local waterways. The government will, of course, continue to work with stakeholders and the community to ensure that everyone can enjoy our waterways safely.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service, or PCS, have prominent signage at all the popular Murrumbidgee River access points, from Tharwa in the south to Uriarra Crossing in the north. Messaging on signage is sectioned in two parts. The top section provides advice on river hazards such as cold water, strong current, submerged hazards, an uneven bottom and the need to supervise children. The bottom section, of

course, is based around water quality testing results. These tests are undertaken by the ACT Health Protection Service.

Emergency phones are located at Casuarina Sands and the Cotter campground, where mobile phone coverage is poor. There are few lifesaving services, though, and facilities or resources provided at river access points or recreational areas. So visitors are reminded that although your wellbeing is our concern, it is also your own personal responsibility.

There is also a case for those venturing into our national parks over the summer period. Weather conditions can change very quickly so always be prepared, know where you are going, and make sure that your family do too. Personal locator beacons are available for hire at Namadgi Visitor Centre and Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, and I encourage everyone to take one with them when going out into our parks. Even if you have a mobile phone with you, it cannot be relied on all the time. Batteries can go flat, and mobile reception can be patchy. I also understand that personal locator beacons can be hired at the Snowy Region Visitor Centre in Jindabyne for any Canberrans going into Kosciuszko National Park this summer.

So in closing, I encourage all Canberrans and visitors to our region to take care this summer when they are out enjoying our parks, reserves and waterways.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.05), in reply: I would like to thank everyone for their contributions today. Mr Milligan's suggestion of regular updated information as to the state of the waterways is something that is definitely worth considering, and I thank you for that idea. I also appreciate Minister Gentleman's response on behalf of the government in terms of what they are doing to improve the safety of the ACT's inland waterways. I think we can be united, as we go into the summer period, particularly as we spend time with loved ones. Over what hopefully will be a hotter summer than the spring was, we will have the opportunity to cool off in an enjoyable and safe manner in our inland waterways. Thank you.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

Motion (by Mr Gentleman) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Valedictory

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.06): Yes, another year has gone and we are now entering the Christmas break. I would like to say I am very proud of the work I have done representing the people of Yerrabi and bringing their views and concerns to this Assembly and making sure that they are heard. I guess the biggest issue for them has been the lack of general urban maintenance. This has been things such as potholes, long grasses and just a general neglect by this government of some of the basic amenities that indicate a good government.

This year I also took on the role as chair at the estimates hearings. To say that was an experience would have to be a bit of an understatement, as we were all locked out by WorkSafe! However, once we were able to continue, the estimates hearings ran smoothly and effectively, here in this chamber—another first! I would like to thank my other two colleagues here today, Mr Braddock and Dr Paterson, for their support through that estimates hearing period. I think we did extremely well. We achieved a really good outcome and all the feedback we have received has been very positive. I would also like to thank the committee secretaries for the hard work they have done during the estimates periods, Dr Monk and everyone else associated with that.

At the beginning of the year we saw a storm that occurred in Belconnen, and it seemed that maybe this year we would see many significant environmental events happening in the ACT. After my successful motion I brought to this place, there was a subsequent inquiry conducted and it came up with a whole series of recommendations. I certainly look forward to seeing the government's response to that inquiry and ensuring situations like that and the government's responses in such emergencies do not happen again.

In my sport and recreation portfolio, my major concerns relate to the lack of new infrastructure, grounds, indoor facilities or even the big items needed for a modern day city. The stadium replacement topic seems to have completely lost its way, continuing along its winding path without a firm direction.

The disability sector is an area where there is great need. It appears, though, that the government has completely forgotten about them. It is time the government stepped up. Yes, there are a lot of people out there that qualify for the NDIS but also there are more people out there with disability who do not qualify for the NDIS. That is why it is very important the ACT government do what it can to support those people that need support.

Similarly in the skills shadow portfolio—another area where the government has its eyes on its own institution, CIT—we are going to put pressure on this government to also recognise the important work the independent RTO sector do in terms of upskilling and creating the workforce that is critical in supporting local businesses with highly qualified employees.

So there is obviously plenty of work to be getting on with for next year, but before I conclude I would also like to offer my thanks to everyone in this building who works hard to support the operation of the Assembly—the attendants, the rest of the committee team, the library, the OLA HR and finance crew—your work commitment is very much appreciated. I would also like to thank my other colleagues here of other political persuasions. It has certainly been an interesting year and I look forward to what next year may bring for us, a year just before we go into the next election in 2024. So no doubt next year we will have a lot more heated debates in this place.

I want to thank my staff senior advisor Karin Oerlemans, she has been a great support with my portfolio and Assembly duties. Ewan Brown has provided wise counsel and valuable policy input and been a great support with my committee work. Kaylee

Dorris has brought added expertise to our communications and has been a dedicated performer on all electorate-related matters within the electorate and the Assembly.

I also want to thank my wife and my son for their support and obviously everyone in the community and the people that have supported me over the couple of years. We would not be in this place without their support. So pretty much I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Valedictory

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.11): Today I stand to say a few words and wrap up for the year. It has been a big year for my office, with the affirmative consent legislation passing earlier this year. I am proud of the work on vaping that was discussed this morning. *The Bets Off. Game On.* campaign to end gambling ads was a huge task but I am very grateful and thankful to the support from the community and stakeholders to get the submission in to the federal inquiry.

My second piece of legislation passed a couple of months ago to amend the Public Place Names Act to recognise those people in our community that contribute to reconciliation, leaving colonisers in the past. Further to that, my motion last week calling on the Assembly to support an Indigenous voice to parliament is something that is very important to me to see a strong yes vote in the referendum next year. Finally, the work I have done with donor conceived families is something I feel incredibly passionate about and I will continue to advocate strongly for urgent legislation and regulation in the ACT next year.

The committee work has been intense this year and I thank my colleagues of all parties that I work closely with through this process. I would also like to acknowledge the victims of dangerous driving that I have been engaging with through my personal advocacy as a local member and also through the inquiry. For families of the 18 people lost on our roads this year this will be a very hard first Christmas. My sincere condolences are with you through this time.

To the people of Murrumbidgee, Merry Christmas. It is my daily pleasure to serve you. I never cease to be amazed at the diversity and breadth of issues that people bring to me. Thank you to ACT Labor members broadly and to those members who run the branches in my electorate. I greatly value my relationships across the party and a special shout out to Ash and his team at party office for all the support and advice throughout the year.

To my staff, thank you to Anna Gurhill, who has left my office, off to bigger and better things. Thank you for your dedication and unwavering support during your time in the office. Welcome to Kathy Allen. It is a pleasure to have you in the office and I look forward to the amazing things we can achieve together. To Rhys Thompson, I am so sad you are leaving my office. I have had such a great time working with you over the past two years and very much consider you my friend. You will make a fantastic contribution to the Chief Minister's Office, I have no doubt. I would also like to thank the staff from other Labor offices: your patience, support and engagement is invaluable to me.

To the staff at the Legislative Assembly, without you this machine does not work, so thank you so much for everything you do. To colleagues in the chamber, I hope you all have a fabulous Christmas and some time with your families. To my ACT Labor colleagues, it has been a pleasure working with you this year and I look forward to everything we will achieve next year. Merry Christmas.

Valedictory

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.15): To complete the trio of former estimates members of the year of 2022!

To the residents of Yerrabi in Canberra, as we head into the end of the year I encourage everyone who can to take an extended break. Everyone is tired and needs time to rest, recuperate and recharge. To those who cannot take an extended break, I thank you for your service over this period in whatever sector you happen to be working. I hope you get an opportunity at some point to take a break in the future. I hope this summer brings nothing more alarming than the sounds of cricket, or crickets, a cold drink and time with family and friends. I hope there is no need to fear floods, fire or plague.

To the community groups and volunteers who work tirelessly to make Canberra a better place, I would like to say thank you. Your work, whether it involves planting trees, building rotundas, cleaning up Yerrabi Pond, looking out for others, or maintaining your ties with your culture or your language makes Canberra home and a community. So I say thank you for all your efforts over the year.

I would like to thank OLA staff for all your efforts and support over the past year. I think the secretariat for estimates deserves a special shout out for this year and their efforts as they supported us throughout the estimates process. That was one hell of a ride, but I knew the worst was over when I saw you trying to maintain professionalism and not laugh at the estimates committees jokes!

To Hansard, the attendants, tech support, chamber support and the wider ACT public service, you are essential to our democracy and how appreciated you are is not said enough. So I say thank you.

I would like to thank all the members of my office, Deb, Aileen, Jordan and Dina, for all your hard work over the past year. I would like to say a thank you to Deb Cleland on the public record. She has worked in my office for the past two years and she will be sorely missed. She has made everyone insanely jealous about her move to the South Coast!

I would like to say thank you to all the Greens staff in the building and my fellow Greens MLAs for their support, cooperation, assistance and encouragement throughout the year. I would also like to thank all of the colleagues in this chamber for making it such an interesting year and for all of the support and help that you have provided.

Personally, 2022 was a difficult one for me where I couch surfed for a period of six months. This is a difficult job at the best of times that demands more than most of the

public would ordinarily be aware of. But we are all still human. So to everyone, I would like to say: enjoy your break, spend time with friends and loved ones. Spend time just with yourself as well. Everyone is running on empty after such massive years and we need to recognise that. Then we can come back to a bigger and better 2023.

Valedictory

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (4.18): There is a lot to reflect on as we approach the end of another busy year. Twelve months ago we acknowledged what was a challenging 2021, marred by COVID. But it was also a time of optimism as we became one of the world's most vaccinated jurisdictions and we focussed on our recovery. Today, as we near the end of 2022, with 32 years of consecutive economic growth and a reaffirmed AAA credit rating, the Territory continues to have a strong economy and the strongest labour market and the lowest unemployment rate in the country. With around 240,000 jobs in our economy we are well on track to reach our target of 250,000 by 2025.

Of course this year has had its challenges. COVID continues to linger in the community. However, it has been great to see our city recover so strongly. Canberrans are renowned for their personal responsibility and looking out for each other, so as we go into this Christmas season I again want to take the opportunity to thank Canberrans for doing the right thing.

This year the government has continued to deliver infrastructure and services that the growing community needs. The hospital expansion is well underway, with continued designing, building and opening of new schools. As we have debated extensively in this sitting fortnight, we are progressing the expansion of the light rail network. We are planning for Canberra's future, including introducing a comprehensive new planning bill and consulting on a new Territory plan and district strategies.

We are delivering more diverse and affordable housing options. We continue to lead the nation on climate action and I am pleased that the Sustainable Household Scheme has delivered more than \$118 million in loans for upgrades across our city, including rooftop solar, electric heating and cooling and electric vehicle chargers. This year we also took a nation-leading approach to decriminalise small-scale possession of illicit drugs, a significant social justice measure that will get people suffering from addiction the help they need.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the ACT public service throughout the year and particularly thank my directorate, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development. Of course, as we know, many public servants and others throughout the community will be working throughout the holiday period to provide essential and emergency services for our city. Thank you to those people. I hope they find time to spend some time with their loved ones over the Christmas break.

I want to thank my ACT government colleagues for their continued passion, dedication and hard work over the past year. I acknowledge all Assembly colleagues across the floor. It is clear we do not agree on much, but we do, I believe, share a

common goal of wanting to represent and support our constituents. I particularly want to thank my staff in the Chief Minister's office who work incredibly hard to support me in this role. And of course I thank the Office of Legislative Assembly staff for ensuring the Assembly continues to run so effectively.

We are now past the halfway mark of this parliamentary term. Time does indeed fly! I think we should all take Mr Braddock's advice to find time to relax and recharge ahead of what will be a busy 2023. This place will be particularly focused, I anticipate, on dealing with voluntary assisted dying legislation, a process that I imagine will take the entire calendar year. There will also hopefully be a referendum on an Indigenous voice to the Australian parliament. I foreshadow the government will campaign very strongly for a yes vote. I hope the ACT will replicate its nation-leading yes vote in marriage equality in a nation-leading yes vote for a voice to the Australian parliament for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Having made all of those political observations, I conclude by wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday period and look forward to seeing everyone back raring to go for a busy year in the Assembly in 2023.

Valedictory

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (4.23): As I started thinking about what to say in my valedictory speech for this year, after six years of serving as Member for Kurrajong, I reflect on the fact that for me the role still very much is, and will always be, about serving the people of Canberra.

All year, like many of my colleagues, I have been out meeting and chatting with Canberrans at shopping centres, cafes and workplaces, and they all love our city. Most of the older people I speak to want to ensure future generations have the same opportunities they had, and a lot of the younger people are very hopeful but uncertain about whether they will have some of those opportunities. Issues like housing affordability, cost of living, high taxes, and the poor state of our health and education systems and public transport are what people talk to me about the most.

Our duty here in the Assembly is to listen and to deliver for the people of Canberra, and to make sure the best opportunities are there for Canberrans a hundred years from now. This is an enormous responsibility, and it is one that I and my team take very seriously. The conversations I have had with Canberrans from all walks of life are one of my favourite parts of this role. It is a humbling experience and I always learn something new.

As well as the great conversations I have had with everyday Canberrans throughout the year, I have also enjoyed hearing from local residents groups. These are the organisations that bring people together to provide connection and meaning, and the breadth of people's interests and pursuits is truly eye-opening. These Canberrans serve their community on a voluntary basis, and I thank them for their tireless advocacy and engagement.

As we emerge from the destruction of COVID, I have heard a lot from Canberra's diverse business community about the challenges they are still facing. Small and

medium businesses are the exporters, the entrepreneurs and the employers of thousands of workers who form the backbone of our economy, and they have done it incredibly tough in the last few years. The thing they always say to me is that they want government to get out of the way. Red tape and high taxes are the biggest handbrake on business in our city.

The Canberra Liberals understand business and appreciate their important contribution to our economy and to our community. I look forward to keeping up our strong engagement with business in the new year. We will support our business community to do what they do best.

One of my favourite responsibilities as a member in this place is welcoming new Australians. The hope and pride of all our new Australians, and their faces as they make the pledge of citizenship, makes me very proud to be an Australian, as it always does, and especially proud of our capital city. It does remind me, of course, of my own journey in becoming an Australian citizen some 33 years ago now. To all of those who have come from other shores to Canberra this past year, I extend a heartfelt welcome.

I will close by thanking all members for another year of constructive, critical important and, sometimes, very fiery debates in the chamber. Special thanks to the Canberra Liberals team for their hard work and perseverance this year both in their electorates and in this chamber. To Jeremy, Nicole, Mark, James, Elizabeth, Leanne, Peter and Ed: thank you for your continuing support. I also pay tribute to Giulia Jones, who served the Canberra Liberals and her community so well for a decade.

To the Legislative Assembly staff—the Clerk’s office, the committee team, HR, finance and payroll, Hansard, library, IT and building maintenance and our attendants—who ensure this place works like clockwork: thank you for the role you play in our great democracy.

Thank you to my team: Albert, Amy, Alex, Dean, Scott, Kellie, Lisa; and the staff members who left us this year—Brendan, Georgia, Luke, Anastasia and Paddy, although he has not gone too far! A shout-out to Meagan, who is serving in a casual role at the moment as a temp in my office, and to all Canberra Liberals staff who have worked tirelessly to support our MLAs, thank you.

To my family, my parents and sisters, who have been through blood, sweat and tears as they staunchly supported my journey from unknown candidate to party leader: thank you for your unwavering support and unconditional love. To my in-laws and extended family, who have been nothing but supportive and warm, thank you.

To Nathan, my long-suffering partner, who really has seen it all—the good, the bad and sometimes the incredibly ugly—and still has not once faltered in his support and love for me in the whirlwind of a world that I choose to live in, thank you.

To my daughter Mia, who has never known life without her mother rushing off to another event and not being around to drop her off at child care, and who has gone to sleep too many nights without a goodnight kiss: you are an amazing young girl and

I am incredibly proud of you. Each time you kiss and cuddle my growing belly, I know that you are going to make the best big sister any little girl can have, and I love you both.

Finally, thank you to the people of Kurrajong. It is an incredible honour to continue to serve you. Happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2023.

Valedictory

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) (4.28): Politics is about people, and as we farewell this year, I will reflect on the people that support, enable and define me and the work that I have the special privilege of doing every day. Thank you to our extraordinary ACT public service. I remain in awe of what they achieve and the way with which they rise to challenges with grace and an unwearied work ethic.

From an enormous, progressive human rights agenda, with much delivered and more to come—and maybe, just maybe, the imminent righting of a democratic injustice and what that will mean—to the return of community events in earnest. A multicultural affairs agenda that has driven legislative reform, recognising the values of our multicultural city, and the intensive planning for the 25th anniversary of the multicultural festival. A new arts, culture and creative policy and action plan, supported by a large injection of funding to our arts organisations, and giving a clear destination and direction for how we will get there. The mind-boggling amount of work and direct community engagement and support that Access Canberra does each and every day, and the innovation they apply to their work. The clear, better regulation agenda we have embarked on. The growing small business sector—the support for which we have been proud to offer and will build on. The strength of our capability industries. That is a small insight of this year alone in just my portfolios.

Thank you to the people who maintain, elevate and care for our city and its people every day in the presentation and customer-facing roles: from GSOs and rangers to nurses, teachers and every person in between. It is your commitment to our city and its people that makes it so special.

Thank you to all of the OLA staff, who make this place not only function but hum. Your practical advice, responsiveness and good humour never cease to amaze me.

Thank you to my Labor colleagues in this parliament and in the broader community and their teams, particularly in the Chief Minister's Office. Every day serving with you, and together delivering our progressive agenda, is an honour.

To my team. I could not ask for better—Joe, Anna, Michael, Nick, Jemma, Kaarin. Our DLOs—Kylie, Fiona, Michelle, Tom, Rachel, Chris, Morgan, Rad, Draz, Kellie, Shauna, Lauren and Gez. Among them is a unique capacity for caring, thoughtfulness, kindness, generosity, hard work, responsiveness and creativity. These attributes combined make for an exceptional office.

To Joe, my chief of staff and my friend: thank you for your confidence in me and your unfailing belief in what we are doing and in what we want to achieve—something that permeates your actions, guidance and leadership. When we first worked together over eight years ago, I knew you were a star. Once we pursued different careers, I wondered if, and hoped that, we would work together again. I was surprised and delighted when you agreed to come on board two years ago.

We have been so lucky to benefit from your intellect, your unfailing composure—in contrast to me—and your encouragement, and we are indebted to your efforts. The feeling I had eight years ago is the same feeling I have today. On behalf of my team, we wish Joe so very well in his future endeavours and look for opportunities to work with him again one day. In the meantime, we will comfort and guide ourselves by asking, “What would Joe do?”

To my boyfriend James, you are the love of my life and I feel very lucky every day. To my mother and my dear friends, thank you for being incredible supports to me: from the levity you provide to simply just understanding. I love you dearly.

We are here because we want to serve people and because those people put their faith in us. To the people of Ginninderra: it is the very best place to live, as I say year on year, and it is true. It is true because of the people, and it is true because of the community. There is nothing else like it. Thank you for continuing to put your trust in me to represent you and to get the outcomes that matter to you. I will not let you down, and I am so grateful to have so many people around me to support me in getting that job done. Merry Christmas to all.

Valedictory

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.33): We have had a busy year in the Clay office. We have worked on public and active transport, planning, the environment, the circular economy and animal welfare issues, and we have put a gender lens on all of that. We have introduced a couple of pieces of legislation, we have run several motions and campaigns, and I have also chaired and sat on 13 inquiries this year.

It is important not to disappear into this building, so we made a real effort to make sure that I stayed connected with Belconnen. I have lived there for my whole life, and it is always a joy to be at home. I spent a lot of time out in the electorate. I attended over 150 local events, which was amazing fun. I ran weekend stalls and weekly coffee clubs, and we followed up on hundreds of constituent matters, covering streets, parks, planning issues, crossings, schools, shops, access to local services and much more.

It was a busy year. People see me at the front of this work, but there is a huge crew of people who are doing the work and supporting all of us to make sure that we can do it. I want to take a moment to thank some of those people.

First off, I have an amazing team in the Clay office. Mav has endless energy and soul for helping other people. He has given me tireless, expert advice on transport and on all things about Belconnen, and he has kept everything going in the office when we are losing our tiny minds.

Canberra is going through the biggest planning review we have ever seen. I am the Greens spokesperson for planning and I also chair the planning committee, so there is quite a lot to manage. I was delighted when God and the universe brought me Steph, who loves planning and planning law. She has actually read multiple versions of the Planning Bill, the regulations and all of the submissions. She is also an amazingly passionate environmentalist and community advocate. Steph has asked me for a favour. She has asked me to mention her cat, Amelia, so I will: Amelia.

Aileen is our whips clerk. Mostly, what she does is to nag us on the crossbench. She makes sure that we present as the amazing, crack team that you have all come to fear. She is a mother of three small children and she says that she feels well prepared for the new role that she has, as a result of that prior experience. Aileen is also my women's adviser, and she has been doing some amazing work in gender budgeting and birth services.

Deb was my arts adviser. Deb knew everyone in Canberra, particularly everyone in the arts scene and the community scene. She is also an artist herself and she has recently left us to return to her arts practice. We really miss her, but I understand that it is absolutely in her marrow.

Carol is our grand high chief of staff. She has endless patience, diplomacy, wisdom and humour. To all of our staff and to my colleagues, I say: thank you for a great year.

I also want to mention our committee secretaries. We have had quite a lot of change here, so I want to make sure that I mention everybody. Thank you so much, Martin, and Jo, who stepped in to save us. Thank you to the great team we now have of Lydia, Adam, Kate and Miona. There has been a huge amount of work, and you have done a marvellous job.

There is a huge number of people working hard in the community who are bringing their problems, their solutions and their hearts to me on a daily basis. I want very quickly to run through some of those people: Warwick, Annie and Nick; Helen and Elle; Ryan; Ian, Kate and Simon; Denise; Kat; Mon; every single member of a community council, particularly Glenn, Adele and Lachlan; Mel and Frances; Michelle; Irene, Mia, Sue, Candice, Jess and Brooke. I thank you all, for all of your help.

I also want to mention my family, who give me a huge amount of support. With my daughter, I know that I am often role modelling both being a parent and a politician, and I am not sure that I do any of those things very well, but every now and then she just amazes me. She had this conversation with me the other night when I was rushing off once again. She said, "Mummy, I'm proud of you. You're doing important work." It was really touching; I said, "Thanks. Maybe one day you'd like to be a politician like your Mummy?" She said, "No, that would be awful. I'd never see my family. I'd hate that." It is probably a good snapshot of what it is like to be the child of a politician.

I also want to mention my partner, who is many things. He is a lovely man; he is a lot of fun. He is a basketballer, a sportsman and a podcaster. He is a fairly grumpy

gardener, because he has to do it all by himself. He is a really dedicated son and a very good friend, and he moved from full time to part-time work to support me in this job.

I want to tell a story that has stuck in my head, and I hope you will indulge me if it runs over. It is not very long, but it is quite striking. He was in the hospital with my daughter the other week—they were visiting someone—and she came over a bit faint, so she vomited and collapsed, and he managed to catch the vomit in one hand, catch the child in the other hand, sweep everybody out of the door to safety and fresh air, and he did not drop a thing.

That is just the kind of guy that he is. I feel like it is a pretty good metaphor for what it must be like to support a politician. I know who he is in that anecdote. I am not sure which of the hands that I am. I am one of those. But it actually would not be possible without them. Thank you.

Valedictory

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.38): It has been just over two years since I was elected as a local MLA for Ginninderra. When I thought about what this new role required of me, I thought, “I’ll have to be in the Assembly for a certain time, probably on a committee or two; then what else do I do?” I reminded myself that my primary duty is to my electorate. I am a local member, and I am thrilled to support the people of Ginninderra, which is most of Belconnen, obviously. It is hard not to forget that it is Belconnen as well as the region of Ginninderra.

My office has always been very constituent heavy. We have answered emails; we have answered those phone calls. In some cases they have not always been responded to by others. Even this year, I have written, according to my senior adviser, 127 letters to the government, each one requesting action from the community or from community groups, whether it is related to planning, housing or basic city services.

I am sorry that Mr Steel is not here, because I wanted to give him the prize for being the recipient of the most letters from me, that being 58. Mr Gentleman is here; second prize, Mr Gentleman: 31 letters. Minister Cheyne, 18; Ms Berry, seven; Ms Vassarotti, seven; Mr Rattenbury only three—I will need to work on the Attorney-General shadow role a bit harder, I think—and Mr Barr, three. The majority of these have been on behalf of the Ginninderra community.

With respect to doorknocking, I have certainly not done as much as I wanted to, but I look forward to getting back to that after we finish this week. Again I look forward to some of those surprised reactions when I doorknock, which include, “Don’t bother talking to me; I vote Labor or Green,” and my response is, “I’m not here for that; I’m here because I’m your local member.” That does stop a few people in their tracks. Of course, the other surprising response is, “Is there an election on?” I would say, depending on the time when I doorknock, “Yes, in about three years,” or 2½ years, or two years. It does surprise a few people that they are being doorknocked midterm.

The mobile office is also a very important part, particularly, of my weekend regime, with a focus on Kippax, Hawker, Jamison, Charnwood and the larger centres in

Belconnen. A big shout-out goes to my local centre at Evatt. I think they have got to know me pretty well.

It is sad that much of the correspondence I have entered into with the government has related to basic services like, and unsurprisingly, potholes, mowing, quality of the shopping centres, and community parks. I want to let the government know that I will be continuing to advocate on behalf of the community for these really basic services.

It is interesting that Mr Steel is often heard to say that he is getting on with the job—often related to light rail. My goodness, I wish he would get on with the job when it comes to basic city services, because that is what affects the community most of the time, and they deserve the highest class. I am sad to say in this speech that they are just not getting it.

A big shout-out goes to my team, of course. Over the year they have been Amy, Unity, John, Dan, Nisha and Sam; and my current team is Unity, John and Sam. I would not be doing this job anywhere near as satisfactorily, and sometimes better, without your assistance, so thank you for your help. There have been several volunteers over the years, including Sam, who is now working for me and who was a volunteer originally. I say to Isabella, Emma, Yu-lin and Josiah that I am so appreciative of your contributions and efforts.

I thank the OLA staff. I cannot name all of you who have helped me because so many of you have done so, whether it is while I am in the chair and I am told, “No, you can’t say that, you need to say this,” or in an Assembly committee meeting and being helped. There are so many who have helped to keep me on course.

Special thanks go to team Lee. I am so supportive of Elizabeth and what she is aiming to do in this territory. She has my support and I am so thankful to be part of her team.

To my family and friends, I say thank you. My wife Claire puts up with me mostly not being at home. To the Canberra Liberal Ginninderra branch members, I say: thank you for your support, and I will be there for you whenever I can muster the effort and time.

Canberra Women in Business awards

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.43): It is my pleasure to stand tonight to recognise some wonderful women in business that we have here in Canberra, and specifically the 2021 and 2022 Canberra Women in Business Award winners. Some of them will be joining me upstairs a little bit later to celebrate.

Canberra Women in Business, which is better known as CWB, is a not-for-profit association that supports women in business in the Canberra region. They help provide opportunities for local businesswomen to expand their business skills, build a supportive network with other businesswomen and foster confidence and growth within the community.

The annual CWB Awards is a fantastic opportunity to recognise and reward the valuable contributions and outstanding work of our Canberra women in business.

Tonight we have some of the 2021 and 2022 award winners and CWB committee members coming in to the Assembly.

The past few years have been difficult for Canberrans as a whole and particularly difficult for businesses. So it is wonderful to see such an impressive array of finalists and award winners, despite the challenging circumstances of the past two or three years.

In 2021, the CWB Award winners were: the Chamberlains Law Business Woman of the Year, Olga Imbriano of Bellelis Australia and Natasha Telfer from National Community Care; the QT Canberra Young Business Woman of the Year, Vanessa Schimizzi from Branded Graphics; the Pipeline Talent Indigenous Business Woman of the Year, Melissa Lacey from Point River Networks; the Solace Creations Small Business Woman of the Year, Justine Lennane from Gumnut Dance; the Elite Event Technology Innovation Business Woman of the Year, Melissa Lacey of Point River Networks; and the Bookssorted Social Impact Business Woman of the Year, Antoinette Gomez from Exhale Coaching & Consulting. Well done to all the 2021 award winners and thank you for all your hard work.

I note that the 2021 awards themselves was an online awards night due to COVID restrictions, demonstrating once again the unique circumstances these business women as well as all Canberrans were facing at the time. Congratulations to the committee of CWB for pulling off that online event. I stayed home and I got to choose a meal from one of several meal providers. There was Daana, who just won a big award for best Indian food in Australia, or QT Canberra, and they were delivered to your home for you to enjoy while you were watching the online awards.

The 2022 CWB award winners were: Chamberlains Law Business Woman of the Year, Kate Freeman from the Health Eating Group Pty Ltd; the Clover Small Business Woman of the Year, Amanda Snashall of Digital Design Partners Pty Ltd; the Parbery Consulting Young Business Woman of the Year, Rae Knopik of GREN and the CBR Gals Network; the Synergy Innovation Business Woman of the Year, Chaturica Athukorala of Aurabox; the Synergy Indigenous Business Woman of the Year, Dixie Crawford of Nganya; the QT Canberra Social Impact Business Woman of the Year, Jo Farrell of Kane Constructions Pty Ltd & Build Like a Girl; and the Social Impact Business Woman of the Year, Kristine Hewett of Adamas Nexus Ltd. Congratulations to all of the award winners and finalists in 2022. I am really looking forward to seeing what they are all going to achieve next.

All the nominees were all amazing but not everyone can win. So perhaps the winners and maybe the finalists were even more amazing than the nominees. But please consider nominating again or nominating some other fabulous business woman that you know.

A big thank you to the sponsors of the awards: in 2021, the major sponsor, Rubik3, and, in 2022, Synergy. These awards nights are not possible without the generous support of sponsors. Also, a big thank you to the CWB committee members. These awards do take a lot of work to organise. They do not just happen on their own, and it is a big tribute to the committee members that they are such a great success. Finally, a big thank you to all of the Canberra businesswomen for the incredible work that

they do. Our community is better off because of all that you contribute. You are a shining light for others to follow.

Valedictory

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 (4.48): In preparing my end of year remarks I looked over my remarks from last year and I was granted a few of my wishes. An important one was for a federal Labor government.

I spoke about the shared values and how it would be easier to achieve outcomes for workers with an Albanese Labor government, and it has been true. The reforms being delivered this week in federal parliament to get wages going and support injured workers is just one example. These changes, of course, complement the work that this Labor government has been doing. Good Labor governments put workers front and centre.

We have more work to do to build an even better Canberra, and I look forward to working with our hardworking public servants, the community and, of course, colleagues in this place to make it happen. But, before we get there, I think we need a well-earned break. These last few years have been unprecedented. I know I said that last year, but then we know what ended up happening over the holiday period.

I am only going to make one wish this time around, and that is a wish for all of us to have a break, rest and spend quality downtime with family and friends.

As we head into the holiday seasons there is much for this government to be proud of, and I want to thank my Labor and Greens colleagues for what has been a busy and hectic year. The contributions from all my colleagues in the past fortnight highlights that great work of course.

I want to thank, in particular, Minister Vassarotti and her office for their collaboration, especially across the planning and environment portfolios. Both I and my office have appreciated their guidance and friendship.

I also want to acknowledge opposition colleagues. This place is often a contest of ideas, and it is important as it helps find better solutions. This time we have been able to work collaboratively across the parties to find a common path in many circumstances. It has been especially evident in the work to improve gender equality. Last week we passed landmark work health and safety legislation that made sexual assault notifiable to WorkSafe. This change was achieved because of the tripartisan approach to this important issue. I think there are more issues that we can achieve similar collaboration on, and I would like to see that go through next year.

As we head towards the holidays I would like to thank the people who live in the best place in Canberra, Tuggeranong, our electorate, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is looking great, thanks to the work of Minister Steel—and I know that he has more work to do

next year. It is truly the best job when you get to stand up for such a great place and great people. To the residents of Brindabella, thank you.

Thank you also to the many hardworking public servants across CMTEDD, including the Assembly coordination team, JACS, ESA, ACT Corrective Services, ACT police, EPSTD, PCS and WorkSafe, who each day come to work to make Canberrans' lives better. This also extends to the wonderful DLOs who work with me. I am very privileged to work with you all. That includes you, Butters, on your last week. Thank you to our OLA and attendants in this place to support our work as well.

Lastly, to my fantastic team: it has been a tough year but, because of the amazing comradeship we have, you have supported each other and made a lasting change that will stand the test of time. But we are not done yet. Team Gentleman is something that remains even after you have left the office, and I want to thank all of the wonderful people who have worked with me this year and in the past and have gone on to do different things as well.

With that, I again wish everyone a restful and relaxing period.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.53 pm.

Schedule of amendments

Schedule 1

Climate Change And Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill 2022

Amendments moved by the Leader of the Opposition

1

Proposed new clause 7A

Page 4, line 25—

insert

7A Section 15 (1) (b)

substitute

- (b) the effectiveness of government actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions during the year, including the cost of the actions measured per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions reduced during the year; and
-

2

Proposed new clause 8A

Page 5, line 9—

insert

8A Functions of council

New section 17 (1) (c)

insert

- (c) actions taken in the ACT to address climate change.
-

3

Proposed new clause 9A

Page 6, line 2—

insert

9A New section 20 (3A)

insert

- (3A) The appointment must be made in consultation with the relevant Assembly committee.
-

4

Clause 10

Proposed new section 20 (5), new definition of *relevant Assembly committee*

Page 6, line 13—

insert

relevant Assembly committee means a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly nominated, in writing, by the Speaker for subsection (3A).
