



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

TENTH ASSEMBLY

11 May 2023

www.hansard.act.gov.au

Thursday, 11 May 2023

Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT—Select Committee.....	1265
Hospitals—outpatient and emergency department waiting times—update (Ministerial statement).....	1274
Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.....	1276
Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023.....	1279
Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023 (Consideration).....	1283
Public Accounts—Standing Committee.....	1290
Planning, Transport and City Services—Standing Committee.....	1291
Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee.....	1293
Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee.....	1294
Questions without notice:	
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1294
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1295
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1296
Public housing—debt to commonwealth.....	1296
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1298
Canberra Theatre Centre—redevelopment.....	1299
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1300
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1300
Municipal services—footpaths.....	1303
Mental health—workforce strategy.....	1304
Calvary Hospital—acquisition.....	1305
Children and young people—mental health services.....	1305
Planning—Thoroughbred Park.....	1307
National Multicultural Festival—attendance.....	1308
Supplementary answers to questions without notice:	
Transport Canberra—bus shelters.....	1309
Canberra Health Services—staffing.....	1309
ACT Health—Digital Health Record system.....	1309
C40 Green and Healthy Streets Accelerator Initiative (Correction to the record)....	1310
Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee.....	1310
Papers.....	1310
Coroner’s report—inquest into death of Passenger H—government response.....	1311
Building—property developer licensing scheme.....	1312
Canberra Health Services—procurement.....	1325
Adjournment: Disability services—Hartley Lifecare.....	1338
Ms Jo Cullen—retirement (Statement by Speaker).....	1339
Adjournment:	
Yerrabi electorate—community events.....	1339
Mr Gordon Scott—tribute.....	1341
Arts—2023 Ovations Inaugural Awards.....	1342
Trees—planting.....	1343
Youth—voting rights.....	1344
Standing orders—suspension.....	1345
Sport and recreation—Achilles Running Club.....	1345
Mr Russell Charles Taylor AM—tribute.....	1346

Arts—environmental themes.....	1347
Multicultural communities—Afghani refugees.....	1348
Questions without notice taken on notice:	
Canberra Health Services—data security.....	1351
Canberra Hospital—cardiology department.....	1352
Canberra Health Services—data security.....	1352
Canberra Health Services—data security.....	1353
Roads—maintenance.....	1353
Roads—maintenance.....	1353

Thursday, 11 May 2023

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

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

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

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

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

Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT—Select Committee Report

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (10.02): I present the following report:

Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT—Select Committee—Report—*Inquiry into Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT*, dated 10 May 2023, including additional comments (*Mr Davis and Ms Lawder*), together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the report of the Select Committee on Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT. The Assembly referred the inquiry to the select committee on 9 February 2023. The committee received 35 submissions and held two public hearings, and our witnesses took 18 questions on notice.

The committee heard that it is our most vulnerable people who need the most support, and submitters provided several areas where support could be implemented or increased. The 52 recommendations address topics including housing, health, education, food and transport. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to write submissions and appear at hearings for their significant contribution to this inquiry. The committee looks forward to the implementation of its recommendations. I thank the other members of the committee, Dr Marisa Paterson MLA and Ms Nicole Lawder MLA, and I commend the report to the Assembly.

Madam Speaker, it is at this point, as the committee has now dissolved, that I will no longer be speaking in my capacity as chair of the committee but speaking in my as a

Greens MLA. Canberrans, like many people all around Australia, are doing it tough capacity right now in this cost-of-living crisis. Pressures on the cost of living have been coming from every angle. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased the cost of fuel. We have had the economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting supply chains, and we have seen company profits driving supply-side inflation.

The consumer price index, which measures the cost of goods that everyday Aussies and Canberrans buy, has increased by 6.8 per cent in the past 12 months alone, and the biggest price hikes are in housing, food and transport. These are not costs that anybody can avoid.

I am proud to have chaired this inquiry into cost-of-living pressures in the ACT. We set out to investigate policy measures that could support low and middle income households to manage cost-of-living pressures, and we heard from numerous stakeholders, community groups, individuals and experts along the way.

Madam Speaker, before I go on, may I just draw to the Assembly's attention that it is my understanding that recommendation 8 in the committee's report that has been tabled is incorrect. The committee will endeavour to correct the record on recommendation 8 and provide advice to the Assembly by the end of the day.

I will return now to my remarks. The backdrop to the tabling of this committee report is, of course, Tuesday night's federal budget. Handed down by the federal Treasurer only two days ago, it was created in the context of enormous cost-of-living pressures around the country, just like this committee's report. In fact, a significant number of the issues presented to this committee fall under the responsibilities of the federal government.

For this reason, the committee agreed to include a section in the report presenting recommendations for advocacy to the federal government. These include recommendations for regulating the buy now, pay later industry; for the introduction of a cost-of-disability supplement; for raising the rate of all income support payments to above the Henderson poverty line; and for sustained funding to deliver free vocational education and training. We did not see any of these picked up in Tuesday's federal budget, so I hope that the ACT government will adopt the committee's recommendations to continue raising these issues with our federal government.

The federal budget claimed to provide cost-of-living relief—"prioritising those most in need", the federal Treasurer said. Federal Labour certainly made clear their priorities, but unfortunately that promise to help those most in need did not eventuate. What we really saw was pennies for people struggling—a drop in the ocean, against the backdrop of weak tax reform and billions of dollars worth of irresponsible tax cuts.

Commonwealth rent assistance has increased by barely more than \$1 per day. JobSeeker has increased by a measly \$2.85 a day, not even enough for a loaf of bread. Compare that with the \$254 billion stage 3 tax cuts that the federal government refuses to walk away from. The new JobSeeker rate will put an extra \$1,000 a year into the pockets of the most vulnerable people in our communities. That sounds all right, except when you compare it to the federal budget's other measures.

The stage 3 tax cuts will add \$9,000 a year to the pockets of people earning more than \$200,000 per year—people like you, Madam Speaker, and people like me. Talk about priorities. I do not need a tax cut. Nobody in this room needs a tax cut. I need my constituents who are living in poverty to be given income support payments that bring them out of poverty. If we abolished the stage 3 tax cuts, we could afford to increase JobSeeker to the rate of the minimum wage. Increases to Youth Allowance in the budget still leave the rate 50 per cent below the poverty line.

They had the opportunity to reform the petroleum resources rent tax, but the changes were so small that they have been welcomed by the gas industry with open arms. Taxes on nicotine, and even on beer, will rake in more money than the reformed PRRT. There was barely a cent of money for new public housing, in the middle of a housing crisis.

Yes, there were some good things, like the welcome additions to Medicare and the bulk-billing incentive, but the good does not outweigh the extraordinary scale of the missed opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of people doing it tough. People should not have to scrape together the tiny increase in a bunch of different payments to see how close to escaping poverty they might get.

This federal budget was about priorities, and what those priorities tell me and my constituents is that everyone can have a little something, but no-one can have everything—that is, unless you are already rich. This budget pits our most vulnerable people against each other, to fight over a commonwealth pool of money that has been kept small by choice—a political choice.

I hope the ACT government takes the recommendations included in this inquiry's cost-of-living report seriously and is willing to implement our recommendations, which echo the voices of countless people in our community, to make a real difference to people doing it tough.

The single biggest issue raised in evidence to this committee was that we need to do more to fix the housing crisis. This government set itself an ambitious goal to deliver more homelessness services, more accessible public housing and better laws for renters. The committee heard consistently that we must do more to achieve these ambitious goals.

Housing supply shortages are creating cost-of-living pressures for renters and increasing the demand for affordable and public housing. Stakeholders expressed their support for missing middle housing and their desire for more homes to be built within our current urban footprint. The committee recommends that the ACT government acknowledges this community campaign and considers how planning system reform can enable the construction of more homes within our existing urban footprint.

The committee heard of the delays frustrating plans to build more affordable and public housing through the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program. Evidence indicated that the management of contracts by Housing ACT has played a significant role. Delays of 12 months or more, and houses and empty lots sitting vacant while waiting for the next stages of development, are unacceptable, both to the committee and to the community.

The committee recommends the following: that the capacity of Housing ACT be increased to support the delivery of the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program; that the demolition and construction of new properties be sped up; that the time between moving tenants between old and new public housing on the same site be limited; and that the government manage the sale of public housing properties to ensure that the portfolio stock is not in decline at any one time.

The committee heard of the need to ensure high levels of accessibility in public housing, given that close to 60 per cent of current public housing tenants live with a disability. The committee recommends that the Community Services Directorate identify and publish how many people on the waitlist require class C adaptable property, and it recommends that they continue to both build and buy houses from the private market to increase the total portfolio, in order to cater for all levels of accessibility need on the public housing waitlist.

The evidence indicated that the strategies chosen to meet the delivery of our public housing targets are not working. I refuse to accept that this means that we should change our public housing targets. If we cannot sell, demolish and rebuild public housing on the same site fast enough to meet our targets, try something else. If the strategies being utilised are not working, find new strategies. As I said earlier, government decisions and the allocation of funding are about priorities. Housing must be this government's priority—no exceptions.

Despite all the issues inhibiting the delivery of the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program, this Assembly and the community must be assured that everything possible is being done to manage and deliver the program. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Auditor-General consider conducting a performance audit into the management of the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program.

The committee heard that the government has extended the time frame for meeting its Parliamentary and Governing Agreement target of 400 new properties. Everyone, including people on the public housing waitlist and in the community services supporting people who are homeless or roofless, expects the ACT government to honour their commitments on housing. In the middle of a housing crisis, we cannot fail to meet these housing targets. The committee recommends that the ACT government honour the commitment made in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement between the two governing parties and the community to increase its public housing portfolio by at least 400 properties by 2025.

The committee received much evidence from the community that, even though the ACT's rental laws are strong, more does need to be done to protect renters in our city. Fifty-one per cent of Canberrans are renters, and one-quarter of them are in rental stress. The following recommendations unfortunately did not receive support from my committee colleagues, so I present them here as dissenting recommendations.

The first is that the ACT's rental caps restrict rent increases during a tenancy agreement to 110 per cent of CPI. That is how they are now. As stated earlier, CPI has increased

hugely, as part of cost-of-living pressures, so tying rent increases to CPI can have negative consequences during times like this. Our city has some of the highest median rents in the country. Rents are increasing at seven times the rate of wages. Rent increases are unrestricted between tenants and between leases, leaving new tenants open to huge hikes in price when they are in between rental properties.

The committee heard from the ACT Council of Social Service that additional short-term rental controls would help families who are unable to afford rent increases, and to keep them in safe and secure homes. I recommend that the ACT government explore ways to further regulate the price of rent in the private market, including consideration of a rent freeze and further caps on rent increases. The Greens support a two-year rent freeze and limitations to rent increases to two per cent. I also recommend that the ACT government investigate restricting rent increases when a property is vacated and rented to new tenants, and in between fixed-term leases.

The committee also heard that, despite recent amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act, the practice of accepting rent bidding, if not solicited, was still permitted. I want us to do everything we can to make sure that no renter feels pressured into paying more than the advertised rent. I therefore recommend that the ACT government amend the Residential Tenancies Act to prevent landlords and real estate agents from accepting offers from above the advertised rent.

This report covers a huge diversity of issues. Because of the cost-of-living crisis, it is not confined to one policy area—not even housing. The committee heard evidence around issues and potential improvements to our primary health services, legal services, income support programs—such as the utilities concession—and financial counselling, and reforms to the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. We heard calls for improvements to the back-to-school program and appeals for more free vocational education courses. Community services, sports, food banks and public transport all featured.

Given that there are 52 consensus, tripartisan recommendations in this report, I will not be able to speak to all of them today, but I would like to highlight a few and assure both this Assembly and everybody who contributed to this inquiry that I take each and every one of them seriously and will continue engaging within government to deliver on all of them.

The committee heard that many organisations and individuals are not aware of the full suite of concessional programs that are provided by the ACT government. Concerns were raised that many eligible individuals—even up to one-third of eligible people—are missing out on concessions to which they are entitled. It was put to the committee that the automatic granting of concessions, instead of having to go through the application process, would likely see significant improvements to outcomes. Not everybody has the time or means to figure out their eligibility and go through a complicated application process, even if they really need the help.

The committee recommends that the automatic application of concessions be investigated. The committee also recommends that the ACT government review its concession program and expand the eligibility criteria, improve targeted communication and raise awareness of existing programs.

The committee recommends that the ACT government add more free courses to the Canberra Institute of Technology and increase awareness of those courses. Vocational education should provide critical training and skills in areas like building and construction, aged care and mental health.

I want every child in the ACT who wants to play sport to be able to do so. Other states and territories have community sport voucher programs to help families who are struggling, to make sure they do not have to choose between putting food on the table and letting their kids play soccer. The committee recommends that the government evaluate these programs available in other jurisdictions and design a similar program here in the ACT.

Several organisations that provide community food services say that they have experienced an increase in demand, even from double-income households with mortgages. Their ability to provide these services is decreasing, with skyrocketing freight and delivery costs. The committee recommends that the ACT government support food banks by considering the establishment of a distribution centre in the ACT and providing additional funding for freight and delivery costs, to make that sure everybody who needs these crucial supports receives them.

This report highlights the serious challenges, and the breadth, depth and diversity of challenges, that are being experienced by people in our community. Cost-of-living pressures are hitting people hard, and some who have not experienced hardship previously are now feeling squeezed on many fronts. I am extremely grateful to everybody who contributed to this inquiry. Your stories, your hardships and your calls for help have been heard. I am proud to stand here today and present this consensus report, along with my dissenting recommendations, which outline the very many ways that we can help to make life better for Canberrans doing it tough. I commend this report to the Assembly.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.17): The cost of living is of significant concern to Canberrans, and to us in the Assembly. Through our inquiry, we heard from a wide range of different people, experts and organisations who work directly in this space. Cost-of-living pressures have increased due to inflation; impacts due to the recovery from the economic impacts of COVID, including disruption to logistics and supply chains; and impacts of the war in Ukraine. These factors and many others have led to and exacerbated the current housing crisis.

Growth in the consumer price index is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by households for a fixed basket of goods and services. The monthly CPI indicator for Australia rose 6.8 per cent in the 12 months to February 2023, with the most significant price rises being housing, at nearly 10 per cent; food and non-alcoholic beverages, at eight per cent; and transport, at 5.6 per cent.

The YWCA told the committee that the fact that wages are generally high in the ACT causes additional pressure for those on lower incomes. That Canberra has the highest average weekly earnings in the country should not be conflated with an absence of

widespread and hidden household financial stress. Rather, it should be viewed as a factor that exacerbates the cost-of-living pressures, financial crisis and poverty experienced by those on low and fixed incomes. The higher discretionary capacity in the ACT economy means prices for essential items are generally higher here than they are in other capital cities and regional centres, increasing the disparity between rich and poor, causing financial precarity to encroach on income brackets that may be somewhat buffered elsewhere.

The ACT Council of Social Service told the committee that people in the lowest income quintiles were most affected by high living expenses and could spend over 40 per cent of their income on housing costs. An Anglicare report from April this year reported that, for essential workers, the percentage of their standard weekly income needed to cover the average rent for a unit in Canberra ranges from 57 per cent for schoolteachers and 76 per cent for aged-care workers.

I think that the federal government's recent budget goes some way to addressing some of the concerns raised by people who gave evidence in the inquiry, particularly around Medicare and access to health care. Whilst the committee may have had different perspectives on many other recommendations in the report, I am proud that we have a consensus report and agreement on the things that I think most affect Canberrans.

I would like to thank my colleagues, the chair, Mr Davis, and Ms Lawder, for their work on this report. I also thank the committee secretariat. We do understand the significant time pressures that were put on them to complete this important work. Thank you very much.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.21): I rise to talk about the select committee inquiry into cost-of-living pressures in the ACT. I would like to add my appreciation to everyone who made a submission and appeared at the hearings. Thank you to the chair, Mr Davis, and the deputy chair, Dr Paterson, and to the committee secretariat for their hard work.

As has been indicated by others, it was really appreciated that we were successfully able to produce a consensus report, with 52 recommendations that we agreed on. There were some additional comments from some members of the committee, including me. The timing of the inquiry was specifically so that, according to the motion passed in the Assembly, some recommendations might be able to be included in the ACT budget. I guess the proof of the pudding will be in the eating and whether there is anything that is picked up in the ACT budget.

There were a number of really important areas of discussion, but, for me, the stand-outs were about health care and housing. For example, we know that we have the lowest rate of bulk-billing in the country. The ACT also has the highest out-of-pocket expenses in the country for GP, specialist and other allied health appointments. That means that in the federal electorates of Bean and Canberra, we have the second and third highest out-of-pocket expenses in the country. Two of our federal electorates here in the ACT are in the top five most expensive for out-of-pocket expenses in Australia, which is pretty shocking and something that we could be doing more to address.

A number of my other dissenting or additional recommendations relate to housing unaffordability and are around housing and homelessness. Providing appropriate, affordable, long-term housing is the flipside of homelessness, and there is much more that we need to be doing in this space. This government continues to fail Canberrans in this space. If we keep doing what we are already doing, we will continue to fail, and that is what is happening here. Despite the government's alliance with the Greens, who promised a home for all, we are nowhere near a home for all. It is quite devastating to find that they are a long way from achieving that goal, if at all. It is all very well to have aspirational statements, but unless you are implementing the right policy levers to achieve those goals, it is just hot air going up into the ether, and that is what I am afraid is happening here.

In my additional comments, in the appendix to this report, I mentioned the fact that a number of the submitters talked about rates and land tax. This was something that the majority of committee members were willing to ignore, despite the fact that a large number of the total number of submissions referred to rates and land tax and their impact on housing unaffordability and cost-of-living pressures for Canberrans. That is quite disappointing. Because it did not fit with the political rhetoric of some members of the committee, they were trying to ignore those submissions. That is why I had some additional comments in that space.

Overall, though, it was a collaborative and cooperative process. It is a great achievement that we have been able to have more than 50 agreed recommendations between the three members of the committee, where we did not stick as strongly to party lines. We really were interested in addressing cost-of-living pressures for residents of the ACT. Once again, thank you to the other members of the committee for their approach and to the committee secretariat.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.25): I would like to make a few remarks on this debate, in my capacity as a member and as ACT Greens spokesperson for transport. I am not speaking on behalf of any committee. I am very much looking forward to reading this committee report and the recommendations. I am very glad that this important inquiry has taken place, and grateful to all of the people who have contributed to it. It certainly sounds like we are going to learn a lot when we see this report.

I want to make a few comments about transport. We have heard about housing and health costs, and quite a lot of the other cost-of-living pressures at the moment. I was following this committee inquiry and I was interested that quite a number of people made submissions about transport costs as well. The transcripts showed that ACTCOSS presented evidence that 15 per cent of the average ACT budget is spent on transport costs. That is a significant chunk from your weekly spend being spent on transport. Pedal Power also spoke quite a lot about transport costs.

I am, frankly, not surprised that it has come up. We have heard about transport costs in a lot of other committee inquiries lately. I was interested to see that there was some very strong evidence presented that this government needs to spend more money on

separated active infrastructure and public transport. These are more affordable for people than asking them to buy a car. Even if somebody has a car that did not cost much, running that car at the moment is causing immense pressure on the household budget, and fuel costs are not going to make that any easier in the near future.

It is also a great outcome for health and for climate change. We have so many reasons to support active and public transport at the moment. As well as needing better public transport and better infrastructure, there was discussion from people presenting evidence that there are barriers to purchasing a bike, an electric bike or an electric motorbike. All of these things are much cheaper ways to get around Canberra. They can cover large distances, particularly e-bikes, electric motorbikes and electric cargo bikes. These are really well designed for an environment like Canberra, but people find the up-front cost quite prohibitive. They can run them much more cheaply. We have heard evidence in previous inquiries that people might be spending only a few dollars a week—if that—to run these devices and to meet some of their transport needs. They are so much cheaper than petrol or diesel, but there is still an up-front barrier.

A lot of those items start at \$2,000, and e-cargo bikes and electric motorbikes are much, much more expensive than that. The government has some really great schemes that help people to use electric vehicles. We have got really great no-interest loans and the Sustainable Household Scheme. The Greens have asked in the past, “Could we extend that to electric bikes, electric cargo bikes and electric motorbikes?” and we have not yet seen that extended.

I have had that request made to me by a number of organisations. I have had that request made to me by the Conservation Council; by C Change; by Pedal Power; by ACTCOSS; by many, many bike shops; by people who ride and would like to encourage others to ride; and also by those people who are not currently riding or using those devices and have looked at the price tag and decided that it is a bit prohibitive and they are not sure they could afford it, but who think that it would be a very good way to get around.

Similarly—and I will not speak on behalf of the committee—there was evidence presented to the EV inquiry recently. Again, we heard evidence from ACTCOSS saying, “Wouldn’t it be great if we could, as part of our just transition to a safe climate, help people with the purchase price of vehicles that are not EVs?” EVs, even second-hand EVs, are still quite expensive. I am delighted that we are helping people, through no-interest loans, to buy EVs; but wouldn’t it be great if we could open that up to people on even lower incomes, with bikes and devices that would help them? E-bikes, bicycles, electric motorbikes, e-cargo bikes, scooters—all of these devices are great ways to move around Canberra. They are very cheap transport. They are zero emissions, climate friendly transport. I am very much hoping that we might see something in the recommendations about that, and that we might get the government to reconsider their stance on this issue and, in some form, such as grants or loans, provide more support.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Hospitals—outpatient and emergency department waiting times—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) (10.30): I rise today to provide the Assembly with an update on the resolution of 9 February 2023 regarding waiting time figures for outpatient services at Canberra Health Services. The resolution called on the ACT government to table updated outpatient waiting time figures in the May 2023 sitting week and to continue to monitor CHS 2022-23 performance measures to increase the percentage of initial medical specialist outpatient appointments to 35 per cent of all appointments.

Firstly, I open by acknowledging the significant and sustained work by our highly skilled health workers in continuing to deliver high quality outpatient services to the Canberra community. Public hospital and healthcare waiting lists across Australia and internationally have been under pressure from the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Work is underway across the country to improve waiting times, including in ACT public hospitals and community settings, now that we have moved to living with COVID.

Clinical and non-clinical staff in our hospitals are working hard every day to see patients according to their clinical urgency. Team members are to be commended for their work, with outpatient specialist care being a critical component of supporting patients to stay well and manage health conditions, in conjunction with primary care.

The implementation of the Digital Health Record, or DHR, in November 2022 necessitated a reduction in outpatient clinic volumes for a period of 12 weeks to facilitate staff training, familiarisation and stabilisation of the new system. More than 11,000 staff were trained in the lead-up to the DHR implementation.

At the same time, preparation for the transition to a digital health record resulted in the identification of outpatient waitlists that had previously been located outside ACTPAS, which was the former, legacy patient administration system in the ACT. The DHR has replaced approximately 40 existing systems across ACT public health services, with many of these no longer being fit for purpose. The implementation of the DHR will continue to deliver a transformation to ACT public health services, and we will continue to realise these benefits into the future.

As I have outlined previously in the Assembly, the implementation of the DHR has posed ongoing challenges to external reporting. Teams are working diligently to undertake quality assurance processes to deliver this external reporting as soon as they can, and it is important to get this right rather than rush something that could be incorrect.

Today the quarter 1 2022-23 quarterly performance report was published. This report was, unfortunately, delayed due to the implementation of the DHR and represents the final report in this form. Going forward, the ACT Health Directorate and CHS are working together to ensure that high quality performance data can be released on a

monthly basis. In the future, performance data will be published monthly via a dashboard. This will provide a high level of accessibility and interpretability for the performance data. This will mean more transparency, more frequently, with more and richer data.

The ACT Health Directorate has commenced consultation with stakeholders on presentation methods, data interpretation and annotation, and I look forward to providing the Assembly with further advice on the time frames for presentation of this new public reporting.

When it comes to outpatient services, the DHR has replaced more manual systems of appointments and waitlists that were being used in a number of specialties. These included paper-based referrals management and the use of electronic diaries for scheduling some outpatient clinics. The centralisation of all outpatient waiting lists in a single electronic system in the DHR has supported greater visibility and understanding of waitlist composition across the territory. This has also resulted in an increase to reported numbers with the improved transparency of waiting lists.

To ensure that comparisons can be made, the outpatient waiting list data provided today is for medical specialist outpatient clinic appointments for the same specialties as those included in the October 2022 outpatient waiting times tabled in the February 2023 sitting week. The figures tabled today are current waitlist numbers for May 2023.

I am committed to providing Canberrans with meaningful, easily accessible information about the healthcare system and public hospital waiting times. ACT public health services are working towards regularly reporting the outpatient waiting lists for medical specialist clinics across all specialty areas in this calendar year. This information will be publicly available for Canberrans to see and will be updated regularly.

Waitlists for outpatient clinics are dynamic. CHS receives more than 60,000 referrals each year and this number continues to grow. CHS provided around 130,000 medical specialist appointments last financial year, with more than 18,000 patients removed from outpatient waitlists. Since October 2022, there has been a reported increase of around 3½ thousand in total waitlist numbers, due in part to the effect of the digitisation of waitlists in the DHR.

The current state of the outpatient waiting list is not acceptable. I have been clear with the leadership of CHS that immediate attention is required to bring wait times towards the clinically recommended time frames, and to reduce the total numbers of patients waiting. DHR now provides the platform for visibility and transparency of waiting list demand to guide informed decision-making about resource allocation and need into the future, and to ensure that these reductions are being delivered.

I have been assured that work continues to achieve meaningful reductions in the waitlist over the next two years, including changes to intake models, waitlist and referral management and clinic profiles. Proactive recruitment has taken place across various specialties, and CHS nurse-led and allied health clinics are well established and expanding. Integrated models of care are being piloted in partnership with primary care, and the number of telehealth appointments is rising.

Patient flow across the entire system will continue to be a core focus for health services and I will receive regular updates regarding the progress of these efforts. The CHS flow and coordination hub has been implemented, with optimisation of monitoring and reporting of patient flow using both retrospective and real-time data.

This has fed into the morning bed huddle and the newly established weekly clinical operations executive meeting. Integration of these data into team leader roles, huddles and other processes for active real-time monitoring of flow has also commenced. This whole-of-system view means that we can ensure the right people are in the right place at the right time, including optimising clinician time to attend clinics alongside acute inpatient activity.

The Integrated Care Program is also looking at initiatives to reduce unnecessary presentations and admissions and developing initiatives to assist in early discharge. The Liaison and Navigation Service is an example of the work being undertaken as part of the Integrated Care Program, which is building on the success of the Paediatric Liaison and Navigation Service to connect care across the health system. The overarching goal will be to reduce avoidable and preventable presentations and admissions and streamline care coordination with the primary health care, community and acute care settings.

CHS has committed to a target of 35 per cent of all outpatient appointments being new patient appointments. Leading up to, during and immediately following the DHR implementation, it was necessary to introduce a “change freeze” period, during which time no changes could be made to the make-up of clinics. The change freeze has now finished, and clinic profiles are progressively changing to reflect an increasing proportion of new to follow-up appointments. The percentage of new appointments will form part of the new public reporting. I present the following papers:

Waiting times—Outpatients and Emergency Department—Assembly resolution of 9 February 2023—

Government report, dated May 2023.

Ministerial statement, 10 May 2023

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Mr Rattenbury, by leave, 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) (10.39):
I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 to the Assembly. This bill makes minor and technical, but important, amendments to five pieces of justice-related legislation. All amendments contained in the bill are being made to improve the administration and operation of territory laws.

This bill amends the Court Procedures Act to rename the role of the Principal Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of ACT Courts and Tribunal to the Chief Executive Officer of ACT Courts and Tribunal. Notwithstanding the title, the current Principal Registrar and Chief Executive Officer has no registrar functions, is excluded from the definition of a registrar in the Legislation Act and is expressly prohibited from directing a registrar or deputy registrar in the exercise of a function of the court. As such, the current title can cause confusion among members of the public and the legal profession. This amendment will remedy that confusion. This amendment, while minor and uncontroversial, will promote confidence and trust in ACT Courts and Tribunal.

The bill amends two acts to resolve an inconsistency in our parole laws. The Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act includes a process for offenders who are on parole in another state or territory to have their parole orders transferred to the ACT. Similar arrangements are in place under other state and territory sentencing legislation. When a parole order is transferred to the ACT, it is treated as if the original sentence had been imposed in the ACT, and ACT laws will apply.

An inconsistency arises when a parolee on an interstate life sentence has their parole order transferred to the ACT. Under ACT sentencing law, a sentence of life imprisonment does not allow for parole. The Crimes (Sentencing) Act does not allow a court to set a non-parole period for a life sentence.

The Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act provides a different pathway for ACT offenders on life sentences. There is a process for these offenders to apply for release on licence, rather than parole. Decisions to release on licence are made by the executive, which is different from decisions on parole. However, these “release of licence” provisions apply only to offenders who have committed an offence against a territory law.

If a transferred interstate parolee on a life sentence breaches the order and commits further offences in the ACT, the transferred parolee is returned to custody on the life sentence, and there is currently no mechanism for a court to set further non-parole periods and no mechanism for the person to apply for parole, or otherwise apply for release. This is different to how other parolees are treated under ACT law.

The proposed changes make minor amendments to the Crimes (Sentencing) Act and Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act to ensure that a new non-parole period can be

set for a life sentence transferred parolee if the parolee reoffends and receives a further sentence of imprisonment. The amendments will cover current and future cases where interstate life sentenced parolees come before the ACT courts in relation to new offences.

The amendments help to integrate interstate parole orders into ACT law in situations where there is no equivalent order and enable the ACT system to manage breaches of the order coherently in the context of ACT sentencing law. This, of course, does not guarantee parole for these offenders. Their applications will need to be considered by the Sentence Administration Board and are subject to the same requirements of the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act as any other application for parole.

This bill makes amendments to the Gaming Machine Act to extend the time licensees of a gaming facility can redeem offsets granted under the Pathway to 4000 scheme. In 2018 the government inserted part 2A into the Gaming Machine Act, providing that a licensee of a gaming facility could voluntarily surrender gaming machine authorisations in exchange for a land, lease or planning and development charge offset. The offsets were intended to support gaming machine licensees to reduce their reliance on gaming machine revenue and diversify towards new revenue streams. However, the uncertainty and financial downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented licensees from undertaking planned development and redeeming these offsets for a period of two years.

Currently, licensees must redeem these offsets by 1 April 2026. This amendment will extend this time frame to 1 April 2028, allowing licensees to access these offsets until 1 April 2028. This amendment will remove barriers to licensees of gaming facilities diversifying away from gaming machine revenue, and therefore supports economic diversity in the territory.

Finally, the bill amends the Land Titles (Unit Titles) Act relating to the registration of final building damage orders and administration orders. In 2012 the Unit Titles (Management) Act came into effect, appointing the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal as the body responsible for the making of final building damage orders and administration orders. Prior to this, the Magistrates Court was responsible for making final building damage orders. However, corresponding amendments to the Land Titles (Unit Titles) Act were not made. As a consequence, there is legislative inconsistency between the two acts, with the registrar-general presently required to register final building damage orders and administration orders made by the Magistrates Court, not the ACAT.

This inconsistency may cause confusion for the Land Titles Office and people seeking to register final building damage orders and administration orders. This is an uncontroversial but important amendment that will promote trust in the ACT government and institutions and ensure the efficient operation of ACT laws.

I am pleased to say that the bill being introduced today is a human rights compliant bill, and one which improves the operation and effective administration of the laws in the territory. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023

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

Title read by Clerk.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (10.46): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the ACT government's Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023. The bill, if passed, will enable the ACT government to acquire the part of the land where Calvary Public Hospital Bruce is situated—block 1 section 1, division of Bruce—to construct a new north side public hospital; transition the operation of the public hospital to the territory, including by terminating the Calvary Network Agreement; allow for the safe and orderly transition of Calvary Public Hospital Bruce employees, assets and services to the territory; and provide for compensation on just terms.

We know that the ACT and the surrounding region are growing and ageing. Demand for public health services is increasing, as is the complexity of the health needs of the Canberra community. As our population ages and grows, we are also seeing an increasing prevalence of chronic conditions, and the ACT needs a public health system that can flexibly respond to the needs of our community now and into the future.

Canberra's north side has the largest population in the territory and this will continue to increase over the coming decades. By 2060, the population in the north side of Canberra is projected to grow by 285,000. By 2041, the demand for hospital services on the north side is forecast to be more than double the current capacity of Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

In 2016, the ACT government committed to conducting a scoping study for longer term new and expanded north side hospital facilities. This was supported by funding in the 2017-18 ACT budget, with \$3.25 million invested to commence planning for enhanced north side hospital facilities. This led to an additional investment in the 2018-19 budget of \$1 million for the continuation of feasibility and planning works for a north side hospital.

To address the need for more capacity, the ACT government undertook a condition assessment of the Calvary Public Hospital Bruce infrastructure in 2020, along with an options analysis for the building of a new north side hospital. This condition assessment found that many of the buildings at Calvary Public Hospital were ageing and nearing the end of their useful life.

The options analysis recommended that a new north side hospital be built, rather than a remediation and expansion of the existing Calvary Public Hospital Bruce. Preliminary

architectural work as part of this analysis showed a new hospital could be built on the existing campus without a need to interrupt the delivery of any public hospital services during construction.

In 2020, the ACT government committed to building a new north side hospital. In the 2021-22 budget an investment of more than \$13.5 million was provided to establish a north side hospital project team to undertake a scope and early design of the new north side hospital, and to investigate whether the best location for the hospital was at the existing Bruce campus or at a greenfield location in Canberra's north.

A new north side hospital will be the largest single health infrastructure investment in the history of the territory and is expected to cost more than a billion dollars. This is, of course, in addition to more than \$640 million invested in the Canberra Hospital expansion and the ongoing work on the Canberra Hospital master plan.

The ACT government is committed to commencing construction of the new north side hospital by mid-decade, and funding will be allocated in the 2023-24 budget to progress the new hospital through to detailed design, as well as provisioning for construction.

Prior to making this significant investment, there have been two key considerations for the ACT government—owning the land on which the hospital is built, and who would be the operator of the new, larger, north side hospital. As members are aware, the north side public general hospital is currently operated by Calvary Health Care ACT.

The ACT government plans to build a new north side hospital on the current Calvary Public Hospital site in Bruce. This is the site where Canberrans have been going for public hospital services for more than 40 years and where there is a private hospital and other health services, as well as an ACT government-owned multistorey car park. From the planning we have done to date, we also know that we can build a new hospital without having to interrupt the delivery of services—just as we are delivering the new Canberra Hospital expansion without reducing clinical services across the functioning hospital campus.

Planning for the hospital over the coming years will be supported and informed by ongoing engagement with the community, clinicians and key stakeholders, ensuring that it meets Canberra's future healthcare needs with no disruption to existing services.

This will be a bigger, state-of-the-art hospital that will be a great environment for patients, carers, staff, volunteers and visitors. Community consultation undertaken last year on the new hospital showed that people are interested in having access to quality services on a campus that is welcoming, easy to navigate and accessible. This hospital will be all those things and will serve the needs of our growing population on the north side.

On the question of operator, the government has decided that the new north side hospital will be operated by Canberra Health Services, delivering a more efficient and effective health system for Canberrans. It will enable the new hospital to slot into a genuinely integrated public hospital network across the ACT—as a general hospital working alongside the tertiary hospital in Garran and the subacute rehabilitation hospital at the University of Canberra.

While this decision is a difficult one for Calvary and has not been an easy one for the government to make, this is not a decision about Calvary as an organisation. It is a decision about providing the best public health system and infrastructure for Canberra.

As the Assembly may know, Calvary—then known as Little Company of Mary Health Care—was granted the land and the buildings in Bruce by the commonwealth government in 1971 and began operating the Calvary Public Hospital Bruce in 1979. Calvary operates the public hospital in Bruce under the Calvary Network Agreement linked to the crown lease, which expires in 2098.

It has been discussed and debated for many years whether in the ACT system it would be better to have a single provider delivering public hospital services in our small city. It was the subject of extensive consideration by a committee in this place in 2011, which concluded that a single integrated public hospital network would be more efficient and effective for the ACT. However, it was not possible at that time to move to a single operator. As a result, the government negotiated a new agreement with Calvary, the Calvary Network Agreement, that came into effect on 1 February 2012.

Over the past 12 months, the ACT government has been in discussions with Calvary about its role in the context of a new north side hospital. Following a period of exclusive negotiations with Calvary, an agreed position between the ACT government and Calvary was not reached.

Following careful consideration of the options for the new north side hospital and the needs of the broader health system, the ACT government has decided to move forward with one service operator of public hospitals across the territory. This means that Canberra Health Services will transition to operating the north side public hospital from this year.

Bringing the management of public hospitals in the ACT under a single operator will enable a range of benefits across the health system and improve the ability of the system to respond to health demands across the ACT and region. It represents a significant shift in the provision of health care but is consistent with other jurisdictions and regions of a similar size and provides opportunities for greater health efficiencies and outcomes.

Experience from other Australian jurisdictions has demonstrated that a one service, multi-hospital model delivers significant improvements in throughput and cost-effectiveness. The benefits of having a single provider, which have been evidenced in other jurisdictions, include more appropriate load sharing across hospitals; easier transition of patients and mobilisation between sites; improved mobility for staff, including training rotations; the removal of ambiguities in clinical governance; efficiencies in service provision that support delivery of increased activity at marginal cost; and true hub-and-spoke models of clinical service provision.

While not the primary motivation, this change will also remove potential conflicts of interest, with a single organisation running a general public hospital and two private hospitals within the same relatively small health system.

This bill will allow the territory to acquire the land where the existing Calvary Public Hospital Bruce is situated. It will allow the territory to amend the crown lease for block 1 section 1, division of Bruce, to enable Calvary to retain the lease over its private hospital and health services. The territory will retain the public hospital land as unleased territory land, for the time being.

The bill provides a mechanism to determine the just terms for the acquisition of the land and termination of the Calvary Network Agreement. It will also provide a mechanism to transition Calvary Public Hospital Bruce employees, assets and services to the territory. The bill represents a significant moment in the delivery of public health care for the territory and will ensure the most efficient and effective delivery of public hospital services for Canberrans.

Planning for the transition of the essential public health services at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce to Canberra Health Services is being undertaken with staff wellbeing and patient safety at the centre of all decisions. The ACT government will work collaboratively with Calvary to support information being available to all staff, patients, visitors and other key stakeholders, including contractors and referrers. Planning has included a dedicated transition team that will ensure that any risks to the continuity of service delivery are minimised and assist Calvary as needed to effectively transition services to Canberra Health Services.

We know that staff will find this period unsettling and some people will be worried about their jobs. Let me be clear that we want to grow the health workforce in the ACT. Calvary staff will be invited to transition to Canberra Health Services, and the transition team will be providing them with a letter of offer to join the Canberra Health Services team. There is a small handful of staff that the transition team will need to work with on an individual basis, but for the vast majority of staff this will be a simple process.

Communications have been sent out and information is on the website to let the workforce know what they need to do to transfer to Canberra Health Services. Staff sessions are being held for concerned staff and there is also a hotline number to call. Our clear aim is that staff will be able to keep doing the same job, with the same team, in a public hospital that respects the care they provide every day to patients and to each other.

We will respect that the public hospital at Bruce needs to remain “large enough to deliver, small enough to care”. Canberra Health Services understands that Calvary Public Hospital has its own culture and way of doing things. Our aim is to minimise disruption for staff and patients to the greatest possible extent. That is why we have proposed a relatively short transition period—an acquisition date of 3 July, with an expected formal transition period from 31 May—in order to minimise uncertainty for staff. It is also the territory’s intent to honour contracts, and contractors can also access the website for information or call the hotline.

There are some who will want to take this as an attack on the Catholic Church and on faith-based care. I want to assure members that this is no such thing. The government

partners with many faith-based and Catholic organisations in the delivery of services, and we will continue to do so. Indeed, we will continue to partner with Calvary's private hospitals in the delivery of health care, and I am pleased that Calvary has indicated that it intends to remain part of the territory's healthcare system.

Calvary has played a crucial role in the delivery of public hospital services in the ACT for more than 40 years. For decades, Calvary's public hospital staff—doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, wards people, cleaners, support staff and administrators—have dedicated themselves to supporting the people of Canberra in times of need. Many Canberrans will have fond memories of the services that Calvary has provided as Canberra has grown. Many Canberrans will continue to do so as Calvary remains an important contributor to health and aged-care services in our community.

As Canberra continues to develop into a larger and more diverse city, the ways that we deliver public health services need to continually evolve to meet increased and complex demand. The introduction of the bill creates an opportunity to plan and deliver a hospital system that is networked under one operator, with the ability to strengthen workforce capacity and coordinate services, all with the goal of improving health outcomes for all Canberrans.

I am pleased to table the bill and the accompanying explanatory statement and human rights compatibility statement, and I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023 Consideration

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) (11.01), by leave: I move:

That notwithstanding the provisions of standing orders 174 and 175 and the resolution of 2 December 2020, as amended, which refers all Bills to the relevant committee, the Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023 may be debated by the Assembly prior to any committee inquiry or report, except for the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in its Legislative Scrutiny role.

I move this motion today to provide certainty and assurance to the staff and patients of the Calvary Public Hospital. The passage of this motion will suspend the requirements of standing orders 174 and 175 and of clause 5 of the continuing resolution of 2 December 2020 for the Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill.

This will allow the bill to be referred to a standing committee for inquiry and will allow a debate on the bill before an associated report is tabled and responded to by government. The motion will not suspend the requirement for the bill to be scrutinised by the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in its legislative scrutiny role.

These measures will allow a more swift passage of the bill, reducing any time of uncertainty for staff and patients of Calvary Public Hospital with regard to employment and continuity of operations. The motion, however, does not preclude the Standing Committee on Health and Wellbeing from being regularly briefed on the bill and a reform process by government, nor does it preclude the committee holding an inquiry into either.

Legislative scrutiny is important and necessary. The only thing that is changed by this motion is the requirement for reporting prior to debate in this place. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.02): We will not be supporting this motion. It is shameful.

What is the point of having a committee inquiry if this government is going to steamroll through and pass this bill before the committee could report or the government could respond? It makes a nonsense of the process. We do not support what is happening with the egregious hostile acquisition of Calvary and we do not support what is happening here today with the circumvention of democratic processes.

The substantive debate about Calvary will be litigated, I am sure, in the coming weeks and potentially months and is separate to what is happening here. I think it is important that we do not have a conflation of the issues, and there is no doubt that the government has been attempting to do that. It is attempting to conflate a new north side hospital with what it is doing to Calvary. They are separate.

It is quite clear that there is a need for more hospital beds—because this is the government that cancelled a hospital in 2012 to pay for their tram, and we are a decade behind. We are a decade behind when it comes to health infrastructure. So the Canberra Liberals are not opposing the proposition of additional hospital facilities in the north of Canberra—let me be very clear. We are absolutely opposed to this hostile takeover of Calvary, which the government is trying to conflate.

This is legislation which, in its effect, is probably the most significant piece of legislation in this term of government. The decision not to follow due process and have an inquiry and examine these issues is simply undemocratic. It is undemocratic. It is trampling on process—and it is no small thing.

The consequences of this need to be understood—and I think someone that did understand this was the previous health minister and previous Chief Minister, Senator Katy Gallagher. She understood this. Let me quote what she said in 2010. In an ABC article, she said that “compulsory acquisition could also be a disaster that would cause a lot of conflict and would put the system into disarray”.

No wonder this government does not want that exposed. It does not want this considered by a committee before it is debated in this place, and it probably does not want Senator Gallagher being called before that committee to explain what she meant when she said

it would “cause a lot of conflict and would put the system into disarray”. That is your previous Chief Minister. That is your previous health minister.

This is a dictatorial style stitch-up, and it goes against every democratic principle. It goes against the Latimer House principles. Remember the Greens used to be arguing for the democratic processes, the Latimer House principles? Remember they used to want that? Do you remember that? Do you remember Caroline Le Couteur, Meredith and Shane Rattenbury—before he got his hands on being a minister and what comes with all of that?

Let us read from the Greens first parliamentary agreement. I quote:

... recognising that the Committee system of the Legislative Assembly is a vital tool in providing oversight and scrutiny of Executive Government. This function to be strengthened, to provide through Assembly Committees opportunities for nonexecutive Members to be more involved in the development of Executive legislation, policy setting, and service delivery decisions.

So back when the Greens were on the crossbench—back when they had any inkling of wanting to hold the government to account—they stood up for democratic processes and they argued for Latimer House Principles. But now that they have their grubby little fingers on the tools and levers of government—

Ms Berry: A point of order, Madam Speaker: grubby is unparliamentary language and I ask Mr Hanson to withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: “Grubby” has been ruled out of order. I will let it pass, but I will ask you, Mr Hanson, to perhaps change your use of words. There should be no inference that there is improper behaviour going on from any side of the executive.

MR HANSON: Well, let us have a committee inquiry to investigate that! That is what we want to look at, is it not? That is the whole point of having an inquiry—to find out what sorts of actions have been taken by the Greens and the Labor Party here, which they are shutting down today.

Where is their commitment to accountability, now? Where is the Greens’ commitment to accountability? They are saying that we cannot have more than a couple of weeks to look at this. Calvary’s been operating since 1979. It has a contract for 76 years. We are talking about a century of health provision—both back to 1979 and what they have got going forward—and this government says, “You cannot take more than three weeks to consider ending that. You cannot possibly do that.”

We have standing orders that we have all agreed to where we have said it is so important that committees get involved to scrutinise legislation. We do not have a Senate here, and we have all agreed that they provide such an important role. One has to question why this government is so keen to shut this down.

They talk about “on just terms”. What is just about what is happening here today? Is circumventing the democratic process just? When this ends up in the High Court and

this debate perhaps forms part of it, will they be saying, “That looked like a pretty just way to do this business. That looked fair, and gave everybody their say”? Is what the government doing here today just or is it unjust? I ask that question.

They do not want the egregious nature of this and the bullying that is happening here to be exposed. What they are doing is they are hiding behind the staff. They are saying that they are actually doing this because this is in the best interest of staff. Rubbish, absolute rubbish!

They did not even consult with the staff. The staff read about this in the paper. They did not know about this. They were hijacked. They were ambushed. This is the government running roughshod over the staff. To try and hide behind the staff and say “It is in their best interest” is disingenuous and disrespectful.

We have heard from a lot of staff. I have been receiving emails. I have been receiving phone calls. We have been in contact with a lot of staff who are upset. But there was one email that has touched me greatly, and let me quote from this. It came through Ms Castley’s role.

Good evening, members of the Legislative Assembly, Leanne and Jeremy. I am writing in the capacity of a staff member of Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and as a concerned citizen of the ACT. I, like most staff members of Calvary, have had a horrendous day. I have seen staff members physically upset to the point of being in tears.

I have had a working connection with Calvary for the past 22 years, with a short stint of two years in the Health Directorate. I chose to return to Calvary from the Health Directorate due to incompetencies in management of the health director, blatant ignorance and bullying and harassment.

Being a gay man, I can honestly say I felt less welcome in the Health Directorate than I ever did at Calvary. In fact, as a gay man, I feel extremely welcome within the public hospital and within the management across the Calvary organisation.

Information about the takeover seems to be more available to the current staff of CHS than within Calvary and seems to be pre-empting the passing of legislation required to acquire Calvary. This is completely disrespectful to Calvary staff.

Whilst not a clinician, I am proud to be involved in public health, something that I hold part of my core beliefs in our collective social contract.

That is a sentiment that has been expressed to the opposition about how disrespectful this process has been. The government today is going to compound that by removing the normal democratic processes that you have argued for, Madam Speaker, and that every member in here has argued for and that Mr Rattenbury has argued for historically.

You are disrespecting the staff, and it is egregious that you are hiding behind those very same staff that you have put into tears. The same staff that were crying at Calvary yesterday, you are now trying to hide behind and say, “We are doing it in their best interest.”

So while, the staff are saying you have disrespected them—that they are in tears—you are saying, “We are going to cut the democratic process. We are going to remove the ability for the staff to have their say to their parliament about what they think about this, and we are going to ram this through.”

Madam Speaker, I do not understand how you can sit there and preside over what is going on here, as Speaker in this chamber, and then vote for this—if you are going to vote for it today. It cuts out the community. It cuts out the staff from having their say. How disrespectful!

The archbishop has spoken as well. He said:

The lack of transparency of the ACT government raises several questions and concerns. It is a very sad day when governments can simply decide to mount a takeover of any enterprise they like without any justification.

It also opens up the question that all ACT institutions are now open to compulsory acquisition.

People are genuinely frightened by this. They are frightened by what you are doing. You are going into a respected organisation in Canberra without any warning and you are ending them. There are a lot of people in this town saying, “Who is next?”

Look at the way they behave like bullies, like dictators. They are causing dictatorship here in the ACT. When there is not an ability for this parliament to look at it and for people to have their say and put their point of view forward, you are getting rid of that democratic ability. It is outrageous. It is disgraceful. It is a quasi-dictatorship you are running here today.

“The boss of Calvary”, and I will quote from the media, “has said that the ACT government had not negotiated with the organisation for nearly six months before announcing it would take over the Bruce public hospital.” The article continued:

Calvary national chief executive Martin Bowles said he was only informed about the planned compulsory acquisition of the hospital on Monday, the first time the government had contacted him since November.

So the CEO found out on Monday, this legislation is put in today, and that is it—and then you are going to cut the ability for there to be a democratic, proper inquiry. The article goes on:

Mr Bowles said Calvary was deeply concerned at what this could mean for the 1800 staff working at the hospital.

“We started a good conversation in May last year that went for pretty much the rest of the year,” Mr Bowles said.

“I heard nothing effectively and then I got a call to say, ‘Can you come in on Monday [May 8], the Minister wants to talk’. I turn up and she says, ‘I’m

introducing legislation that will compulsorily acquire your land and buildings and will also terminate the contract you have in place.”

They have treated Calvary in the same way that they are treating this Assembly—with disrespect. They are going into Calvary and saying, “We are not going to talk to you; we are going to end you. We are bringing in legislation and we are not going to have a proper democratic process”—that before all of you have argued for. They are saying, “What we are going to do is we are going to hide behind the staff”—the staff that are now in tears because of this—“and we are going to say that we are doing it in the best interests of the staff.” How disrespectful. Nobody believes it.

You are doing this because you do not want the political arguments, you do not want the debate and you do not want to expose that what you are doing here is disingenuous and disrespectful. It is a dictatorial decision. You are doing this because you do not want what happened in those negotiations exposed or discussed.

You do not want to tell the truth about it. You do not want to tell the truth or have the truth exposed about what this means for staff. You do not want the impacts of this exposed. You do not want what Ms Gallagher has said exposed. You certainly do not want what she said—“a lot of conflict and a system in disarray”—to be exposed. You want this hidden. You want to ram it through, and that is what is happening today.

The opposition does not support the substantive decision that you have made to forcibly acquire Calvary. That is a disgraceful decision. But what is happening here today is compounding that. If you look like little dictators taking over Calvary—

Ms Berry: Madam Speaker, point of order, please.

MR HANSON: Can you stop the clock, please?

Ms Berry: Madam Speaker, I ask for a ruling on the term that has been used on at least a dozen times during Mr Hanson’s speech by his backbenchers and himself—using the word “dictator”. I understand it may not have been ruled as unparliamentary in the past; however, it is clearly being used in a derogatory way in his speech today. So I ask for your ruling on whether or not it is appropriate for that language to be used.

MADAM SPEAKER: I am going to reflect on it and come back. There are only 15 seconds left. I also remind people that, if there are more from the opposition talking on this, to be very mindful of the language you use in your debate. Mr Rattenbury?

Mr Rattenbury: Madam Speaker, Mrs Kikkert just said across the chamber to the Deputy Chief Minister, “Suck it up, Princess.” I seek your advice on whether that is considered unparliamentary.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mrs Kikkert interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Kikkert, that is enough! Those interjections and those comments are not useful in any way, shape or form. You are coming here saying this is an important matter.

Mrs Kikkert: It is.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Kikkert, withdraw that. You are warned.

Mrs Kikkert: Withdraw what?

MADAM SPEAKER: Saying “Suck it up, Princess.”

Mrs Kikkert: I withdraw it.

MADAM SPEAKER: And you are warned. Mr Hanson, on the time you have left.

MR HANSON: What is happening today is shameful. It is disrespectful. It is egregious. Today, the democratic processes of this Assembly have been weakened.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (11.18): Legislative scrutiny is important and necessary. It should be noted that this motion removes the requirement for the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing to report prior to debate occurring on this particular bill only.

The Greens will support this motion today for the following reasons. Firstly, in order to provide certainty for staff and patients, it is important for this bill to progress as quickly as possible. Delaying the implementation date for this transition may have negative and detrimental impacts to staff and patient welfare.

Secondly, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing may at any time of their own volition initiate any inquiry into any matter. Nothing in this motion prevents this. The committee may still inquire into the bill and report back to the Assembly if they so wish.

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms Clay: Madam Speaker, I am finding it very difficult to hear the debate, and this is an important matter. I would really like as a member of this parliament to be able to hear what the speakers are saying.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, my patience has now expired. I remind you, Mrs Kikkert, that you are warned and next you will be named.

MR BRADDOCK: Thirdly, the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in its legislative scrutiny role will still examine the bill prior to debate. This motion also does not preclude the health committee from being regularly briefed on the bill and the reform process by the government. These are the matters which the opposition have raised as their principal concerns 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) (11.20), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to my motion today. Contrary to Mr Hanson’s claims, it does not mean that there cannot be an inquiry. It simply means that the report from the inquiry or the response to government cannot interfere with the timing of the debate of the bill. So, again, I ask that members vote yes to this motion.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 15

Noes 8

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee Reporting date—amendment

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (11.24): I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of the resolution of the Assembly of 2 December 2020, as amended, that established general purpose standing committees, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will present its report on the Modern Slavery Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 on 25 June 2023.

This motion relates to the extension to the reporting time for the inquiry by the Standing Committee of Public Accounts into the Modern Slavery Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.

The current deadline for this particular report is 28 May. We are seeking for 25 June, due to a few stakeholders requesting more time for their submission. In order to allow this, we are seeking a new reporting time, for 25 June.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.25): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred petitions.

Petitions 20-22 and 36-22, titled “Appropriate trees for Bradfield Street, Downer” were received by the Assembly on 22 November 2022 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A.

The committee notes that, in her response to the petitions, the Minister for Heritage, Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, said that amendments to the replanting scheme for the trees concerned had been agreed to by the Heritage Council, reflecting a genuine effort to find ways to increase solar access to the new development whilst not compromising the heritage conservation outcome. The committee also notes the minister’s comment that:

While a review has commenced as to how to best manage and protect heritage values in a growing city, decisions of this kind are a matter for both the independent council and ACTPLA. They make decisions at arm’s length from Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The committee considers that the government’s response to these petitions has addressed the concerns raised. The committee also notes that the Office for the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment has an investigation underway into these matters. For these reasons, the committee does not believe an inquiry will advance the issues any further than processes underway already and will not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petitions 20-22 and 36-22.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.27): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred petitions.

Petition 26-22 titled “Parking in urban open space for Gungahlin apartment dwellers and small business owners” was received by the Assembly on 22 November 2022 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A.

As signatories to petition 26-22, 590 residents of the ACT requested the Assembly to call upon the ACT government to consider taking back the undeveloped land at block 6, section 88 Gungahlin and make this underground paid parking with urban open space on top for Gungahlin apartment dwellers and small business owners.

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

While the block is vacant and yet to be developed by the private lessee for commercial reasons, the site has already been sold, and the ACT Government cannot withdraw the sale to 'take back' the land.

The minister has noted that car parking is a permitted use on the site and the site could be developed with a public car park as part of the development by the lessee.

The committee considers that the minister has responded to the issues and that a committee inquiry is unlikely to advance this issue any further. The committee will therefore not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petition 26-22.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.28): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred petitions.

Petitions 29-22 and 37-22 titled 'Property Developer Licensing' were received by the Assembly on 22 November 2022 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A.

As signatories to petitions 29-22 and 37-22, 1,128 residents of the ACT requested the Assembly to call upon the ACT government to move, within this term of parliament, to implement a broad property developer licensing scheme.

The committee notes that, in her response to the petitions, the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction, Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, said that the ACT government remains committed to introducing property developer regulation within the current parliamentary term to provide greater accountability for property developers within the building and construction industry. The committee further notes that the ACT government is currently undertaking community consultation on developer regulation through the YourSay website.

The committee considers the minister's response to be detailed and to address the issues in depth. The committee also considers that there will be future opportunities to inquire into this issue should it become necessary. For these reasons, the committee will not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petitions 29-22 and 37-22 at this time.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.30): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred petitions.

Petition 39-22, titled "Kippax Fair Parking", was received by the Assembly on 30 November 2022 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A. The committee notes that, in his response to the petition, the Minister for Transport and City Services, Mr Chris Steel MLA, outlined new parking arrangements at Kippax and said:

The ACT Government is continuing to review parking arrangements at Kippax, including reviewing the layout and location of parking to identify possible opportunities to optimise the number of spaces.

The committee considers that the minister's response has addressed the issues raised and offers practical suggestions for managing parking requirements. For these reasons, the committee does not believe an inquiry would advance the issues in a material way and will not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petition 39-22.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.30): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services.

The committee has noted the 30 March 2023 motion in the Assembly asking that the committee consider inquiring into medium-density housing models and residential zoning for missing middle housing in Canberra. The committee expects the draft Territory Plan to be referred to the committee later this year and anticipates undertaking an inquiry at that time, during which it is likely that this issue will be considered. For this reason, the committee will not be starting a separate inquiry into residential zoning for missing middle housing.

Statement by chair

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.31): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services relating to referred bills.

The Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 was referred to the committee on 22 March 2023. The committee notes that this bill is not a significant bill and that the ACT government has carried out detailed consultation with the Unit Titles Reform Consultative Group. The committee considers that there is no value to be added by holding an inquiry. For this reason, the committee has resolved not to inquire into this bill.

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.32): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion.

I would like to advise the Assembly that, on 2 May 2023, the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion resolved to self-refer an inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks. This follows the referral of two petitions to the committee advocating for further investment in skate parks in the ACT: one for the Gungahlin skate park and the second for the Tuggeranong skate park. The committee resolved to broaden the scope of inquiry to look at all skate park infrastructure across the ACT.

The inquiry's terms of reference include: accessibility of skateboarding and skate parks across the community; skateboarder safety and welfare; skate parks, including planning and maintenance; skateboarding and skate park history; and the relationship with other cultural activities—for example, music and visual art. Skateboarding and skate parks allow people to have fun. There is evidence that skateboarding and skate parks also give people a great way to socialise and develop networks to support them elsewhere in their lives.

The committee would like to receive feedback from people on what skateboarding and skate parks mean to them and to see how the ACT government can improve facilities and other resources. My colleagues and I are conducting an online survey and calling for submissions. To facilitate our public hearings, submissions close on Friday, 23 June 2023. Members of this committee look forward to engaging with the people of the ACT. I encourage members of this place to promote the inquiry as well.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (11.33): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing.

On 22 March 2023, the Variation in Sex Characteristics (Restricted Medical Treatment) Bill 2023 was referred to the committee. The committee has since received correspondence from medical practitioners who would like to have their views heard in relation to the bill. After careful deliberation, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing has decided not to undertake an inquiry into the bill.

Nevertheless, on behalf of the committee, I emphasise that the choice not to inquire into this matter does not denote a lack of interest. On the contrary, my fellow committee members and I very much appreciate the correspondence received, to which we will respond, and, further, the committee has decided that we will hold private briefings with interested parties in relation to this bill. Our work depends on the participation of the public and is not confined solely to formal inquiries. We thank all those in our local community and beyond who have taken the time to share their expertise and experiences with us in relation to this bill.

Sitting suspended from 11.35 am to 2 pm.

Questions without notice Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MR HANSON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, the last time the government tried to take over Calvary, back in 2009-10, your predecessor, Katy Gallagher, was reported in an article by the ABC as saying that compulsory acquisition would be a disaster. She said:

That would cause a lot of conflict, it would put the system into disarray.

Chief Minister, why have you pursued a course, without any proper notification or scrutiny, that Katy Gallagher said would be a disaster, would lead to conflict and would put the system into disarray?

MR BARR: I guess I don't win a tipping competition for guessing that Mr Hanson's questions to me today would be on this topic! In simple terms, the circumstances are very different in 2023 than they were nearly 15 years ago. A lot has changed. The government have given careful consideration to the issues and are pursuing the course of action that we have outlined.

MR HANSON: What has changed so significantly that would prevent this from putting the system into disarray?

MR BARR: The needs across the north part of Canberra are significantly greater, given much stronger population growth than anticipated 15 years ago. In fact, Canberra has been the fastest-growing capital city in Australia in the last decade, and the population growth demands a new, modern, north side hospital.

MS CASTLEY: What contingency cost have you estimated for the disarray and conflict this course of action may cause?

MR BARR: The government has undertaken a risk assessment and made provisions in relation to those matters. Obviously, we will release the budget next month.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MR HANSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, in a brief this morning, the health minister advised me and Ms Castley that the government did in fact have an estimate of the cost of the forced acquisition of Calvary but refused to state what that estimate was. Chief Minister, will you produce this estimate, or will you also keep it secret from the community?

MR BARR: The government will obviously publicly reveal the cost in due course.

MR HANSON: How can your forced acquisition be “on just terms” when you will not reveal what the terms are, even though this is seemingly going to be after you ram through the legislation and shut down a committee review?

MR BARR: The legislation that the minister has introduced today outlines the process.

MS CASTLEY: Chief Minister, how does anyone do business with your government if they could be bought out by force and without knowing what terms will apply?

MR BARR: Acquisition for a public purpose, and a purpose as important as a new north side public hospital, is very clear. The capacity to do so exists within the Australian Constitution and, indeed, within legislation. So the member's question is both hypothetical and exaggerated.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MR HANSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. I refer to reports on the manner in which negotiations with Calvary Hospital have been conducted. It has been claimed that the government moved to a forced sale “after negotiations broke down”; however, Calvary themselves have said that they were “utterly devastated” by the “unexpected and unilateral” decision. They state that they were “only informed about the planned compulsory acquisition of the hospital on Monday, the first time the government had contacted them since November, saying:

I heard nothing effectively and then I got a call to say, “Can you come in on Monday ... the Minister wants to talk”. I turn up and she says, “I’m introducing legislation that will compulsorily acquire your land and buildings and will also terminate the contract you have in place.”

Chief Minister, why did your government say negotiations had broken down when you had not been in contact with them for months and then told them they would not last 48 hours?

MR BARR: The government had been negotiating for some time. Negotiations had broken down and there was not a pathway forward. So we have taken the course of action that we have outlined.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, why do you need to take this hostile takeover of Calvary in order to build a new hospital?

MR BARR: The government requires the land; we need to capitalise the expenditure; and we wish to operate the hospital as part of a network of hospital arrangements.

MS CASTLEY: Chief Minister, why should all other businesses with contracts with the ACT not now fear that they may be treated in the same callous, dictatorial way?

MR BARR: That is an absurd question and Ms Castley knows it.

Public housing—debt to commonwealth

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, like all of us, I watched the federal Treasurer present the federal Labor government’s budget on Tuesday night with great interest. I was particularly keen to hear if the federal Labor government would respond to the unanimous calls of this Assembly to abolish the ACT’s historic public housing debt, supporting the territory to buy and build more public homes. Sadly, it appears the federal Labor government has ignored this Assembly. Can you update the Assembly on representations you have made to the federal government, particularly ACT senator Katy Gallagher, who herself has indicted support for debt forgiveness during her time in the Assembly? And what was the outcome of these representations?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Davis for the question. I have been engaging with Senator Gallagher, including today, on this matter and it is the subject of further discussions. I hope to meet with her in the next couple of weeks.

MR DAVIS: Chief Minister, can you update the Assembly on the exact figure, as at 1 May this year of the public housing debt, the rate of repayments, and the interest that Canberra ratepayers are currently charged to service this debt?

MR BARR: The last data I saw showed it was about \$87 million. It will reduce to about \$81 million when we make a payment in June. The amount of interest I will have to take on notice. What was the third part of the question?

Mr Davis: The interest rate Canberra ratepayers are charged to service the debt.

MR BARR: I believe it is around 4½ per cent, but, if I am wildly out, I will correct that for the Assembly. There were two loans: one that was at about 12½ per cent that has been discharged, and a second loan that is at a lower interest rate, which, from memory, is about 4½ per cent. The outstanding balance on 1 July—that is, the new fiscal year—will be about \$81.5 million.

MS CLAY: Chief Minister, is servicing this historic public housing debt challenging the ACT government's ability to honour the PAGA commitments to increase the portfolio by at least 400 properties by 2025?

MR BARR: No, but certainly we could do more if the debt servicing requirements were, as we have offered, then put into the public housing portfolio. We certainly think there is a pathway forward. We are very conscious, though, of the constraints on the supply of building materials and labour that make the construction of new housing quite challenging at the moment.

There are a number of factors that can contribute to increasing the housing supply. This place will debate some of them in the planning system reform later this year. We would also welcome the passage of the Housing Australia Future Fund through the Senate. That would then provide the territory with the funds for 1,200 additional houses, which is significantly more than what is contained within the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement. That is no small contribution. It would be a challenge to deliver that many houses, given some of the constraints that we face around land availability and supplies of building materials and labour. Nonetheless, it would be a challenge that we would step up to seek to deliver. Saying no to 1,200 additional houses at this time, when we are in a housing crisis, as I have heard repeatedly, is a very poor decision. Standing in the way of this is disappointing. We can build on it, of course. Should there be more? Yes, there should. But why stop 1,200 being built over the next few years? Let us make a step forward and seek to build on it. That is what mature and cooperative political parties seek to do.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the health minister. Yesterday in an interview on the ABC, Mr Peffer said that workers at Calvary should provide CHS their details and they will work to transfer their entitlements across. You have also said that contractors and suppliers should make themselves known to CHS so that you can keep them when the compulsory acquisition is complete. How many of the roughly 1,800 Calvary staff have provided this information so far?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I do not have a number right at this minute, but I do know from this morning that a small number of Calvary Public Hospital staff had already completed the form, and the transition team had had some phone calls and a small number of staff had turned up to the “town halls” that were run yesterday. Of course, the announcement was only made yesterday. Calvary staff were only notified yesterday, and the legislation was introduced today. This is a transition period over a number of weeks. So, while we are encouraging Calvary Public Hospital staff and, as Ms Castley has noted, contractors and suppliers to contact the transition team, we were never expecting that 1,800 people would contact the team on day one.

People will take the time to read the information on the website, and I understand there have been quite a number of hits on that website with people checking out that information. They will think through what has happened, the information they have received, and make their decisions in due course. We are not seeking to rush them, but we also wanted to ensure that there was an opportunity available as soon as the announcement was made—that people had that opportunity to call the hotline, to email in, to check the website or complete a form.

MS CASTLEY: How many suppliers and contractors, as you noted, have contracts with Calvary and how many have supplied information to CHS so far? If you cannot give us the answers, will you take them on notice for today?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I am happy to take the question on notice, but I do not see there is a lot of point in taking on notice a question on how many today, when by the time I come back with that answer it will be more. Then in another week it will more, and then in a week after that it will be more. Part of the bill that I introduced today requires Calvary and the ACT government, the territory, to work collaboratively together to understand all of the arrangements that Calvary has in place for the management of Calvary Public Hospital—

Mr Hanson: On a point of order. We have asked for some information. The minister is debating the necessity to provide that information. If she does not want to provide information that is fine, but she is debating the need to actually provide it.

MADAM SPEAKER: There is no point of order. She has made reference to taking it on notice and providing clarification of what that response could look like.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thank you. Yes, I am happy to take it on notice. I thought Ms Castley may be interested in some additional information, but clearly the Canberra

Liberals are not actually interested in any additional information. They are just interested in making political points.

MR COCKS: Minister, is the government inducing individuals and organisations to reveal private and commercial-in-confidence information you currently have no right to access?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: No.

Canberra Theatre Centre—redevelopment

MS ORR: My question is for the Minister for the Arts. Minister, this morning you announced the design and technical adviser for the Canberra Theatre redevelopment. Can you update the Assembly on what this milestone means for the project?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Orr for the question. Today the ACT government appointed Architectus, Danish architects Henning Larsen and international theatre designers Arup as our design partner consortium to deliver new designs for the Canberra Theatre redevelopment. This is the first of many exciting milestones for the project.

As part of our competitive procurement process, we received 21 EOIs from around the world. Three consortia were short listed and asked to participate in the next phase. Architectus, Henning Larsen and Arup demonstrated they have the best plan to deliver designs for a theatre centre that integrates with the existing landscape and future vision for a thriving Canberra, Civic and cultural district. This consortium has understood our vision for a world-class venue with architectural excellence befitting its location. They will now commence the early planning and design process to deliver a theatre to bring us closer to realising our ambition to being Australia's arts capital.

MS ORR: Minister, how will the Canberra Theatre redevelopment support the ACT government's ambition for Canberra to be recognised as Australia's arts capital?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. Canberra has the highest cultural attendance and participation rate in Australia and we are a leader in creative employment. We are renowned for our cultural tourism offerings. However, the current capacity and technical constraints of the Canberra Theatre limits what we can see close to home. The redevelopment will deliver a new 2,000 seat theatre with a larger stage and the capacity needed to include Canberra in the circuit for top tier productions. The existing theatre will be adapted to a flexible space with an option for a flat floor set-up, meaning for example, we can attract more mid-size concerts. More and bigger productions will bring more audiences and support and grow our passionate and talented local industry.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, what are the next steps for the design and technical adviser to progress the Canberra Theatre redevelopment project?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. The design partners winning tender included preliminary designs depicting a new theatre building with a bold and sophisticated facade treatment which references the formal modernist and brutalist

landmarks of Canberra. Now the design partner will get to work to deliver detailed designs to ready us for construction. They will provide a range of advisory services including architecture and urban design, theatre design, acoustic, town planning, heritage, engineering and sustainability advice as well as cultural advice and stakeholder engagement. They are establishing a local office and partnering with Canberra's industry leaders. The performing arts sector will play a vital role in shaping the theatre's design through a performing arts reference group, with EOIs open today, together with additional consultation opportunities for the broader community later this year.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MS CASTLEY: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Following yesterday's announcement, in the middle of a sitting week, that your government will begin a compulsory acquisition of Calvary and now there will be no time to move a motion, make any freedom of information requests or put questions on notice. Mr Gentleman's motion stated that the bill can be forced through without a proper committee inquiry. In that case, will you commit to tabling this afternoon all papers, including condition assessments, strategic asset reports and options assessments, for Calvary and the north side hospital that were previously refused in an FOI? If not, why not?

MR BARR: No, for the reasons outlined in the FOI determination.

MS CASTLEY: Chief Minister, will you commit to tabling this afternoon all documents that outline planning for how a compulsory acquisition of Calvary is going to take place?

MR BARR: No.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, will you table all documents and meeting minutes with stakeholders when you discussed the compulsory acquisition of Calvary, including any discussions that were held with Calvary?

MR BARR: No.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MSCASTLEY: My question is to the health minister. I refer to yesterday's announcement of the government's compulsory acquisition. Calvary has roughly 1,800 staff, and it is unclear how many of them will want to stay on and work under CHS ownership. Staff who have contacted the Canberra Liberals are devastated because they found out from other staff in Canberra Hospital, Woden, or from the media. Do you have any idea of how many staff you expect to leave as a result of this compulsory acquisition?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Castley for the question. Of course, the whole way through this, the staff, patients and continuity of service have been our number one priority, and that remains the case. We worked very closely with Calvary to ensure that staff would hear this first from their employer, if they could. We were also aware

that, as soon as Calvary informed its employees of the government's decision and of the process that the government had proposed, that information would become public.

We also ensured that other staff who would be affected by this decision across Canberra Health Services and the ACT Health Directorate would be directly informed by their employers shortly afterwards. We were also that the media already had an inkling that something was happening here and would hear this fairly quickly from when Calvary Public Hospital staff were informed.

We were aware, unfortunately, that it was never going to be the case that every Calvary Public Hospital employee would hear this first directly from their employer, but that was what we endeavoured to achieve. We did that in partnership with Calvary, and endeavoured to ensure that they had the opportunity to inform their staff first.

Ms Castley: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Castley?

Ms Castley: I asked the minister whether she had any idea of how many staff she expected to leave. It was not that they were not able to hear about it; how many staff?

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, are you able to provide any information?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Yes. In all of my conversations, and when I visited Calvary Public Hospital and talked to staff, it has been really clear that the vast majority of staff at Calvary Public Hospital are committed to their work at a public hospital. They are there to be part of the public hospital system. We want to smooth this transition—
(Time expired.)

MS CASTLEY: Minister, what is the government's plan to run the hospital if too many staff leave as a result of your compulsory acquisition?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: As I indicated to Ms Castley and Mr Hanson in the briefing this morning, of course, we did a range of due diligence in planning for the announcement of this decision. Canberra Health Services is the organisation that manages surges in demand across our hospital system every time there is a surge in demand. That is part of the challenge that we face in having a contracted private provider for our general hospital—surges in demand, changes in demand or incidents that occur, including the incident that occurred in December, with the fire at Calvary's theatre complex, which resulted in a very quick response from Canberra Hospital and Canberra Health Services. Contingency planning for a range of contingencies has, of course, taken place.

I have been very pleased to hear some of the comments from Calvary. I am not surprised in any way, but very pleased to hear Calvary itself committing to ongoing delivery of public health services at Calvary Public Hospital, ensuring that continuity of care, patient safety and staff wellbeing are also their focus. I am not at all surprised about that, because they have been such an important and strong partner in the delivery of that public hospital for such a long period of time.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you apologise to all of the distraught Calvary staff, many of whom were in tears yesterday, as a direct result of the secretive way you handled this announcement?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I think Mr Hanson is drawing a bit of a bow there. Clearly, this announcement and this decision were going to be distressing for some staff. Many staff have worked in Calvary Public Hospital for a long period of time. The hospital itself is part of their identity. That may or may not be linked to Calvary Health Care and the Little Company of Mary. Other staff have let us know that they think this was a good decision and they welcomed this decision. Part of the reason that we have provided a definitive time frame for the transition—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, a point of order on relevance: the nub of my question is: will she apologise to those staff?

MADAM SPEAKER: She has time left to explore the question. She is in order, Mr Hanson.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mr Hanson, as I indicated, was drawing a long bow in what he was asking me to apologise for. I acknowledged yesterday, when we made this announcement, as did the Chief Minister, that this announcement would cause distress and concern for staff. Of course, our thoughts are with those staff whose identity is not only in relation to the public hospital, for which many of them are—

Mr Hanson: This is a filibuster. Answer the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: She is answering the question, Mr Hanson. I have said there is no point of order, so let her continue, and just stop interjecting.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I do not see any point in continuing, Madam Speaker.

Mr Hanson: So the answer is no.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, you are warned. You are a serial interjector. It is an important topic. You are asking relevant, important questions, but you are not paying respect to the answer.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on your ruling, my question was whether she would apologise or not, and she did not answer that. It is a relevant point of order. I hardly interjected at all. It is reasonable for me to ask her to answer the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, resume your seat.

Municipal services—footpaths

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, in 2021 the full ACT path network was audited and the results of that audit were recently released under FOI. There were 10 paths considered a very high to extreme risk, requiring urgent repair within three days, and there were 1,898 high-risk paths which needed repair within 14 days. So the total number of paths needing some amount of repair was 8,987. That was over 18 months ago. Minister, of the almost 2,000 paths that required urgent repair, how many of those urgent repairs have been done?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question in relation to the 2,577 kilometres of footpaths that we have in the ACT. The ACT government understands the importance of a well-maintained and accessible path network. That is one of the reasons why, under our draft Active Travel Plan, a better maintained and connected path network is our second priority in the plan.

In 2021 we did undertake a path audit, with the help of some fantastic staff members through the Jobs for Canberrans program. That has led to a range of different path defects being repaired. I can inform the Assembly that, since 1 January 2022, following that path audit, 4,371 defects have been treated. Defects are treated in priority, based on the identified risk or hazard, and we will continue to look at those remaining defects that have been identified in the audit. We are currently using that audit and the outcomes to help develop and review service levels to improve the conditions of our community paths as part of the Active Travel Plan. I look forward to making further announcements once we finalise the plan.

MS CLAY: Minister, how much money is the ACT government spending each year on path maintenance and path repairs?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Clay for her supplementary. The average annual budget allocation for the community path maintenance program over the six-year period from 2016-17 through to 2021-22 was \$5.1 million. There is a range of different components to that, including asphalt, concreting and a range of other works.

Labor took to the election a commitment to invest \$3.7 million in path maintenance, which we have delivered on through investments in the budget this term. We will consider further outcomes of the path audit and, indeed, the Active Travel Plan, based on community feedback over the coming months.

MR BRADDOCK: When will all 9,000 of the reported defects be fixed?

MR STEEL: We are currently reviewing the outcomes of the audit in the context of the community maintenance program for footpaths. We will consider what additional investments need to be made in the future, in addition to the extra investments that

we have made, including using commonwealth funding through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, to maintain our path network, as well as making sure that we also continue to invest in new path connections where the community, in particular, has identified that a new path is required. Of course, we will also respond to defects which are raised by the community and not just through the audit process.

Mental health—workforce strategy

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, I understand work is underway on a three-year action plan to underpin the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy. What consultation is being undertaken on the action plan, and when will it be released?

MS DAVIDSON: I thank the member for the question. Yes, we are indeed working on a three-year action plan for the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy. The consultations have commenced. Open public consultations have been completed and there have also been targeted meetings, which are continuing. To date, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing has had three open workshops and 15 meetings with key stakeholders. One of the things that we have learned from that is that some of those stakeholders and the sector have asked for some additional time for consultations, and that is exactly what we are providing so that we can make sure that everyone has the opportunity to provide important feedback and advice for us.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how does the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy compare with strategies in other jurisdictions?

MS DAVIDSON: I will need to take on notice a comparison with other jurisdictions, but, because the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing are also engaged in the national workforce strategy development and are working closely with our commonwealth counterparts, this gives me a lot of confidence that we are able to hear from other jurisdictions about what they have learned in the work that they have done so far and make sure that we are doing the best that we can for the ACT context.

DR PATERSON: Minister, in what areas does the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy differ from the 2022 National Mental Health Workforce Strategy?

MS DAVIDSON: One of the things that we know we really want to work on more closely in the ACT is around how we work with lived experience and the peer workforce. For that reason, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing has been liaising with some peak organisations in the ACT about the role and functions of lived experience director positions in the ACT. At the moment, we are working closely with Canberra Health Services and the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing. They are jointly advertising and recruiting two lived experience director-level positions. We would like to thank the Mental Health Consumer Network who provided some really important feedback on the position description and will be participating in that recruitment process. We are putting that into action right now.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Chief Minister. Why do you need to rip up a 70-plus year contract with an existing supplier to build a new hospital?

MR BARR: The government has outlined the reasons for its decision on multiple occasions. I would advise Ms Castley to read them.

MS CASTLEY: Chief Minister, why do you need to abolish an existing, well-performing system to build another hospital, and what other options did you consider?

MR BARR: The government considered a range of options, and we have outlined the course that we have chosen.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, is Calvary in breach of its contract or is it, in fact, a valued part of the ACT health system and has been for over 40 years?

MR BARR: The government has been very clear: it is the latter.

Children and young people—mental health services

MR BRADDOCK: My question is for the Minister for Mental Health and was written by Dean Jones whilst on work experience within my office. Minister, according to the 2021 ACT General Health Survey, 20.6% of children surveyed reported being diagnosed with a mental health disorder, with a majority of these cases including anxiety. The percentage of children has climbed since 2018, when it was 12.3%. Additional surveys from the Black Dog Institute have shown that adolescent mental illnesses are the main cause of illness and disability among children and adolescents aged 10 to 19. Given the growing demand for adolescent mental health services across the ACT, how is the ACT government ensuring that children have access to adequate resources and services to support their mental health and wellbeing?

MS DAVIDSON: I thank Mr Braddock for the question and I thank you Dean for helping him with that. The information we have been receiving through the information people are searching for on MindMap, which is our youth mental health navigation service, tells us that anxiety is indeed one of the things that young people in the ACT are looking for help with.

We have a number of programs that work in the prevention and early intervention space to support young people in identifying when they might need some extra help and how to manage what would be within the range of normal levels of stress and anxiety as well. One of those programs is the Youth Aware of Mental Health program which is delivered to year nine students across the ACT. The feedback that I am hearing from young people for that particular program is that it really helps them to understand what is normal, what is not, where to go to get help and how to support their friends if they realise their friends might be going through a hard time as well. We would very much

like to see that kind of program continue. We also know that programs delivered by our NGOs supported by ACT government including MIEACT, Mental Illness Education ACT are very much in demand in ACT schools at the moment. MIEACT tell me they are receiving a lot of requests for running those programs in schools including programs that can help young people with stress management and dealing with anxiety.

In terms of programs that can support young people who need some therapeutic support for mental illness, we have quite a few programs in the ACT that are helping with that. In the October budget I talked about the child early intervention team expanding to the Gungahlin Child and Family Centre to be able to provide support a bit closer to home in Mr Braddock's own electorate. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in Woden is— *(Time expired.)*

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, for parents of children and adolescents who are neurodivergent, how are their needs being incorporated into the government's programs. How inclusive in nature is the accessibility and cost related with these initiatives?

MS DAVIDSON: I must thank Minister Stephen-Smith and Minister Berry for the work they have done to make sure the early intervention service at the child development service received additional funding and is able to provide therapeutic support for children and young people in the ACT, particularly in that two to three-year-old age group where parents or the early childhood educators might realise that they need a little bit of extra help. That might be speech therapy, it might be occupational therapy, it might be physiotherapy, and that child or young person may or may not yet have a diagnosis that relates to a developmental delay or to neurodivergence. But if we know they need the support, they will be able to get access to it through our public health system, and that it is really important. It also means that they will be able to refer those young people into the ACT's free three-year-old early childhood education system preschool if they think that is going to support that young person's development as well. That is really helpful.

One of the things that we learned through the *ACT disability health strategy roundtable listening report* is that disability awareness and inclusive education are really important to young people and their families in the ACT and so, if we are going to take a strength based approach and really take pride in the skills and strengths that come with neurodivergence then being able to incorporate that into inclusive education is a very important part of what we need to do in the ACT. I know the Education Directorate will be doing some work on that over this year and will be very well supported by the Office for Disability in doing that work. I have also heard some really good feedback from people who are neurodivergent and also need some support with mental health from the Safe Haven service that recently started in Belconnen. Some very positive feedback about how inclusive and understanding the staff are. *(Time expired.)*

MR DAVIS: Minister, following the federal budget announcement that there will be mental health programs in the ACT where funding will not continue into the next financial year, what is the ACT government doing to ensure young people and the programs they rely on will continue to be supported?

MS DAVIDSON: There is one program in particular that I think is something we need to see continue in the ACT that has been funded by the commonwealth over the past four years and that funding is due to end in June 2023. The Stepping Stones program is an evidence-based multi-disciplinary trauma-informed program for children under 12 years who are in the ACT. It provides a stepped care treatment model for children who have experienced trauma or are exhibiting signs of trauma. It is delivered by CatholicCare, mostly through its Braddon office but is also able to provide outreach as needed within schools. That program is really valued and we would love to see that continue in the ACT, but it is a commonwealth funded program.

CatholicCare do deliver a number of youth mental health programs in the ACT that are ACT funded and will continue, and in fact have received additional funding from the ACT government over the last couple of years, such as the youth and wellbeing service, which received additional funding in the 2021-22 budget and is also now receiving training as part of the initial rollout of the trial of MOST from Orygen to better support that service. The positive feedback that we have heard about all of their programs is also reflected in the number of contacts we have had from people in the community wanting to see the Stepping Stones program continue, and I would be very keen to see that happen.

Planning—Thoroughbred Park

MR CAIN: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, I refer to the possible relocation of the Canberra Racing Club from their current site at Thoroughbred Park, as per the draft new Territory Plan and draft inner north district strategy—your documents, Minister. Minister, if you do not get your preferred outcome of relocating the club, will you rule out compulsory acquisition of the Canberra Racing Club, their assets, leases and the site they are on?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Cain for the question. None of those documents relocate the club.

MR CAIN: Minister, why is the relocation option still included in the draft new Territory Plan and draft inner north district strategy?

MR GENTLEMAN: As explained in detail through the hearings allocated to the Territory Plan, there is no intention to relocate the club.

Mr Hanson: That's what you said about Calvary!

Mr Cain: Why is it in the documents?

MADAM SPEAKER: Members! You have asked the question. Let the minister answer. Mr Gentleman, have you concluded?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, Madam Speaker.

MR PARTON: Minister, if the outcome of relocation of the Racing Club is not removed, or if no alternative site is identified in the proposed planning reforms, does this spell the end of horseracing in the ACT?

MR GENTLEMAN: It is a hypothetical question. There is no intention to close down horse-racing in the ACT or relocate the club.

National Multicultural Festival—attendance

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Minister, you recently shared information about the wide range of social and cultural benefits from this year's 25th anniversary Multicultural Festival. Can you please provide further details about the economic impact that this year's festival has had?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Dr Paterson for the question. This year's National Multicultural Festival, our 25th anniversary, generated a substantial boost to the local economy, with more than 40,000 visitor nights, and delivering a total economic benefit of \$20.8 million for the ACT. These figures represent a significant increase on the results from the 2020 festival, which created 22,000 visitor nights and a \$12.2 million economic benefit.

These figures are a testament to the hard work and passion of everyone involved, from our showcase leaders, performers, stallholders and businesses to the organisers, volunteers and the hundreds of thousands of visitors who enjoyed the event. This was Canberra at its best.

The success of this community-led event should be shared by all, but I particularly thank the inaugural National Multicultural Festival community panel reference group, who played an integral role in the lead-up to and during the event, and the communities and groups who were represented for the very first time.

DR PATERSON: Minister, how many people attended this year's festival and what feedback have you received about the overall experience of attendees?

MS CHEYNE: It is not an exaggeration to say that this year's National Multicultural Festival smashed all previous attendance records. Total attendance over the three days was more than 380,000, with more than 40 per cent of Canberra households in attendance. More than 30,000 interstate and international visitors attended the festival, with approximately two-thirds of these people travelling to Canberra specifically for it. A majority of visitors also said that their perception of Canberra had changed for the better after their festival experience. Most importantly, 93.1 per cent of attendees said the festival enriches and strengthens Canberra as a diverse and multicultural community.

These results are a testament to the role that the festival plays in supporting Canberra as an inclusive and welcoming city.

MS ORR: Minister, where did our interstate and overseas visitors to the festival come from this year?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. This year almost 90 per cent of attendees were from Canberra and the surrounding region. Along with record attendance, this highlights the special place this major event holds in the hearts of our beautiful and diverse community.

Of the more than 30,000 attendees who travelled from further afield to attend the festival, most of our interstate visitors came from Victoria and Queensland. People also came to the festival from across the globe. This year we had a significant number of visitors from the UK, Germany, China, the USA and Canada, and we warmly welcomed them back.

I look forward to providing an update to the Assembly later this year about next year's National Multicultural Festival, an event we are already looking forward to.

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

Supplementary answers to questions without notice Transport Canberra—bus shelters

MR STEEL: Yesterday, Ms Clay asked me which of the bus stops in Belconnen have had solar lights installed, and I can now inform the Assembly that there are eight of those. Those are: 4012, Baldwin Drive after 2nd Maribyrnong Avenue in Kaleen; 4065, John Cleland Crescent after Tattersall Crescent in Florey; 4073, Copland Drive opposite Copland College in Evatt; 4190, Southern Cross Drive up to Kingsford Smith Drive in Florey; 4206, Lhotsky Street, Charnwood Shops, Charnwood; 4411, Onslow Street, Latham Shops, Latham; 4503, Bennelong Crescent after Lachlan Street in Macquarie; 4026, Kerrigan Street after Traeger Street in Dunlop.

Canberra Health Services—staffing ACT Health—Digital Health Records system

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: On 9 May, Ms Castley asked me what is the current shortfall of junior doctors in the ACT. I can advise that, as at 5 May 2023, there are no postgraduate year 1 or PGY1 vacancies, and there are seven year 2, PGY2, vacancies at Canberra Hospital, with it being the primary employer of junior doctors in those first couple of years out of medical school.

In addition, on 9 May Ms Castley asked me how many privacy breaches in total have been identified across the health portfolio since the DHR has been implemented. The answer, I am advised, is that a total of eight privacy breaches have been recorded since DHR go-live. At the time of DHR go-live, a number of pathology results, including historical results, merged into the DHR from legacy systems and triggered unexpected messaging to Canberrans through the MyDHR record and GPs, but these are different incidents.

In addition, Ms Castley also asked, in relation to her office having contacted my office regarding a constituent who had an unknown person in their emergency contact

details, after some preamble, how many breaches like this have occurred since DHR was implemented. I am advised the answer is that, since DHR go-live, eight instances have been recorded where someone had inadvertently received part of another person's personal information. All instances are attributed to human error in documenting information to the wrong record. In relation to this particular circumstance, the office provided Ms Castley's office with the appropriate information for the correspondent to contact an official in the ACT Health Directorate and encouraged Ms Castley's office to provide further details about the matter in order to support an investigation of the issue. However, those have not been provided to date.

C40 Green and Healthy Streets Accelerator Initiative Correction to the record

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (2.47): by leave: On Tuesday, I spoke in relation to Ms Orr's motion and I misspoke. I said that the Woden Bus Depot was due for completion in 2026. It is, of course, due for completion in 2024.

Health and Community Wellbeing—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (2.47): by leave: Pursuant to standing order 246A, I make this statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing. This morning, the Minister for Health presented the Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2023. Following the presentation of the bill, the Assembly debated and passed a motion allowing for the bill to be debated by the Assembly prior to any committee inquiry or report, with the exception of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in its legislative scrutiny role. The committee acknowledges this decision of the Assembly in passing the motion.

To enable the committee to still perform its role of scrutinising government policy, the committee has written to the Chief Minister, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health requesting briefings. The committee will be asking for fortnightly briefings with ministers and Canberra Health Services officials during their regular private meetings, and the committee looks forward to receiving these briefings.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Committee Reports—Schedule of Government Responses—Tenth Assembly, as at 8 May 2023.

Select Committee on Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT—Report—Corrigendum—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the former Members of the Select Committee on Cost of Living Pressures in the ACT, dated 11 May 2023.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity—Annual Report of the Integrity Commissioner 2021-22—Summary of corruption issues relating to ACT Policing 2021-22, dated 31 October 2022.

Coroners Act, pursuant to subsection 57(4)—Report of Coroner—Inquest into the death of “Passenger H”—Follow up response—Ergonomics Assessment Report—ACT Canberra Community Bus Access Assessment R2—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, prepared by Dohrmann Consulting, dated 22 July 2022.

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Management Report for the financial quarter and year-to-date ending 31 March 2023.

Freedom of Information Act, pursuant to section 39—Copies of notices provided to the Ombudsman—Freedom of Information requests—Decisions not made in time—

Community Services Directorate—

FOI-CSD-21/8, dated 30 November 2021.

FOI-CYF-22/65, dated 29 March 2023.

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 242(2)—Statement of Leases Granted for the period 1 January to 31 March 2023, dated May 2023.

Coroner’s report—inquest into death of Passenger H—government response

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (2.49): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Coroners Act, pursuant to subsection 57(4)—Report of Coroner—Inquest into the death of “Passenger H”—Follow up response—Ergonomics Assessment Report—ACT Canberra Community Bus Access Assessment R2—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, prepared by Dohrmann Consulting.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (2.49): On 2 August 2021, Coroner Theakston released his findings and recommendations arising from the inquiry into the death of Passenger H on 1 May 2019. In February 2022, the ACT government’s response to the coroner’s report, which identified a matter of public safety, was tabled.

In response to the findings and recommendations from the coroner, Transport Canberra and City Services engaged an external consultant to undertake an independent risk assessment of the vehicles used to provide the community bus service. As noted in the

government response, additional time was required to undertake this work because the independent consultant, who had been engaged at the time of tabling the government's response, had been delayed in completing this work due to COVID-19 related lockdowns and restrictions.

Today I am providing an update to the Assembly on the government's response, as I committed to do. I can inform the Assembly that the risk assessment work has now been completed and provided to Transport Canberra. Following receipt of the report, Transport Canberra has been working through the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report.

The risk assessment identified eight recommendations related to the coroner's findings, including modifying the orientation of seats and steps within the bus. Additionally, the report also recommended updating drivers' standard operating procedures. In the next few months, Transport Canberra will deliver a plan outlining the implementation process and funding plan to fully implement Coroner Theakston's recommendations. The time is required because the decision to retrofit the current fleet of 22 community buses or lease new vehicles is under review while Transport Canberra decides on the future leasing arrangements for replacement vehicles.

As an interim control, Transport Canberra has removed the affected seat adjacent to the door on all vehicles to prevent any instance of passengers falling from these seats. An engineered solution has also been developed to address the recommendation regarding the position of the seat directly across from the door. Community partner feedback is also being sought on the final design and, should a decision be made to retrofit the existing fleet of buses, that solution will be implemented. Transport Canberra and City Services is committed to undertaking any necessary works as quickly as possible to ensure the ongoing safety of community bus passengers.

I reaffirm the ACT government's acknowledgement of the tragic death of Passenger H on 1 May 2019 and the effect that this loss has had on their family, friends and the community. I want to again send my condolences to the family and friends, some of whom join us here in the chamber this afternoon. The ACT government is committed to working with community partners to ensure the safety of passengers using the community bus service now and into the future.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Building—property developer licensing scheme

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (2.52): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) ACT Labor's 2020 election commitment to set up an Australia-first licensing scheme for property developers that:

- (i) requires developers to meet a “fit and proper person” test and apply to undertake higher-risk developments (such as apartment builds); and
 - (ii) includes a stringent and rigorously enforced penalty scheme, up to and including barring developers from working in the ACT;
 - (b) the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement of the 10th Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory, made between ACT Labor MLAs and ACT Greens MLAs, which states that the Government will, this term, set up an Australia-first licensing scheme for property developers which features:
 - (i) a “fit and proper person” test; and
 - (ii) a rigorously enforced penalty scheme;
 - (c) e-Pet 029-22 and Pet 22-037, by petitioner Mr Zachary Smith of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union ACT, and tabled in this Assembly on 22 November 2022, which called upon the ACT Government to move to implement a broad property developer licensing scheme that requires property developers to:
 - (i) have the financial and operational capacity to complete any proposed developments and address any building defects arising;
 - (ii) demonstrate a commitment to ongoing ethical behaviour;
 - (iii) not engage in phoenix activity or other unfair commercial practices;
 - (iv) not engage in misleading or deceptive conduct while marketing a development to the public;
 - (v) accept liability for industrial practices, environmental impacts, building quality and the health and safety of workers on sites that they control or have influence over;
 - (vi) publicly disclose the source of funding of any development; and
 - (vii) nominate a natural person as a nominee; and
 - (d) the YourSay webpage on developer regulation indicates that the implementation of a regulatory framework for property developers will not take place until 2024.
- (2) further notes:
- (a) within the building and construction industry (the industry), serious power imbalances exist between large commercial entities and small subcontractors;
 - (b) the industry capitalises on the fact it can operate with ambiguity through business structures which allow trade under both registered and unregistered business names;
 - (c) the *Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009* (the Act) aims to facilitate the recovery of payments under construction contracts in the industry;
 - (d) although the intention of the Act is to encourage self-help towards adjudication, claimants report that the processes to obtain payment via an adjudication certificate are complex and difficult to navigate;

- (e) claimants have also reported instances where respondents have deliberately used corporate insolvency as a mechanism to avoid paying workers' entitlements, tax remittances and creditors; and
 - (f) the recommendations of the Federal Government's 2018 Review of Security of Payment Laws; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) by the end of 2023, set up an Australia-first licensing scheme for property developers that:
 - (i) requires developers to meet a "fit and proper person" test and apply to undertake higher-risk developments (such as apartment builds); and
 - (ii) includes a stringent and rigorously enforced penalty scheme, up to and including barring developers from working in the ACT;
 - (b) conduct a review of the *Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009* (ACT) to determine the need for any urgent and simple amendments to strengthen security of payment protection, and report back to the Assembly in the first sitting week of October 2023; and
 - (c) advocate for the Federal Government to create a strong national security of payments regime that adopts the recommendations of the 2018 Review of Security of Payment Laws and ensure that ACT Government policy and legislation continues to implement the findings of that review.

I rise today to speak about property developer licensing—a longstanding issue of vital importance to my constituents and the broader ACT community. I have heard from countless Canberrans who have been exploited by property developers: new couples investing their lifesavings in their first home to start a new life together; growing families who bought off the plan to give each of their kids their own bedroom; entrepreneurs seeking to turn their small business dreams into a reality. All of them had once shared great hopes but now only share horror stories of being left in the dust by property developers who only care about making money at any cost. I have said this before and I will say it again: with great power comes great responsibility.

Here in the ACT, property developers wield significant power over the community. They are trusted to design and construct our built environment. They are trusted to build the places that we call home, the businesses that we shop in and the public spaces which make our community better. It is no exaggeration to say that property developers are trusted with people's futures.

In exchange, they dictate terms to builders, workers and consumers, squeezing them hard to extract incredible profits for themselves and their financiers. The amount of money up for grabs is simply eye-watering and the stakes are incredibly high—so high that seemingly everyone else involved in the industry requires some form of licence or registration: builders, architects, tradies and even real estate agents. So, naturally you would think that there would be some regulation around who can become a property developer, but there is not.

Right now, here in the ACT, anyone rich or connected enough to get their hands on land can make decisions about how Canberrans live and about our shared urban spaces. It does not matter how many times they have burnt a customer, driven a project into the ground or double-crossed their workers, anyone can be a property developer in Canberra.

Property developers play such a critical role in the building and construction industry. However, they are not held to the same standard as other stakeholders who participate. This means that the current regulatory system does not divide responsibility across the chain of accountability in a reasonable and proportionate manner. Instead, responsibility is skewed away from property developers and towards the little guy—the workers or the builder just trying to put food on the table, and the customers just trying to put a roof over their heads.

Right now, our laws hold property developers less accountable than those who sell alcohol, breed cats and dogs, drive a car or run a labour-hire business. In my view, this is ridiculous. I have no doubt that the average Canberran would agree. So we should do something about it. This government made a commitment ahead of the 2020 election to establish an Australia-first licensing scheme for property developers that requires them to meet a fit-and-proper person test and make an application to undertake high-risk developments, and it includes a stringent and rigorously enforced penalty scheme which would allow the barring of developers from working in the ACT. It sounds pretty good to me.

Let us take a moment to talk about the necessity of a fit-and-proper person requirement. The findings from the banking and finance royal commission highlighted the importance of good culture within any corporate entity. What traits do people within a good culture possess? Honesty, integrity and reliability, just to name a few—traits which encourage trust and which are ripe for assessment by fit-and-proper person requirements. Funnily enough, a fit-and-proper person requirement was identified by the banking and finance royal commission as the very foundation of public trust.

The endless streams of media reports sharing property developer horror stories have highlighted to me the rampant unethical behaviour within the industry. It is a culture where robbing innocent Canberrans is allowed, so it is no wonder that these news stories have only increased the distrust that the ACT community has for property developers. In my view, our solution to counteract this insidious culture is simple: let us bring forward the toughest property developer licensing regime possible. Let us implement a scheme that holds property developers to account. Consumers should be able to find out whether the person undertaking the development has both the financial and operational capacity to start and finish the job, and workers should be able to find out whether their big business employers are actually willing and able to pay their wages.

The voices of Canberrans remain loud and clear on this issue. A recent survey found that 76 per cent of Canberrans agree that developers in Canberra are too reckless about adhering to community standards and need stricter controls; 77 per cent of Canberrans

agree that property developers have too much unrestricted power in Canberra; and, overwhelmingly, 77 per cent of Canberrans want the government to introduce a new licence which would require property developers to demonstrate financial capacity to complete any proposed developments—not to mention that a petition calling for property developers licensing that I tabled in this place just last November garnered 1,128 signatures.

These figures speak for themselves. They reflect the very real experience of my constituents who have been done over by property developers time and time again. This gives us a mandate to legislate a strong scheme with real teeth. That is why I am bringing forward this motion today. I think that it is high time we rein these property developers.

I also want to speak briefly about the Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act. I have heard from stakeholders across the construction industry that this legislation needs to be updated and has fallen behind other jurisdictions. Within the building and construction industry, serious power imbalances exist between large commercial developers overseeing projects, through to the builder and then to the smaller subcontractors. That act aimed to counteract this by providing a statutory mechanism for subcontractors and builders to pursue debts owed to them by builders and developers. Unfortunately, although the intention of the act is to enable a streamlined process through adjudication, the way our system is structured makes this process complex. The current act can and should be improved.

To illustrate these issues, let us say that you are a subcontractor based in the ACT who is engaged by a builder. You do the work, pay for materials and employ the workers, but the builder is overextended and refuses to pay you in a timely manner. You need that money now to pay for your materials and your staff. However, the developer pressured you to sign a contract that included a maximum 90-day payment period—practically a lifetime in the construction industry. This is commonplace in the ACT because the contract time frame is not overridden by the statute time frame. The developer does not have to make that payment for 90 days. This means that subbies and builders in the ACT are carrying often large liabilities for extended periods of time.

If you do want to run a dispute over payment, you may have to wait longer in the ACT because the reference date clause in your contract only allows you to make one dispute claim every three months. This seriously undermines the purpose of the act to ensure businesses can maintain suitable cashflow for the stability of the industry. To make matters worse, if the builder or developer goes into liquidation and the remaining retention payment owed to you is mixed in with the builder's assets, it has been lost. This causes significant cashflow problems. Your business is now on the verge of insolvency. Situations such as this are occurring throughout the ACT. Stakeholders have spoken to me and shared how common these extended time lines are in contracts and the issues that arise out of them.

However, if we drive 20 minutes over the border to New South Wales, it is a different story. In New South Wales, there is a maximum 20-business-day payment date. For most payments, it is not over-ridden by a contract. In the ACT, it is the other way

around. The contract over-rides the statutory maximum payment time frame. The New South Wales act also requires the reference date to be monthly. The ACT act allows the contract to determine this time period. On top of this, in New South Wales the retention payments are secured in a statutory trust, not the developer's bank account, so you are protected.

As we have seen recently, developers and builders can go bankrupt. The extended payment periods in the ACT mean that, if this happens, you could be owed months worth of payments, compared to New South Wales. This simply increases risk throughout the industry, which shorter periods and less contractual wriggle room would help to address.

The federal government has identified that these legislative inconsistencies are a major problem and that security-of-payment legislation across the country needs to be updated. The commonwealth government commissioned a review by John Murray that was published in 2018. The review is comprehensive and spans hundreds of pages, providing a detailed analysis of payments legislation in all states and territories. It provides many substantive recommendations.

To address this issue and ensure fairness across the building and construction industry, the ACT government should review our current legislation urgently and introduce straightforward amendments to bring the act in line with other jurisdictions. This should take place as soon as possible. Additionally, the ACT government should do all it can to urge the federal government to implement the recommendations of the Murray review to harmonise security-of-payment legislation across Australia.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate that introducing developer licensing and strengthening our security-of-payment legislation has been a priority for this community for a long time. Canberrans have been crying out and asking for us to do better in this space for many years. As their elected representatives, it is time that we act.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (3.03): I rise to speak regarding Mr Pettersson's motion calling on the ACT government to set up an Australia-first licensing scheme for property developers by the end of 2023. May I make it very clear at the beginning, Mr Assistant Speaker: the Canberra Liberals are supportive of developer regulation. We are very open to implementing an appropriate licensing scheme that increases accountability in the building and construction sector. The Canberra Liberals stand for enhancing government arrangements and improving integrity across government and industry, and in my opinion, these two things are lacking in this current government.

Building and construction is the ACT's second largest industry, the employer of over 20,000 Canberrans and the supplier of our homes and offices. The appropriate regulation of developers is a must. It will ensure that the few cowboy developers do not take advantage of consumers and contractors, and it does not besmirch the quality work being done by the vast majority of developers who provide essential services to our community. But I am puzzled why this motion is before this Assembly today. I am genuinely puzzled. As the motion itself points out, introducing a developer licensing scheme is part of this government's parliamentary and governing agreement, so it is

something that is already decided. Why Mr Pettersson is bringing a motion to say we need this is a bit of a puzzle to me.

In addition, and I have the page in front of me, EPSDD under the governance of Minister Vassarotti in her role as Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction has a time line for implementation of a developer licensing scheme. We have a *Developer Regulation Discussion Paper* issued in November last year. Apparently, the community engagement started 30 January this year. This community engagement ended on 27 February 2023, this year. Tick on those two passing the time line.

But there is a part of the time line that has not been ticked yet, and it is from way back in March, and that is the listening report to be issued from this consultation. That was two months ago. I am just wondering: has Mr Pettersson brought this motion forward because the implementation of the scheme is lagging under Minister Vassarotti's governance? Is this why this motion is before this Assembly? I cannot think of any other reason that is reasonable as to why this motion is in front of us.

A parliamentary and governing agreement commitment, and a process that is in place under Minister Vassarotti's governance that is obviously failing its own time frame. The only way I can really interpret this motion is that it is a motion of no confidence in Minister Vassarotti by Mr Pettersson. I invite Minister Vassarotti perhaps to contribute to this discussion. Is this indicating some sort of squabble between Labor and Greens?

Mr Parton: Between Labor and the Greens!

MR CAIN: Indeed! Is the CLAG coming unstuck? For those who perhaps have not been informed of this acronym—the Coalition of Labor and Green, CLAG. Is the CLAG coming unstuck? It seems so. It seems so, because, frankly, why is this motion in front of this Assembly? I invite Minister Vassarotti and Mr Pettersson to comment. Why has this been brought before us?

As I have said, we are committed to some responsible and sensible developer licensing scheme that does not overburden the industry with red tape but is driven by consumer protection, looking after the smaller players in the industry and assuring the community we are keeping an eye on this very significant activity in the ACT.

As you can see, I have circulated an amendment to Mr Pettersson's motion, and I will speak very briefly as to what that amendment is and why I have introduced it. Firstly, I will mention in the "calls on" in clause 3, Mr Pettersson does say, and I quote, "... calls on the ACT government, by the end of 2023 to set up an Australian licensing scheme."

I have had conversations with Mr Pettersson, and I did not know what that meant. What does it mean to "set up a scheme"? Is it up and running? Is some part of it completed? After some consultation with both Minister Vassarotti's office and Mr Pettersson's office, it does appear that by "set up a scheme", the intention is to introduce a bill before the end of this year for debate next year and to then implement a developer licensing scheme.

The first part of my amendment is, simply, to be very specific and to remove the vagueness from this clause and to say "... by the end of 2023, introduce a bill to the ACT Legislative Assembly"—again by the end of 2023. To me, that ought to bring some comfort and certainty to the community, who are, like me—from some of my discussions—a bit unsure what was actually going to be happening by the end of this year. It is my understanding that is Ms Vassarotti's intention, although given the tardiness of their own timetable, I do wonder if it is going to happen—but anyway, that is part of the "call on".

The other thing that I seek to add to Mr Pettersson's motion is a new clause (3)(d)—to publish the listening report on the community engagement on the *Developer Regulation Discussion Paper* by the end of May 2023. That is only two months late, so I think that is a very reasonable addition to this motion.

Again, I am not quite sure why we are here. Surely, the Labor part of this CLAG can talk to the Greens part of this CLAG and say, "Why aren't we on time with this developer licensing scheme? Why isn't it happening." But instead, and it would appear at the behest of the CFMEU, Mr Pettersson has to come out as a Labor backbencher and chastise the Greens minister in public. My goodness—the CLAG is melting! The CLAG is melting!

It has obviously given me a moment to say a few things, of course, on the floor, which I will never step aside from, so I do want to thank Mr Pettersson for that opportunity! I invite him to continue on this theme. I am very, very happy for Mr Pettersson to bring forward motions criticising the Greens part of this CLAG—the Greens part of this parliamentary and governing agreement. So, thank you Mr Pettersson, for this motion. Again, as I said, effectively, the only way I can interpret this is Mr Pettersson's no-confidence motion in Minister Vassarotti. I move the amendments circulated in my name:

Omit paragraphs (3)(a) to (c), substitute:

"(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) by the end of 2023, introduce a Bill to the ACT Legislative Assembly to set up an Australia-first licensing scheme for property developers that:
 - (i) requires developers to meet a "fit and proper person" test and apply to undertake higher-risk developments (such as apartment builds); and
 - (ii) includes a stringent and rigorously enforced penalty scheme, up to and including barring developers from working in the ACT;
- (b) conduct a review of the *Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009* (ACT) to determine the need for any urgent and simple amendments to strengthen security of payment protection, and report back to the Assembly in the first sitting week of October 2023;
- (c) advocate for the Federal Government to create a strong national security of payments regime that adopts the recommendations of the 2018 Review of Security of Payment Laws and ensure that ACT Government policy and legislation continues to implement the findings of that review; and

- (d) publish the Listening Report on the community engagement on the Developer Regulation Discussion Paper by the end of May 2023.”.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (3.12): I welcome this motion and thank Mr Pettersson for his interest and ongoing advocacy for this important reform. I interpret this motion as his level of interest and advocacy.

Coming into the portfolio of sustainable building and construction, it is true that I inherited a lot of unfinished business. I recognised immediately that delivering on past government commitments was vital to restoring community confidence in construction and building quality in Canberra.

At this time we need to lift the standard of our homes to ensure that they are fit for a changing climate and that they are as accessible as possible so that people can age in place and people with disability can find appropriate housing. All of that reform must be underpinned by community confidence in building quality. We cannot deliver if poor developer behaviour leads to underpayment of workers, substandard conditions, poor safety on site, and dodgy building shortfalls.

If people are investing in building a home or buying an apartment, it is absolutely critical that they know that it will be designed and constructed by highly qualified professionals; that the developers behind the projects are ethical and accountable for their actions; that the construction workers and builders will not be pressured to take shortcuts to boost profits; and that if defects occur, there is a fair and fast avenue for them to be rectified.

That is why I have ensured we now require registration of engineers in the ACT. That was a commitment made almost 10 years ago and why I have ordered a review of the Fidelity Fund. That is why I wholeheartedly agree with my colleague Mr Pettersson that we must license developers. This is a commitment that was made in 2019 by the Labor government under the stewardship of a Labor minister. I came into the portfolio at the end of 2020, and over that period I have been working to deliver this nation-leading reform.

Mr Assistant Speaker, we cannot deny that the last few years have been challenging for the building and constructing sector, with: lockdowns flowing from a global pandemic; supply chain and material shortages due the global instability of war; and skill shortages due to extreme weather and climate change. However, despite this, I have been resolute in ensuring that we progress overdue systemic change and national, leading reforms such as developer licensing. I am laser-focused on delivering on commitments and not seeing promises languish. I have also been committed to ensuring approaches are evidence-based, workable and deliver on intended outcomes: to deliver confidence, provide consumer protection and to support the community.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that work to establish a licensing scheme for property developers in the ACT is well underway. The aim is to deliver a scheme that

gives Canberrans and industry the confidence that when they engage with a developer, a developer will be competent, transparent, act ethically, and have the capacity to deliver quality buildings as well as to be held to account.

A discussion paper on a range of issues and options was released late last year. Feedback from the community showed strong support for the establishment of a licensing scheme. To be effective, any such scheme must be supported by mechanisms to identify and rectify faults early in the design and construction process to hold developers to account for their work. This is to ensure developers with a proven track record of compromising workplace safety and building standards are not able to continue to undertake construction in the ACT. Ultimately, this is about bringing in a developer licensing scheme that gives people the protection they need for what is often the biggest financial commitment of their lives.

Further consultation will be undertaken, and, once complete, we are on track to present legislation for the Assembly's consideration by the end of the year. This will be an Australian first. No other jurisdiction currently has property developer licensing legislation. The ACT will again be leading the country—this time with strong accountability measures for property developers complemented by a regulatory structure that will see construction defects rectified quickly—improving the quality of our buildings and providing protection for the community, builders and their workers.

In bringing forward a nation-leading developer licensing scheme, I am working to ensure that we consider all the benefits that such a scheme can bring. I look forward to tabling this work in the Assembly later this year. Mr Pettersson's motion also raises the important matter of security of payment laws. As we have seen recently with the unfortunate financial collapse of a prominent building company in the ACT, such laws are a critical protection for builders, tradespeople and their employees.

In parallel to this developer licensing work, the ACT's security of payment laws have been reviewed against the recommendations of the 2018 review of security of payment laws, conducted by Mr John Murray AM. While many of the recommendations from the review are already in place, there are some opportunities to make improvements within the current regulatory framework, which I propose to share with the Assembly later this year.

Further, against the backdrop of recent instances of builders facing financial difficulty, as well as CFMEU and community representations made to me urging that a strong national security of payments scheme be adopted, I have written to the Minister for Industry and Science, the Hon Ed Husic MP, who has responsibility for building and construction at the federal level. I have asked that this matter be discussed at the next Building Ministers' Meeting.

As the ACT government continues to progress work on the ACT model, I am conscious of the benefits of a nationally consistent approach, especially here in the ACT. We do have building and construction businesses working across the ACT and surrounding NSW regions who will benefit from uniform frameworks and protections.

I also call on the industry to lead the way in good practice and behaviour, and to support measures that promote good developers, while weeding out untrustworthy companies. While government intervention is necessary, industry-led mechanisms can also achieve significant outcomes and lead to greater confidence in the development industry. We do see this occurring in New South Wales with market-led mechanisms such as liability insurance and the rating tool, iCIRT. The ACT is watching these developments closely for opportunities to support these initiatives in the ACT, as they can ultimately lead to better outcomes and protections for Canberrans.

In relation to Mr Cain's amendments, I am really pleased to agree to them. The first one provides some clarity about what we are proposing, and we are proposing to bring legislation on this issue before the end of 2023. We are also just finalising the listening report for the consultation held on this issue, so we are happy to commit to releasing the listening report before the end of May 2023. Mr Cain: if we can, we will do it sooner.

This is an important reform. We will deliver a licencing scheme and improved regulation, along with stronger security of payment laws, which is part of our commitment to our community. This also demonstrates my commitment to ensuring we have confidence in our building and construction industry, and we are working to protect the community.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (3.21): We have spoken in here this week about the fault line which is opening up in the middle of this once cosy little power-sharing agreement, and this motion is one of the clearest signs of the magnitude of that earthquake! The epicentre of this earthquake is, of course, deep underground, but its effects are now well and truly being felt on the surface. This motion is another clear signal of the movement in the ground on the progressive side of town!

If we, the Canberra Liberals, were today to run a no confidence motion in Ms Vassarotti as sustainable construction minister—we are not going to, but if we did—Mr Pettersson would publicly back his Greens colleague. But, in essence, this motion is a no confidence motion in Ms Vassarotti from Mr Pettersson; that is what it is.

My message to Greens members, in particular, would be that voting for this motion is, essentially, a vote of no confidence in Minister Vassarotti, because the motion sees Mr Pettersson staring down Ms Vassarotti and asking her, "Are you up to this job?" The moving of this motion is a clear indication that Mr Pettersson does not think she is. He does not think she is.

I heard the summary that Ms Vassarotti gave as to how we are moving forward, the work that is being done and when we are going to arrive where we are supposed to be. I do not think Mr Pettersson believes it. Who is actually in charge here? Who is running the ministry? These are not just minor cracks in the fault line; this is an earthquake! Given that the election is still 16 months away, I think this is going to be a rocky road, Mr Assistant Speaker Davis. I do not know if you agree with me, but I think it is going to be a rocky road.

I will not speak for long, because that is all I have got to say on it, really. But I just want to add that Mr Pettersson, of course, is also trying to keep faith with his union masters.

I guess you have got to do what you have got to do, but I certainly commend Mr Cain's amendment.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (3.24): I rise in support of property developer licensing and in support of a Greens minister doing great things which support the fulfilment of this government's parliamentary agreement. We in the Greens believe that consumers and small businesses should be protected from unethical and unfair business practices. We want strong business regulations that address unfair, unethical and ecologically unsustainable business practices. We want a well-resourced regulatory enforcement system to ensure that businesses are compliant with local and federal consumer and workplace laws.

There are elements in the construction industry that are notorious for giving people the run-around. Every other month there is some sort of scandal, be it a construction company folding and leaving their clients and employees in the lurch, or a new major development which pays no regard to local design codes and community expectations.

In my home district of Gungahlin, we can see some of the results of what can go wrong when this happens. Major buildings can end up with chronic problems, substandard work is allowed to happen, and it is almost always up to the residents to clean up the mess.

It should come as no surprise that when the CFMEU began calling for property developer licensing in the ACT, the Greens enthusiastically agreed that we needed to act. Property developer licensing will allow us to regulate against behaviours which evade other legal protections. It will ensure there are actual people held to account when things go wrong. It will allow us to have much greater confidence that developers are competent, transparent, ethical and accountable.

When Greens are in government, we get things done. With matters that have been left to languish on the to-do list, we put the effort in to do them once and do them right. Complex things might take some time, but they happen on our watch. I have every confidence that Minister Vassarotti will deliver on this scheme, and when she does her solution will be both comprehensive and effective. Her delivery of the longstanding commitment to engineering registrations is proof of her capabilities, as is her work on the National Construction Code, which will deliver seven-star energy efficiency ratings and silver accessibility standards.

The CFMEU is certainly within their rights to keep the pressure on. Their contributions to the public debate have been, shall we say, constructive. I thank the CFMEU for their advocacy in this space. There has been a lot of work to do, and there is still a lot to be done. I am proud to say that I look forward to what our Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction achieves next. People like Minister Vassarotti show us what is possible when you have Greens in government.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.27): I speak in support of Mr Pettersson's motion, because I know that Canberrans want

to see property developer licensing and a scheme for that. One of the most common complaints I hear as a member of this place is about the quality of developments: apartment buildings that make strange sounds; bathrooms that are not waterproofed properly; cladding falling off the outside of buildings. These are just some of the stories we hear every day from members of our community, and it is not good enough.

Property developers are building our city's future. They are shaping the way our city will look and where people will live and work. As the government, we are obliged to ensure that the people who are doing this work are qualified, professional and genuine. They need to be able to be held accountable when something goes wrong, and they need to be licensed.

We have licensing schemes for different trades, from builders to electricians to plumbers; we even require a license to breed pets. Yet property developers are exempt. That does not pass the pub test. We need a licensing scheme that protects the Canberra community from the dodgy practices of some developers and promotes the ones doing the right thing.

We need to be clear that phoenixing and other unfair commercial practices are not okay. Developers need to have the capacity to address building defects that may arise after a building has been completed. They need to be liable for the work health and safety of the workers on their construction sites, and they need to be committed to acting in an ethical manner. These are all reasonable expectations to place on companies—that often make significant profits from their developments.

We are seeing an alarming trend of property developers and construction companies becoming insolvent whilst mid-project. The collapse of PBS earlier this year and the collapse of Interface Constructions in Victoria just this week are two examples. Unfortunately, much of the time, when these companies go under, it is the workers that end up worse off, through no fault of their own. I would like to thank Mr Pettersson for including in his motion a requirement that the ACT government review the Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009 to ensure it is fit for purpose and strong enough to deliver the outcomes it was intended for.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I will make a couple of comments on Mr Cain's contribution as well and thank him for supporting this motion. I think it is very important. He did quote the motion of Mr Pettersson, and he used quotation marks to do it. He said, "By the end of 2023 set up an Australian licensing scheme for property developers." Unfortunately, Mr Assistant Speaker, we do not have the jurisdiction to set up an Australian scheme. The motion actually says an "Australia-first licensing scheme". It was probably just a misspeak, Mr Assistant Speaker, but I would ask Mr Cain to use some of his "CLAG" to paste together some of his speech with the correct references in it!

On a serious note though, unfortunately, I fear there will always be some developers out there seeking to make money off the misfortune of our community. It is crucial government plays a role in protecting Canberrans from the dodgy practices of a few. In 2020, ACT Labor made a commitment to the Canberra community to implement a developer licensing scheme. It is about time the government delivered on the promise.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (3.30): I would like to thank all members for their contributions today. Some have been far more humorous than others, but that is often the case in this place. I can reassure Mr Cain that I think his amendment is a friendly one; it is a straightforward one; it is a simple one. I am very happy to support it, and I would encourage all members to support his amendment.

I would particularly like to thank Minister Vassarotti for her keen agreement and happiness to assist with this motion. The implementation of proper developer licensing in the ACT is reliant upon Minister Vassarotti, and I have full confidence in her to meet these time frames that she has agreed to. I am looking forward to continuing to monitor the progress, as we all are, as I have discovered today. The tripartisan support for this issue is, I think, a very good thing. The local industry will be improved by property developer licensing and improved security of payment laws, so to see all members in this place speak in such a positive way about lifting standards locally is a very good thing.

Mr Assistant Speaker, there were many ructions in some of the Canberra Liberal contributions today. I completely reject the premise of all of them. This is a government doing good things, and I have full confidence in every member of this government.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Canberra Health Services—procurement

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (3.32): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) on 19 September 2022, the ACT Government entered a contract with Melbourne company, Studio Binocular, for \$800,000 across two years, to rebrand Canberra Health Services (CHS);
- (b) an internal draft Brand Project Program Plan 2022-24 shows additional expenditure of up to \$850,000 for dedicated staff, also supported by an extended in-house CHS Brand Team;
- (c) this rebrand relies on fallacious assumptions that a lack of clear branding is impacting CHS becoming a leading specialist provider and that a rebrand will improve the perceived quality of its services;
- (d) the contract with Studio Binocular, as well as providing an extension option, also provides that the Territory may at any time terminate the contract or reduce its scope;
- (e) the contract with Studio Binocular states that, “the KPIs for this project will include: Timely delivery of various brand requirements” and provides a draft timeline of deliverables and delivery dates; and
- (f) the March 2023 delivery date for “user personas” and “tone of voice” has already not been met;

- (2) further notes:
- (a) official briefs to the Health and Mental Health Ministers of 26 October 2022 stated that, “there may be concerns from the public and stakeholders on their perception of the value of the brand project in delivering benefit to consumers.”;
 - (b) comments by ACT Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Secretary, Matthew Daniel, on 2CC on 27 February that, “I just do not understand what they’re trying to achieve. But think of that \$800,000. It’s a lot of money to spend on spin” and that “...when we have to fight tooth and nail to get safe staffing levels and they can throw \$800,000 around for spin, it leaves a pretty nasty taste in the mouth of our members.”;
 - (c) comments by Australian Medical Association ACT president, Dr Walter Abhayaratna, on 2CC News on 27 April that CHS should, “Try to avoid the easy, fix and quick solutions of trying to just do a rebrand. I think you’re much better off, you’ll get a lot more trust and building relationships by providing quality services.”; and
 - (d) comments by Johnathan Davis MLA, on 2CC on 27 April that, “I don’t think I’ve been in government long enough to buy this amount of money for signage and rebranding” and that “this does not pass the pub test. It doesn’t stack up for me.”; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) terminate the CHS rebrand contract and program and redirect the money saved to frontline health services; and
 - (b) stop spending vital health money on rebrand exercises.

In recent times, I think Canberrans have been stunned to learn that this government has decided to rebrand Canberra Health Services at the starting cost of at least \$1.6 million. That is just for the creative delivering the brand strategy and architecture, not the implementation or ongoing brand maintenance costs, which will undoubtedly cost more millions.

The government’s rationale for this rebrand is that brand image affects consumer perceptions and expectations of the goods or services an organisation offers and their level of satisfaction with that product or service, and therefore, a rebrand will increase the perception of CHS as a provider of exceptional health care, as well as its ability to attract and retain high quality staff and establish CHS as a leading specialist provider. So this rationale acknowledges what everyone knows about CHS: it has significant reputational problems which impact its ability to attract and retain staff! You would not have to know anything about advertising to see that this muddle-headed rationale puts the cart before the horse. If an organisation is in crisis or has a bad reputation, common sense should tell you to fix the product.

There was a time not so long ago that when you said you lived in Canberra it aroused envy because we had the best public health and education systems and government services. Canberra’s public health system used to be a world leader because it offered the best health services. However, even official briefs to the health and mental health ministers can see “that there may be concerns from the public and stakeholders on their

perception of the value of the brand project in delivering benefit to” customers. Well you are dead right. Documents about the rebrand obtained under freedom of information, read like a script from the TV satire *Utopia*.

We read that Canberra Health Services has a potential “brand identity crisis.” The document states:

This is significantly impacting our ability to become a leading specialist provider. It will also have significant positive impact on our future workforce capability. (It will increase) our ability to maintain a strong reputation during crises. (The current brand is) hindering us from achieving many of the strategic goals set out in our Strategic and Corporate plans.

Do you get it? It is the brand that is the problem, it is not the product! Do not believe me? Well there is a minute to CHS’s executive committee in April last year posing the question, “How will a rebrand improve the quality and safety of our care?” The answer:

We cannot make CHS a great place to work if we lack a strong employee value proposition, and if signage, uniforms and other livery don’t inspire a sense of pride ...

And it goes on:

Research shows positive hospital brand images improves patient satisfaction ...

Or:

In essence (the current brand) is hindering us from achieving many of the strategic goals set out in our Strategic and Corporate plans.

How about CHS becoming a leading provider, fixing the workforce issues, improving outputs and not having a crisis! I reckon that will help. According to CHS Strategic Communications and Engagement Branch, the brand situation is potentially at crisis point. They say, “We need to take immediate steps to align ourselves with best practice brand strategy,” and, “In order to meet deadlines for construction of the new Critical Services Building, the brand refresh is also ‘critical.’”

According to the communication experts at CHS, what is needed is: a new corporate identity informed by stakeholder engagement; a “tone of voice” guide that articulates how CHS expresses its “brand personality” in verbal and written communication to build trust with different audiences; a brand book that articulates how the brand should be used; an employee value proposition “to define who we are, what we stand for, what we can offer prospective employees,” in order to develop recruitment campaign collateral like artwork, concepts and scripts; and fictional personified personas of key stakeholders, based on evidence and research, in order to “present a single human face” to CHS consumers. What is also needed is to work closely with a consultant to be paid \$800,000! This consultant will be supported by three dedicated staff from CHS Strategic Communications and Engagement Branch, and in turn, by an extended brand team with myriad roles and responsibilities.

So a 40-page Brand Project Program Plan 2022-24, developed by CHS's strategic communications and engagement team, goes into every conceivable aspect of the rebrand project. We learn that CHS also needs to develop a "Brand Health Measurement Framework", to set up "qualitative and quantitative metrics" to measure the ongoing "performance and impact of the brand project." So we have more focus groups and surveys. From this document we learn that one of the weaknesses of this project is that it is "unfunded beyond 2 years – (and that the) brand needs to be maintained beyond this." So we need more money for research and PR. And to top it all off, we learn that all the rebranding documents are saved in CHS's strategic communications and engagement intranet, which is called "Utopia". I kid you not!

The idea that CHS is employing brand consultants to tell them who their stakeholders are and which tone of voice they should use to talk to them is particularly risible, or it would be if it were not so serious.

The CHS draft Brand Project Program Plan 2022-24 rates dozens of stakeholders from 1 to 10 depending on their combined levels of influence on, and their interest in, the rebrand project, with 10 having the highest influence and interest in the CHS brand. Incredibly, "union" is given a low rating of 3, on par with the sharps provider—not slated to be engaged or informed, merely monitored. One is low, 10 is high. Of stakeholders that have influence on and interest in, the union is given a low rating of 3! CHS must be so out of touch that it truly believes it needs a consultant to map its stakeholders.

Is it any wonder comments from the public have been scathing? I have a few to read out. The first:

The best way to improve the brand is to improve the service, not to add spin. People are not stupid. Those looking for work will do their research before applying for jobs.

Another:

CHS – Canberra Health Service. It is meant to be a service – not a brand. Time for the bureaucrats to stop wasting money by trying to puff up their own self-importance and just get on with delivering services. Haven't heard a single health consumer saying they were confused by what Canberra Health Service was meant to do. Heard plenty of complaints about services not being delivered though.

Another says:

Just suppose that the money had been spent on wages instead of public image. Spent on the staff rather than public relations. Do you imagine that might have incentivised staff to stay and encouraged new staff to want to work in the ACT health facilities? I wonder.

Another public comment says:

Just when you thought that health services in Canberra couldn't get any worse ... this shambolic embarrassment. And they can't find the money to provide for a permanent gynecological oncology unit, but remain "committed" to it.

Another one says:

So the solution to a toxic work culture and poor resourcing negatively impacting staff and patient perception of the organisation is to rebrand rather than fix the problems. Wow.

The last that I will read today is:

It's easy to attract the best health staff. Simply fix the staffing issues and toxic culture. No amount of money spent on rebranding will fix that – they're simply putting lipstick on a pig. Such a huge waste of public money.

These are comments from the public. I could go on, but I do not have time today. CHS stakeholders have also been critical. The ACT Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Secretary, Matthew Daniel, said:

I just do not understand what they're trying to achieve. But think of that \$800,000. It's a lot of money to spend on spin ... when we have to fight tooth and nail to get safe staffing levels and they can throw \$800,000 around for spin, it leaves a pretty nasty taste in the mouth of our members.

Australian Medical Association ACT president, Dr Walter Abhayaratna, said CHS should:

Try to avoid the easy, fix and quick solutions of trying to just do a rebrand. I think you're much better off, you'll get a lot more trust and building relationships by providing quality services.

A majority of the public think this rebrand is the wrong use of resources and even Mr Davis believes this is the wrong use of resources. On 27 April on 2CC he said:

I don't think I've been in government long enough to buy this amount of money for signage and rebranding ... this does not pass the pub test. It doesn't stack up for me.

We will shortly see if Mr Davis will stick to his guns by voting for my motion, or whether he has been pulled into line by the government.

This expensive rebrand exercise is undoubtedly one of the sillier quick fixes that the government has come up with. The amount of \$1.6 million would pay for 60 hip replacements, 400 cataract operations or 600 MRIs. The government should terminate

this CHS rebrand contract and program and redirect the money saved to frontline health services and stop spending vital health money on rebrand exercises. We need a royal commission, not a rebrand.

I believe the Barr-Rattenbury government has lost its focus on patient care. Its focus and funding is on the tram, not Canberrans waiting to see specialists and needing treatment. It has forgotten about people like the woman with the hernia who had to wait over 700 days, the gentleman with COVID who had to walk home from hospital and ended up with pneumonia, and the children who have died. We have concerns about paediatrics, our staff, the ICU WorkSafe notices, the cardiology department—all of these are people and all of them are struggling.

Our nurses and doctors are working in a very broken system and doing a marvellous job. I assure Canberrans that the Canberra Liberals do care about the health services Canberrans receive, and we do care about our staff. The contract with Studio Binocular provides that the territory may at any time terminate the contract or reduce its scope. It also states that “the KPIs for this project will include timely delivery of various brand requirements” and provides a draft timeline of deliverables and delivery dates. For whatever reason—and, given all of the above, one can just imagine—the March 2023 delivery date for “user personas” and “tone of voice” has already not been met and may not be met for several months.

In conclusion, for all the reasons I have placed on the record, I call on the ACT government to terminate the CHS rebrand contract and program and redirect the money saved to frontline health services.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (3.45):
I move:

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

“(1) notes:

- (a) on 19 September 2022, Canberra Health Services (CHS) entered a contract, with Melbourne company, Studio Binocular, for \$800,000 across two years, to support a brand refresh of CHS;
- (b) an internal draft Brand Project Program Plan 2022-2024 shows additional expenditure of up to \$850,000 for dedicated staff, also supported by an extended in-house CHS Brand Team;
- (c) CHS has contracted Studio Binocular to develop, in consultation with CHS staff and consumers, materials such as clearer signage, uniforms for our dedicated staff, and educational materials for consumers;
- (d) the contract with Studio Binocular also is complemented by the development of a staff recruitment campaign to promote CHS as an employer of choice, which will be critical to ensure that CHS can compete in a highly competitive recruitment market for healthcare workers;
- (e) the ACT Government is making record investments in health infrastructure with a 20-year master plan to transform the Canberra Hospital campus and

- improved access and wayfinding will make it easier for health consumers to find the services they need;
- (f) the ACT Government conducted a YourSay survey on the Canberra Hospital Master Plan in 2021; and
 - (g) feedback from consumers demonstrated a need to:
 - (i) make it easier for consumers to navigate between, and access, CHS services, including clear and effective signage and wayfinding on the Canberra Hospital campus and consistent naming of services and facilities;
 - (ii) improve awareness and understanding of CHS services such as community health centres and what is available at Walk-in Centres across the ACT; and
 - (iii) more clearly distinguish CHS services from private healthcare providers and Federal Government services; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government:
- (a) to continue to undertake work to improve service navigation across Canberra Health Services, in response to consumer feedback; and
 - (b) continue work to promote Canberra Health Services as an employer of choice for healthcare workers in Australia and internationally.”.

Ms Castley’s motion attempts to characterise the Canberra Health Services brand project as nothing more than some kind of vanity project or PR exercise, and this is absolutely not the case. In fact, some of the things she read out specifically describing the project highlight why that is. My amendments correct Ms Castley’s false claims and highlight the benefits the project will bring for Canberra Health Services’ patients, families, carers, staff and volunteers.

CHS’s brand project is an important investment in the ACT’s public health system. It is an investment in making the public health system more user friendly and, ultimately, attracting and retaining health care workers so we can continue to grow our public health workforce. The health system is complex, and navigating it can be confusing for consumers, their families and carers. We know this because it is what consumers frequently tell us. We have heard from the community that it can be difficult to understand what services they can access and where. People have told us that it is difficult to find their way around the Canberra Hospital campus and that they want clearer and more effective signage. This was a major theme in the feedback that came out after the 2021 Canberra Hospital Master Plan YourSay survey.

We also know that many Canberrans only associate Canberra Health Services with the Canberra Hospital, and that there is a low awareness of the 28 community-based health facilities CHS operates. Ms Castley herself forgot that we had a hospital on the north side just a couple of weeks ago!

We have heard that consumers want more health education materials that clearly explain how to access CHS services and who to contact when they need help. This project is about CHS taking action on this feedback from consumers. It will develop a more

effective system of signage across CHS facilities and clearer facility and service names so that people can confidently find the care they need. The project will also deliver improved patient health educational materials that are accessible for a wide range of consumers to improve health literacy and knowledge of CHS services in the community.

Once the project has been completed, the government will be able to leverage CHS's more distinctive and cohesive brand to promote awareness of community-based health services, including the walk-in centre network in the Canberra community. Again, I note that Canberra Liberals often simply refer to ACT Health and they do not even acknowledge the existence of Canberra Health Services in many of their public comments. By simplifying how Canberrans find and use our health services and programs, through consistent branding and accessible education, the project will help to ensure that patients are able to access the right services in the right place at the right time.

Importantly, this project is also an investment in CHS's current and future workforce. A key aspect of the overall project is the development of a recruitment campaign that promotes Canberra Health Services as an employer of choice. This is critical to ensure that CHS can be competitive in a very challenging national and international recruitment market. We know we need to recruit more staff across a range of specialties. Our people and culture team has had substantial success already through its targeted talent acquisition process. But to do this consistently across the whole workforce, the ACT needs to be able to compete with other jurisdictions that are also experiencing workforce shortages. We need to be able to clearly articulate the competitive pay and conditions we offer in a city with great work-life balance opportunities. We need to articulate the flexibility of work in a system that spans a tertiary trauma hospital, regional women and children's health services, mental health, rehabilitation, justice health and so much more including a range of community based and home-based services. This project is about streamlining and lifting up CHS efforts to recruit high calibre staff from across Australia and around the world.

It is also an investment in our current workforce, by creating a more positive, people-centric, inclusive brand that reflects CHS's values and gives CHS staff a greater sense of pride and belonging. We know from internal research that this is a priority for CHS staff. Team members have told the communications team they feel the organisation is let down by inconsistent branding from years of patchy implementation. For example, there is currently no consistent uniform for clinical staff, with team members wearing different coloured scrubs from different iterations of the CHS, CHHS and ACT Health logos. This may seem trivial to Ms Castley, but staff have told us that it impacts on their morale and their sense of pride and belonging in their workplace and team.

If this project improves our recruitment outcomes in terms of attraction and retention by even a small amount, the territory will see a significant return on investment through a better resourced public health system, reduced recruitment costs and a happier public health care workforce.

I want to note that this kind of brand project is also not unusual in the health sector. Monash Health, Victoria's largest public health service provider, underwent a similar

project in 2019 to provide consistency across its different services and make it easier for consumers to identify and navigate between their services. Alfred Health and the Royal Melbourne Hospital have also recently undergone similar brand projects.

This motion, I am afraid to say, is just another example of Ms Castley playing politics with our health system, looking to score political points without actually taking the time to understand what this project is about, despite the fact that some of it was explained in her own talking points. Pulling the plug on the project now would deliver only a small saving in the short term, with long term repercussions for CHS's ability to attract and retain staff, and for the experience of health care consumers and the workforce in the ACT.

It is also important to note that this project is not occurring in isolation. This work goes hand-in-hand with improvements to the health care systems that the ACT government is implementing across the board. Our teams are working hard to improve accessibility and timeliness of care, and to continue the work to improve culture within CHS. These are absolute priorities for this government and progress is being made. Ms Castley will continue to talk down CHS and has demonstrated absolutely no understanding of the impact her reckless statements have on our frontline staff. By contrast, this project will support a positive culture by improving CHS's ability to attract new staff, improving team connection and camaraderie for current staff, and improving the accessibility of the health system for consumers.

Finally, I will also note the ACT government is making record investments in health infrastructure. This includes more than \$640 million in the Canberra Hospital expansion at Canberra Hospital, and as the Chief Minister and I have announced this week, a \$1 billion investment or more in the new north side hospital. These investments will deliver new state-of-the-art facilities for our staff, volunteers, patients, families, carers and visitors. They will be better places to work than the 1970s and 80s buildings that they replace, and they will support more technology, more training and more people.

The brand refresh comes at an opportune time to promote these initiatives; to promote our commitment to research, training and professional development; and most of all, to respond to the feedback from consumers, staff, volunteers and the ACT community.

In closing, CHS's brand project is an investment in making public health services in the ACT more accessible and easier to navigate, an investment in retaining and supporting the dedicated staff at CHS, and an investment in CHS's ability to attract high-calibre staff into the future.

I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.54): I rise to speak to Ms Castley's motion on the rebranding project of Canberra Health Services and note that the Greens will be supporting Minister Stephen-Smith's amendment.

Ms Castley's motion quotes stakeholders saying that they do not understand what the rebrand is trying to achieve and what they will actually get for this money, and I can

understand that instinctive response. In fact, that was why—as it says in Ms Castley’s motion—in my weekly two-against-one on 2CC mornings, on 27 April, I responded to Ms Castley and radio host Stephen Cenatiempo editorialising the government’s expenditure, and I did in fact say that, based on the editorialised way it was put to me by Ms Castley and the host, this money “doesn’t stack up” and that it “does not pass the pub test”.

Unfortunately for Ms Castley, and fortunately for the good folk of Brindabella, the pub is not where I do my work. I do my work in this building.

Ms Stephen-Smith: And the coffee shop.

MR DAVIS: And the coffee shop; every Friday morning, nine to 12, at Jindebah Cafe. The electorate office is always open; thank you, Minister. Fortunately, I came into the office and sought to ask questions. Unlike Ms Castley, I do not write a media release first and then ask my questions later. I do not avoid seeking out briefings, so my talking points do not remain untrue.

A point was put to me on radio by Ms Castley and the host about this expenditure and, based on that editorialising, it raised a couple of eyebrows. It did not pass the pub test. But I came in, I asked some questions, and this is what I have learnt. From those briefings that I have sought from CHS officials, I have a much better understanding of the purpose of the rebranding project, the reason the project was undertaken and the benefits of the project for the community, for CHS and for their staff.

I would strongly encourage Ms Castley to seek and accept briefings from the minister’s office and CHS. That does not mean you cannot take an alternative view, Ms Castley. That does not mean you cannot pitch an alternative way to spend money or to run the department. That is indeed your right and your responsibility as the shadow minister. But it is very difficult to take the points you make in this place seriously when, from the crossbench, I cannot have confidence that you have sought out all of the information available in order to make your case. So I have sought to seek out all of the information.

This rebrand will help to deliver improved services and will help to deliver improved patient outcomes. People using Canberra Health Services have said that the current arrangements are confusing and are difficult to understand. In fact, I had a conversation with my office manager about this, and she brought to my attention an email I received from a constituent just a few weeks ago who was struggling to access a healthcare service at the Tuggeranong healthcare centre. It is a big building and there is not too much signage. It looks like almost anything else there on Anketell Street, and you would be surprised by the diversity of free and accessible health care that is provided in that building. My constituent struggled to find it. Fortunately, we were able to help them, but it probably demonstrated that we are not doing it as well as we could be in terms of getting people where they need to be.

We do not want to have people seeking private health services that they cannot afford purely because they think the public healthcare system does not offer those services. That

is the risk if they are not widely promoted, understood and accessible. It does not mean that they are not available. It means that we need to do a better job of communicating the services that the government provides to Canberrans, and that is what this project is about.

A great case study is how well the government promoted the free health care provided at our nurse-led walk-in clinics. When this government first stood up those nurse-led walk-in clinics—the first of their kind anywhere in the country—a lot of time, effort and money were spent on making sure Canberrans knew where they were, the times they were open and the services that could be provided. We see from the data alone just how well utilised they are, particularly the one in my electorate, in Tuggeranong.

In speaking to CHS officials, I have been provided with the following information about why this rebrand is necessary. This one was particularly important to me—the point made by the CHS research team that customers are confused about where services are offered. That actually seems to me to be pretty basic. People need to get to their appointments. Patients feel more at ease and more confident in the care they will receive if the services are easy to find and welcoming. I think that is fair enough.

We have a huge number of services that are delivered by CHS, and many have different branding, logos and signs. Not only is that true, but that was my experience at the Canberra Hospital only three days ago, Madam Speaker, with a family member receiving care. We had to visit three different parts of the same building. Because I knew this was on the notice paper, I probably made an extra effort to look at the logos, and I can tell you that, with three different logos for the three different parts of the hospital, it did mean an eyebrow was raised. That clearly needs to be fixed.

I refer to this one in particular: people who work at CHS feel let down by the inconsistent branding from the years of patchy implementation. We hear regularly in this place, and rightly so, about the struggle of our government and all subnational governments to recruit and retain a high quality workforce. It is the subject of a health committee inquiry right now, particularly to make sure we can maintain and grow our nursing and midwifery workforce.

When our very own workers are telling us that this is a failure of CHS and they would like it fixed, and we know that we have a challenge with recruiting and retaining workers, that seems to me like one of very many ways we can demonstrate to our workforce that, when they tell us there is a problem, we hear that, and we respond.

This is one quote that I sourced: they would love it if people saw CHS as something they wanted to support. Another staff member said that they needed to tell the story of all the great things that they are doing.

You would not know, Madam Speaker, if you only sourced your information about Canberra's public healthcare system from this Assembly, about the good work that Canberra Health Services do. You would not know about it. You would think that Canberra is a Third World country in which you would be turned away from the emergency room and unable to get resuscitated if you were in real strife. That is the

impression you might get if you observe a debate in this Assembly, and I think that is really unfortunate. I think that this Assembly is poorer for having that kind of hyperbole.

This project has 30 deliverables, and it will include things like improved patient health, education materials for a wide range of consumers and, in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, which is really important.

It is important to note that CHS is competing with other larger health services for good workers. I cannot understand why, Madam Speaker, but I hear far too often, particularly from people in my age group, how appealing places like Sydney and Melbourne are to live in. I think that is rubbish. I think that Canberra is the very best place in which to live. I wish more people would choose to move to Canberra, particularly if they have nursing and midwifery qualifications. I will buy the plane ticket myself, I reckon! But it does prove a challenge to recruit that highly specialised workforce to the ACT.

Given the extremely tight job market, and the difficulty health services around the country are having with recruiting workers, it is important for CHS to make a concerted effort to make sure that they attract skilled people. Sometimes that can be as simple as the nurse from Brisbane considering a tree change to Canberra jumping onto the CHS website and it actually being user-friendly and accessible, so that they can get a clear understanding of how the department works, who goes where, and what is done in what part of the hospital. That is the initial research you would do if you were thinking, “Gee, I might think about working there.” It is really important that we get that first impression stuff right. If we get it right, CHS will become an employer of choice. I would hope that every single one of us in this place would want CHS to be an employer of choice.

Given that Ms Castley has a particular fondness for health motions that raise the issues of health worker shortages in our health system, I would hope Ms Castley, in particular, can appreciate work that CHS must do to recruit and retain a high quality workforce.

I reject that there was widespread misunderstanding about the benefits that this project would provide to people seeking healthcare services. I will say that there was certainly misunderstanding from me, when I sourced my information in the first instance about the government’s work from a member of the opposition and a shock jock. In future I might seek my information from the source in the first instance, before I provide a running commentary. That is certainly a lesson I have learnt on morning radio—two coffees on a Thursday, at least, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I hope that has cleared up the record and that everyone here today can agree that communicating these services that we provide to people who need them is a valuable exercise. Everything that we can possibly do to ensure that CHS is an employer of choice and gives the ACT the best possible chance to recruit and retain a high quality workforce should not only be encouraged but embraced.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (4.04): In closing, we will not be agreeing with the amendment circulated today. The government's response is no surprise, given the events of the last couple of days, where we have seen the government forcibly acquiring Calvary.

As I have said many times, and spelt out very clearly, you do not do a rebrand; you fix the problem first. The system is broken. For all of the reasons that the minister has articulated today, if you need signs, there has to be money somewhere in the budget to put up new signs. The services were split only five or so years ago. That would have been the opportunity, back then, to get the branding right.

I read out a few comments from Canberra Health Services on their brand identity crisis. I find it interesting that they are blaming the issues they have with providing health care on the brand. That is the bit that confuses me. I tend to disagree. I do not think the brand causes a health system to not perform. I struggle to swallow that response from the minister.

We have also heard, as I read out in my speech earlier—and I am happy to reiterate—the sentiments from the public:

So the solution to a toxic work culture and poor resourcing negatively impacting staff and patient perception of the organisation is to rebrand rather than fix the problems. Wow.

Even they are shocked. Here is another comment from the public:

Just when you thought that health services in Canberra couldn't get any worse ... this shambolic embarrassment. And they can't find the money to provide for a permanent gynecological oncology unit, but remain "committed" to it.

The public have seen through this. They see it for what it is.

The AMA have spoken out. The Nursing and Midwifery Association have spoken out. Again, we see the government hell-bent on wasting taxpayers' money when they could help so many Canberrans by using these funds elsewhere. It is that simple. I have nothing more to say, other than that it is good to see a full rewrite of my motion here today! We are on track!

As I said, we will not be voting for the amendment.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 15

Noes 8

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

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

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Disability services—Hartley Lifecare

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4:11): Today I want to highlight the amazing work that Hartley Lifecare are doing for the disability sector here in the ACT.

Hartley Lifecare have been working in Canberra in the disability sector since 1962. They work to provide families with community support, transportation services, respite care and supported independent living accommodation.

I was recently invited to one of their accommodation centres, Hartley Lifecare's redevelopment of Hartley Court. This redevelopment has been on the plans for over 10 years, but they are excited to finally get started on that development.

The services that they provide also include a hydrotherapy pool. This hydrotherapy pool is available for people on the NDIS but also other people who are not on the NDIS. A very important matter that has been discussed here in the ACT for quite some time is the desperate need for hydrotherapy pools in the ACT.

I am always astonished when I see people, such as the staff at Hartley, who give so much of their time and commitment without necessarily seeking support or acknowledgement for what they do. There are so many organisations here in the ACT who do so much great work out in the community in the disability sector, particularly for people who do not qualify for the NDIS. It is certainly an area where the ACT government has a

responsibility to look at providing support for those service providers who look after those people with a disability who do not necessarily qualify for the NDIS packages.

I want to thank Eric for hosting me and talking me through the different support services that Hartley Lifecare offer people with disability. It was great to meet the hardworking people at Hartley Lifecare.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work that they do on behalf of the community and congratulate them on their many years of service and wish them all the best into the future going forward.

Debate interrupted.

Ms Jo Cullen—retirement Statement by Speaker

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, I would like to share with you some comments on the retirement of Jo Cullen, who all of us will know. She has been with this Assembly for some time. So I just want to make a few brief remarks about the retirement of Jo Cullen from the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Jo started her career here in June 1994 in the Government Library, as it was then called, before transferring over to the Assembly Library. Over the 25 years that she has worked in the Assembly—goodness, she would have some stories, would she not!—she has successfully worked in the Library, the Parliamentary Education Office, the Committee Office and the Chamber Support Office. Jo’s reliability, versatility and diligence have been on display in all of those positions and across all of those 25 years.

Jo retires on 19 May. But, due to staff shortages and her willingness to keep on giving to OLA and to assist the office, she will be re-engaged. So you will see her again from time to time on a temporary basis on the employment register, and we will see her around for a few months in Chamber Support and in the Committee Office.

Members, I am sure all of us would want to thank Jo for all her efforts over the past 25 years and wish her well when she finally gets to leave this place—but there are some that keep on coming back; it is a good place to work. I am sure all of us will acknowledge Jo Cullen and her 25 years of service.

Adjournment

Debate resumed.

Yerrabi electorate—community events

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.16): I am happy to bring you a Yerrabi yap and tell the Assembly about a few of the things that have been happening in my electorate of Yerrabi. I would

like to start with two separate events on the same day by FINACT, the Federation of Indian Associations, and the ATN, the Australian Triumphant Network.

FINACT, in partnership with Fair Canberra, Vinnies, and the India Australia Association, organised Australia Day celebrations for the community at Yerrabi's Margaret Hendry School with good food, a didgeridoo performance and a drawing competition which mirrored the day's themes of respect, reflection and celebration. I understand lots of awards occurred on what is also the National Day of India. ATN celebrations were also particularly special as they were limited by COVID-19 restrictions last year but accommodated even more diverse Yerrabi communities to make this year's celebration in their own words, and I quote, "A colourful multicultural event". ATN celebrated Australia Day with some fantastic Bangladesh, Nepalese and Indian street food and music.

I was delighted to attend both events and look forward to next year's celebrations, which I am sure will continue to grow in attendance and spectacle.

I am pleased to report that I joined WINc, the Women's Inspiration Network of Canberra, which is run by NATA, the Telugu association, and was launched and celebrated on International Women's Day for the first time, with a bunch of speeches, dancers and dinner. This is a great initiative. I am very grateful to have been invited to share the day with WINc and congratulate the members on their efforts in creating this new space for women in their community to engage and in organising everyone's interest for progression of women's rights.

The very next day I was also given the opportunity to catch up with the Crace Landcare Group with a visit to the Crace Recreation Park. It was evident that our volunteers have made a strong effort with their work in carefully managing planting to create an incredible sensory and succulent garden, thanks to their 2019 Adopt-A-Park grant. It is always fantastic to see the ongoing enthusiasm and involvement within Yerrabi of our shared natural spaces.

I would also like to highlight the Holi and Harmony Day with the India Australia Association of Canberra. As always, I was glad to support the IAAC in my role as Member for Yerrabi in promoting the day and joining in the festivities celebrating goodness and the beginning of spring.

Holi and Harmony Day with the IAAC is another one of those annual events that was postponed due to COVID that is, ordinarily, highly anticipated. So it is encouraging to see a strong turnout from folks all over the territory.

Finally, I attended a handful of community iftar dinners, including one in the home of Yerrabi resident and community leader Mohammed Ali. This particular iftar was organised by Blue Star Institute through their brilliant initiative to have the ACT Muslim community engage and develop friendships with people from different cultural

and faith backgrounds, as part of their broader project to promote dialogue, awareness and education between different faiths and cultures across the board.

Over dinner, I was grateful to take the opportunity to learn a bit more about Ramadan, get to know Mohammed's beautiful family, enjoy the incredible food, discuss community infrastructure in Yerrabi, speak to the multicultural recognition bill, which this place recently passed, and receive an update from Mohammed on his selfless ongoing work with HelpingACT—a crucial community organisation who are very much on the pulse of the cost of living in this territory.

With that, I conclude my Yerrabi yap, and once again am reminded of how diverse and community-orientated this rapidly growing electorate is. I am very much looking forward to the rest of the year's happenings and continuing to update this place on them whenever I am able to.

Mr Gordon Scott—tribute

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (4.20): I rise tonight to say a few words in gratitude for the lifetime of work by Gordon Scott, who passed recently, on Friday 5 May. Gordon is well known for his over 50 years of service to East Rugby Club, which is where I met him while I was volunteering with East Juniors Rugby Club and he was coaching the under-18s.

Gordon started out as a player there in 1966 and was the first East player to play 300 games, for which he was made a life member in 1984. I remember Gordon talking to me about the work that East did in supporting and developing players—including Matt Giteau, when he was much younger—where they really looked at how they could support and develop the whole person, not just their rugby skills.

Gordon also sang with his brother, Peter Scott, in the Alchemy Chorus, which rehearses in Hughes every Thursday. Gordon and Peter both shared a love of rugby. Peter was the ACT's first Wallabies player, and Peter and Gordon both came from a family where everyone loved to sing.

What people may not know about Gordon is he also was a great cricket player in his time. He played with East in the ACT in the 1960s and 1970s and was noted for his batting and fielding. He was also a great community leader and helped people wherever he could. He organised a bushfire appeal after the 2003 Canberra fires, which I believe was held at the Hyatt and was very successful.

My thoughts right now are with all of Gordon's family and friends, and particularly his brother, Peter, his wife, Maggie, and his children. I know that he will be remembered for his relentless commitment to the community, for helping others and for his sense of purpose but, most of all, for his generosity and for his kindness.

Arts—2023 Ovations Inaugural Awards

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.22): It is my pleasure today to recognise the winners of the 2023 Ovations Inaugural Awards. The Ovations were established in the Canberra region following calls for an awards process acknowledging achievement in local and independent performing arts. We all know the past few years have been particularly difficult for our performing arts industry. So it was wonderful to see such an impressive array of talented award winners, despite the challenging circumstances.

The 2023 Ovations award winners were as follows. In the category of musical theatre: best set award, John Nicholls and team for *School of Rock*, Dramatic Productions; best lighting design, Jacob Aquilina for *School of Rock*; best sound design, James McPherson for *Jersey Boys*, Canberra Philharmonic Society; best costume design, Miriam Miley-Reid for *School of Rock*; best props design, John Murphy for *School of Rock*; best supporting male performance, David Cannell, in *H.M.S Pinafore*, Queanbeyan Players; best supporting female performance, Louise Gaspari in *The Sound of Music*, Queanbeyan Players; best featured performance, The Company, *Jersey Boys*; best youth performance for school kids ensemble, *School of Rock*; best lead male performance, Max Gambale, in *School of Rock*; best lead female performance, Taylor Paliaga, in *School of Rock*; best orchestra, *School of Rock*; best musical director, Kat Tang, *School of Rock*; best choreographer, Nathan Rutups, *School of Rock*; and best director, Marty King, *School of Rock*.

In the category of dance: best dance item, Willkommen, in *Zealous*, High Kix Productions; best choreography, Jai Ho, in *Solid Gold*, Legs Performing Arts; and best production, *Solid Gold*, Legs Performing Arts.

In the category of theatre: best set, Phoenix Mae for *Soul Trading*, Canberra Youth Theatre, and Luke Rogers, for *Collected Stories*, Chaika Theatre; best lighting design, Antony Hately in *How to Vote*, Canberra Youth Theatre; best sound design, Patrick Haesler for *Soul Trading*, Canberra Youth Theatre; best costume design, Fiona Leach of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, ACT Hub; best props design, Lexi Sekules and Tracy Cui of *The Torrents*, Mill Theatre; best supporting male performance, Josh Wiseman in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Free-Rain Theatre Company; best supporting female performance, Natasha Vickery in *Collected Stories*, Chaika Theatre; best featured performance, Alex Hoskison, Cole Hilder and Blue Hyslop in *The Boys*, Alchemist Artists; best youth performance, Liam Prichard in *Beautiful Thing*, Everyman Theatre; best lead male performance, Michael Cooper in *Hand to God*, Everyman Theatre; best lead female performance, Karen Vickery in *Collected Stories*; and best director, Amy Kowalczyk of *The Boys*.

In the category of youth: the youth award—theatre, Asha Ellis in *Velveteen Rabbit*, Child Players ACT; and youth award—musical theatre, *Matilda*, Gungahlin College Theatre Company.

Across all categories we saw awards for best promotion concept for ACT Hub for *The Importance of Being Earnest*; behind the scenes award in theatre to Michelle Norris for *The Boys*; behind the scenes award in musical theatre to the Canberra Philharmonic

Society lighting crew for *Jersey Boys*; judges award for outstanding achievement in theatre to Sophia Carlton of ACT Hub; judges award for outstanding achievement in musical theatre, Teresa Wojcik of Dramatic Productions; best original work or adaptation to Kate Walder of Canberra Youth Theatre; best production of a play—community, *How to Vote*, Canberra Youth Theatre; best production of a play—independent to *Collected Stories*, Chaika Theatre; best musical under a budget of \$70,000 to *School of Rock*, Dramatic Productions; best musical over \$70,000, *Mamma Mia*, Free-Rain Theatre Company; and standing ovation award to David Tricks.

Congratulations to all award winners for 2022. I look forward to seeing the coming years achievements.

As shadow minister for arts, it was heartening to see the success of the newly established Ovations awards. I will continue to advocate for stronger foundational support in the arts industry, which contributes so much value to our community here in Canberra.

Thank you to President Michael Sparks OAM and the rest of the team of Ovations for your work in acknowledging this excellence in performing arts.

Trees—planting

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.27): In April, I was contacted by a constituent who told me a story of gross government intrusion and inconsideration. On a street in Florey, government workers have planted two gumtrees on the front yards of two separate homes with no consultation with the neighbourhood. They did consult with the residents of the home, so the bare minimum effort was achieved; however, when the resident told them they did not want a gumtree and that perhaps a different kind of tree would be more appropriate, the government ignored them and went ahead and planted it anyway. This intrusion is bad enough, but the inconsideration of the decision makes it even worse.

One of the most common complaints I get from residents is that a gumtree is too close to their property and has become a danger. The subsequent request is usually to either prune or remove the tree. These residents do not hate trees; in fact, welcome more trees, but universally they believe that gumtrees are an inappropriate and irresponsible pick for street trees in front of people's homes.

Their reasons are compelling. The tendency of some gumtrees to unpredictably shed branches is well known—enough that they have earned the grim nickname, “widow maker”. In addition, the roots of these trees are sprawling and are often responsible for buckling pavement, broken driveways and burst and blocked up pipes.

Unfortunately for the residents, though, it is often the case that they have no power over whether to get rid of the tree. In many instances, the government owns the tree and, though it may be on that resident's yard and destroying that resident's property, the government will stubbornly refuse to remove it. Then they will make the process of receiving compensation as painful and convoluted as they can, while also requiring the resident to pay most costs upfront with no guarantee they will be reimbursed.

It will probably be news to this out-of-touch government that, in times where the cost of living is soaring, many Canberrans do not have thousands of dollars lying around that they can spend on digging up a driveway to prove the damage is caused by the tree less than two metres away.

The government likely sees no problem with this arrangement. Indeed, Mr Steel made the case that anyone with an objection to a particular tree being planted in their front yard is probably just someone who needs to be educated on the benefits they provide—as if the average resident has no idea about the benefits of trees.

Rather than believe that residents have valid reservations about gumtrees as street trees, the government instead chooses to believe that the resident does not know basic primary school science and does not know the benefits of trees and, thus, the solution is that they need more education.

Canberrans are not stupid. There are valid reasons for these residents to have concerns about these gumtrees. The government should have spoken with the residents, listened to them and taken their concerns and possible solutions on board. Instead, residents were overlooked and ignored.

To anyone listening, I would encourage you to keep an eye out, because one day you might just wake up with a new gumtree planted where you wanted to grow some strawberries or potatoes.

Trees are a wonderful thing to have in our suburbs. Their environmental and aesthetic value cannot be overstated. The planting of gums the government has done on the public greenspace along John Clelland Crescent is ideal. It is important to plant more natives—but there are ideal places for them and some not so ideal places for them. On the front yard of a resident who does not want one is probably one of those not so ideal places.

Youth—voting rights

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.31): This speech was prepared by my work experience student, Dean Jones, who is a 17-year-old constituent from Nicholls. He states that the age requirement of being 18 years old to vote is outdated and it must be addressed. Today I would like to argue my reasoning for lowering the voting age to 16 in the ACT.

Firstly, 16-year-olds are not children. They are young adults who are already capable of, by law: consent, joining the Defence Force, driving, working full time and paying taxes. Given these democratic freedoms, it seems necessary to also lower the voting age. Extending basic citizenship, democratic and human rights to more young people across the ACT gives effect to the ACT Human Rights Act by giving the right to vote to 16- and 17-year-olds. Moreover, the level of responsibility that 16-year-olds are already endowed with shows that they are more than capable of creating informed decisions. The government should recognise their ability to participate and engage in the democratic process.

Secondly, this change would encourage more young people to educate themselves on political issues, while becoming more active and politically aware citizens of the systems that are around them. Currently, 16- to 17-year-olds do not enjoy the basic citizenship right to vote, despite being subject to policy decisions that they cannot oppose. Lowering the voting age to 16 would help to voice unheard opinions and perspectives on government policy. This not only means that 16- to 17-year-olds cannot hold politicians and government accountable on decisions that negatively impact them but also results in many new voices being left unaddressed.

Thirdly, the biggest argument against lowering the voting age has been that 16-year-olds are not mature enough to vote and become politically engaged. However, their maturity is not only a function of age but also subject to many other factors, such as education, life experience, parental involvement and so on. This raises the question: why is it that 16-year-olds are considered mature enough by the government to join the military, pay taxes and rent a property but are not deemed mature enough to make an informed decision on the government's policies and the initiatives they want to see implemented?

Lastly, there is historical precedent for lowering the voting age to 16. At the beginning of the twentieth century many countries had set the voting age at 21 years or higher. However, this began to change across western Europe throughout the 60s and 70s, when countries such as the UK, France and Germany, brought the voting age down to 18 years old. This was seen as an unprecedented change in the past but is now deemed the norm. Similarly, there are already countries that have lowered the voting age to 16, such as Austria, Scotland, Ethiopia and Brazil. It is time for the ACT to follow suit.

In conclusion, the fact that conventional arguments made against lowering the voting age to 16 rely more on prejudice than on rigorous empirical evidence makes it clear that lowering the voting age to 16 is a viable and, in fact, beneficial step towards a more transparent, accountable and inclusive representative democracy.

Thank you, Dean, for writing this speech, and thank you for your work in this past week.

Standing orders—suspension

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

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the adjournment debate continuing for a further 15 minutes.

Sport and recreation—Achilles Running Club

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) (4.36): This past weekend marked the 10th birthday of the Achilles Running Club of Canberra. Achilles supports people with disabilities to enjoy the social, recreational and health benefits of an active lifestyle, facilitating

training and participation in running and walking events. You may have noticed them in bright yellow shirts, with guides assisting members to achieve their fitness goals, from walking or running five kilometres to running marathons or more.

Achilles Canberra has been a key, bright yellow feature of Ginninderra parkrun for almost all of Gindy parkrun's existence. To celebrate their 10th birthday, many Achilles members took on the volunteering roles at parkrun last weekend, from leading the pre-brief and first timers' brief to acting as marshals. There seemed to be no better time to participate in my very first parkrun. As I explained last year, for Gindy parkrun's 10th birthday, I think—or their 500th; either one—parkrun has been a firm part of my life, but not as a participant, because it has always coincided with the time that I set aside to walk my dog to the dog park.

Last Saturday Bailey was left under the blankets, and I turned up, newly registered, and took the opportunity to volunteer, as well as to be a park walker. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you well know, parkrun welcomes everyone to run, jog, walk, volunteer or spectate. While many people choose to run, walking is perfectly acceptable, particularly as there is no time limit and no-one finishes last. It was fantastic to join with Achilles and all the parkrun organisers, volunteers and regulars, who made me feel very welcome. I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Gindy parkrun on its 11th birthday, celebrated just the week before, with a pyjama run. It is such a vital part of many Canberrans' Saturdays, and, indeed, their overall wellbeing. I cannot imagine Lake Ginninderra without it.

Mr Russell Charles Taylor AM—tribute

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (4.38): I rise briefly to acknowledge the life and recent passing of proud Kamilaroi man, tireless advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and Canberran Russell Charles Taylor AM. I was privileged to attend the recent service which celebrated Uncle Russell's full and decorated life.

Born in 1948, Russell was raised in Millers Point, on Sydney's waterfront. While this is now something of a prestigious postcode, that was not the case in the 50s and 60s. Stories shared at Russell's service by life-long friends spoke of humble beginnings and of the fact that Millers Point was a place Russell was deeply connected to and proud of.

Uncle Russell went on to live a life of high achievement. He spent more than 20 years in senior public service roles, including positions in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Aboriginal Development Commission, and two stints as Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, or AIATSIS. He was also the CEO of the New South Wales Aboriginal Housing Office. Russell was the founding director of the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre. When Uncle Russell retired as CEO of AIATSIS in 2016, he was one of the most senior First Nations commonwealth public servants.

It is clear that the power of education was close to Russell's heart. He was the first Aboriginal Australian to have graduated with a Master of Business Administration from any university. His daughter, Louise Taylor, became the ACT's first Aboriginal judicial officer when she was appointed as a magistrate in 2018.

Uncle Russell himself was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, or AM, in the 2015 Queen's birthday honours, for his significant services to the community as a cultural leader and public sector executive in the field of Indigenous Affairs. In 2018, in what I suspect he considered a higher honour, Russell was named NAIDOC Male Elder of the Year.

Uncle Russell lent his services to the ACT government. For example, in 2019 the Health Directorate contracted Russell, as a director of Burbangana Consulting Group, to review the service operations at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.

Throughout his career, Uncle Russell remained a tireless campaigner for promoting knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, languages and stories, past and present. Russell, go well, with your ancestors. Your contribution lives on in so many ways.

Arts—environmental themes

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.41): I want to talk about two recent arts events that I attended. They were very different events but had a common theme. Both of these events were arts events with a very strong environmental and climate change theme. I am seeing this more and more in the arts at the moment. It makes very good sense to me. I move in artistic circles and I practice a little bit. I think that what artists do is reflect their own anxieties and they also reflect the anxieties that they see and feel around them, so it makes perfect sense to me at the moment that it is quite hard to walk into a gallery without seeing an apocalypse up on the wall in front of you and it is quite hard to see a film festival at the moment without seeing a whole lot of environmental themes.

The first was a film festival at the National Film and Sound Archive. It was called *And... Breathe*. It was staged by Liz Lea and it was put on for Earth Day. It had some beautiful works. Jim Lounsbury created a beautiful film and an installation about the circular economy which really reflected how much stuff and guff we are creating in our world. There were some really fun pieces as well. There were some really dark pieces, but there was a really fun one that was made with the help of a CZE ACT government grant called *Aunts on Scooters*, which featured some aunties showcasing Canberra on scooters. That was a really fun work commissioned by Sue Healey.

The second event I went to recently was at Photo Access. It has Noah Thompson, Chris Round and local artist Toni Hassan. It is still showing, so I urge anyone who has not been there recently to go and look at the works. There are photographs of environmental destruction in Tasmania and in Canberra, some of the culture wars that are coming from

that, and also the engineering beauty of windfarms and some of the hydroelectricity that we are creating.

Toni Hassan's pieces were really beautiful. She works in a lot of different mediums, but she works in film at this particular event. She filmed the stories of women channelling their fears during the bushfires, the smoke events and the recent hailstorms, and she set those against images. She made this beautifully meditative, reflective space for us to think and grieve about what has happened. These are beautiful exhibitions. They have really affected me.

We are seeing a lot of fear for the environment at the moment. The IPCC has given us seven years to cut global emissions in half. We are also seeing a lot of hope. We have moved beyond a lot of the darkest times of the culture wars on a lot of these issues, and we are coming together collectively to solve these things. One of the reasons we are seeing so much of this coming out in our art is that art really lives in the space between fear and hope. That is what most artists work with every day. It is quite joyful to share and to see these works, and I think it is really healthy to channel the anxieties.

I spoke at those occasions. I usually try to leave on a bit of a high note and with bit of hope because I think we are making some really good progress here in the ACT. It cheers me up to see how happy people are when they watch a film festival about climate destruction that has been shown with electricity generated by 100 per cent renewables. I think that is a really good way to round out the theme of an Earth Day film festival.

Multicultural community—Afghani refugees

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.45): I am going to try something new today, which I am sure should interest other members. I am going to read my adjournment speech from my phone. I am going to see how that goes. I am at the cutting edge of being technologically savvy, of course!

Ms Cheyne: Did someone else write it?

MR CAIN: No—I wrote it, Ms Cheyne. Such an unsavoury comment in this kind of setting. Shame on you!

Let us get to it, then. It was a delight to attend last Sunday afternoon's launch of the ZamZam Foundation's instructional book for newly arrived Afghan refugees, along with an Eid celebration. The book is designed to assist new Australian residents from Afghanistan to settle into Australian life. It was written by members of the Afghan community in Australia.

The ZamZam Foundation was founded in Afghanistan as a charity to help vulnerable youth and orphans, especially young girls, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or race. Initially, it focused on sponsoring and championing their education and welfare, and now it works more broadly to feed and clothe the hungry and homeless in regional Afghanistan, since August 2021. Obviously, it is a very remarkable charitable activity. It has a registered office and centre here in Canberra.

It was a great honour to meet two former female Afghani parliamentarians: Dr Nilofar Ebrahimi, who is the founder and director of ZamZam Foundation; and Dr Karima Faryabi, also a former Afghan parliamentarian. I do not think it is surprising for us to realise why they are not in their home country. They obviously had to flee their country after August 2021. It was a delight to meet, as well, the partners from the LexGlobal law firm, who sponsored the launch: Shahri Rafi and Tariq Kareemi. I was delighted to see them come from Sydney for this event that they sponsored, and I was also delighted to see a couple of our MLAs, Ms Vassarotti and Ms Orr, in attendance.

It is a really worthy cause. It is my delight, in particular in my responsibility as shadow minister for multicultural affairs, to attend such charitable activities, reaching out to our newly arrived community.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.48 pm until Wednesday, 31 May 2023, at 10 am.

Questions without notice taken on notice

Canberra Health Services—data security

Ms Davidson (*in reply to a question by Ms Lee on Tuesday, 21 March 2023*):

In addition to the ACT Public Service Integrity Governance Policy, and Whole of Government policies and procedures related to staff conduct, Canberra Health Services (CHS) has the following documents that relate to sharing of confidential patient information. All documents referenced below can be found on the [Canberra Health Services website](#):

1. Clinical Records Management Policy and Procedure
 2. Consumer Privacy Policy
 3. Open Disclosure Procedure
1. Clinical Records Management Policy and Procedure

CHS is required by law to keep full and accurate records of care provided and to ensure that clinical records are available to clinicians at the point of care. These documents establish the framework for the creation and management of CHS clinical records and personal health information.

The Policy and Procedure set out that all staff and clinicians are responsible for ensuring that comprehensive clinical records are maintained, and that personal health information and clinical records are protected against loss, misuse and unauthorised modification, access, disclosure or destruction.

All clinical records of CHS are managed in compliance with:

- *Territory Records Act 2002* (Sections 17,17,19, 21)
- *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*
- *Human Rights Act 2004*

2. Consumer Privacy Policy

This Policy outlines how CHS ensures that consumer privacy and personal health information is protected in compliance with the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997. In this document people accessing care at CHS are referred to as consumers.

This document provides a broad overview to the legislative obligations imposed by the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997. The document outlines the procedures to support staff to comply with the Act.

3. Open Disclosure Procedure

This procedure informs staff on how to manage an Open Disclosure process following an incident that could have resulted, or did result, in harm to the consumer while receiving healthcare provided by CHS.

CHS conducts Open Disclosure in accordance with the Australian Open Disclosure Framework (2014) and requirements of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (second edition).

This breach was discovered in early February, and I was notified on 8 February 2023.

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

Canberra Hospital—cardiology department

Ms Stephen-Smith *(in reply to a question by Mr Cocks on Wednesday, 22 March 2023):*

Correspondence between the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and Canberra Health Services on this matter for the period 1 March 2022 to 28 February 2023 is attached.

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

Canberra Health Services—data security

Ms Stephen-Smith *(in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Ms Castley and Mr Cocks on Wednesday, 29 March 2023):*

- 1) One breach of the eight identified at the time was also the breach involving the senior nurse, and information was inadvertently provided to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ACT Branch).
- 2) The breach related to the senior nurse occurred in January 2023 and was self-disclosed on 23 March 2023. The other seven breaches identified as of 29 March were from 2020 to 2023.
- 3) All other reported breaches have been identified as one-off incidents and have not been sustained activity over a period of time. As noted in the Assembly, the information about the eight identified breaches provided in March 2023 was pulled together quickly. Following a thorough search CHS has identified thirteen breaches in total to the end of March 2023 that have involved deliberate inappropriate access or sharing of information and have resulted in counselling, summary termination, misconduct investigation or referral to an external body.

Other privacy breaches are reported by CHS team members from time to time through the Riskman system. These breaches are not deliberate and include incidents such as patient records being dropped/lost or patient information being sent to the incorrect consumer by accident. These incidents are human error.

Based on this examination, there are no grounds to believe that a wider investigation of data breaches is warranted.

For the further information of Members, in addition to the ACT Public Service

Integrity Governance Policy, and Whole of Government policies and procedures related to staff conduct, Canberra Health Services (CHS) has the following documents that relate to sharing of confidential patient information. All documents referenced below can be found on the [Canberra Health Services website](#):

- a. Clinical Records Management Policy and Procedure
- b. Consumer Privacy Policy
- c. Open Disclosure Procedure

Canberra Health Services—data security

Ms Stephen-Smith (*in reply to a question by Mr Hanson on Wednesday, 29 March 2023*):

During the period of 12 November 2022 to 31 March 2023, following the rollout of Digital Health Record (DHR), Canberra Health Services (CHS) has received a total of nine complaints in relation to someone inadvertently receiving part of another person's clinical records.

During the period of 11 November 2022 to 20 April 2023, following the rollout of DHR, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce has received one complaint in relation to someone inadvertently receiving appointment communication intended for another patient, however it is unclear if the source of error was entirely DHR related.

Roads—maintenance

Mr Steel (*in reply to a question by Ms Lawder on Thursday, 30 March 2023*):

- a) 705 claims were lodged between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022.
- b) 69* days on average to settle claims.

*Not including days for Shared Services to process payment.

Roads—maintenance

Mr Steel (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Ms Lawder and Mr Cain on Thursday, 30 March 2023*):

- a) 705 claims were lodged between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022.
- b) 69* days on average to settle claims.
- c) 198 claims have been settled (ie. claimant has received some amount of compensation).

*Not including days for Shared Services to process payment.