



Debates

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

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

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

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

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

Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion—report 7—government response Ministerial statement

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (10.01): As Minister for Disability, I am pleased to present the ACT government’s response to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion’s inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan.

The ACT government is committed to supporting better access to services for deaf and hard-of-hearing Canberrans, as with all people of disability. I welcome the standing committee’s focus on how we can improve our collective efforts to continually strengthen accessibility for users of Auslan.

Before I turn to the government response, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the origin of the inquiry and acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Auslan users in continuing to collaborate with the ACT government to enhance the inclusiveness of services throughout Canberra.

Auslan is a rich and descriptive visual language and the most authentic way for deaf people to communicate fully. For many people in Canberra, Auslan is their first language. DeafACT estimates there are currently around 300 deaf or hard-of-hearing people who communicate using Auslan in our region.

I thank members of DeafACT and the deaf community for raising concerns about limitations on the availability of services and information in Auslan in the ACT. As a result of this advocacy and an associated petition, the standing committee resolved to inquire into this matter. The government welcomed this inquiry.

The inquiry's report was published this February. The suite of 25 recommendations provides the ACT government with valuable guidance on how to work toward the inclusion of Canberrans who are deaf or hard of hearing across many areas of government activity and services. Of the 25 recommendations made by the committee, one has been agreed, 15 agreed in principle, six have been noted and three are not agreed.

In responding to the report and its recommendations, the ACT government considered recent initiatives aimed at improving access for Auslan users. It also considered some of the longer-term work underway to create a more inclusive and accessible community.

Before outlining some of this work in more detail, I will briefly touch on the three recommendations that are not agreed. These three recommendations are not agreed because there are either sufficient mechanisms in place to not require further action or because there is work already underway that will consider how to address the recommendations' concerns.

While not agreeing to recommendation 1, to establish an Auslan task force, we are currently developing an ACT Disability Strategy—and I will return to this shortly. A range of other disability strategies are also in train, and these will provide wide-reaching opportunities to consult with key stakeholders from the deaf community.

Recommendation 2, for the ACT government to legislate Auslan as an official language, is not agreed, as the ACT does not have any legislated official languages. However, I am pleased to advise that the ACT government has a commitment, through the ACT Language Services Policy, to ensure that all Canberrans have equal access to information, services and programs through the use of language services, including Auslan. This policy requires all areas of government to make interpreters available when required and plan and budget for language service needs when considering client service delivery.

Recommendation 16, to establish a dedicated facility for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in a mainstream school, is not agreed. In the ACT most students who are deaf or hard of hearing attend their local school, where they receive support from a centralised hearing support team who plan and assist to implement adjustments for individual students.

Furthermore, the ACT is currently developing an inclusive education strategy, anticipated to be released in 2023, which will outline how all ACT public schools will be supported to strengthen inclusive practice. Through this strategy, system reform will strive for all children and young people to feel welcomed, understood, included and safe.

The remaining recommendations are all agreed, agreed in principle or noted. I am pleased that the inquiry's recommendations align with a broad suite of work that the ACT government is undertaking to improve the lives of the more than 80,000 Canberrans with disability.

Some of the vital measures we have already introduced to improve access to services and information to ensure the full participation of deaf and hard-of-hearing people include:

- ensuring the ACT courts and tribunal processes support the rights of deaf people throughout their participation in all legal proceedings. This includes as witnesses or members of a jury, with Auslan interpreters utilised as required.
- an agreement between the Deaf Society and the Emergency System Alert in place since 2015. This provides for Auslan interpreting services for announcements and information sharing during emergency events and training for ESA personnel on working with Auslan interpreters and deaf awareness. It also covers translation services for key safety information on the ESA website and communication with deaf and hard-of-hearing communities outside of emergency events; and
- providing Easy English training to ACT government staff. The ACT government has provided Easy English training to 198 people across government to improve information accessibility.

We know that this is not enough. For this reason, the ACT government is developing a 10-year whole-of-government ACT Disability Strategy, for release in 2023. The ACT Disability Strategy will create a more welcoming and accessible community and generate actions and outcomes to support improved wellbeing for Canberrans with disability.

I anticipate that the Disability Strategy will support further actions that are consistent with the intent of recommendations in the inquiry. The ACT Disability Strategy will also align a range of other strategies and initiatives that are underway across the ACT government to create better outcomes for people with disability and their families.

These initiatives include the development of an inclusive education strategy, a disability health strategy, a disability employment strategy and the second action plan for the Disability Justice Strategy 2019-2029. These strategies recognise that all directorates and services have a responsibility to strengthen their practices so that they are truly inclusive of people with disability.

A common feature in each of these disability related policies is a commitment to the Social Model of Disability. The Social Model of Disability understands that disability results when people living with impairments interact with an environment filled with barriers. These barriers may be physical, attitudinal, communication and social, and they hinder the full participation of people with disability on an equal basis with others in society.

The Social Model of Disability seeks to change society to remove barriers for people with disability. It does not seek to change people with disability to accommodate society. By taking the Social Model of Disability approach, the ACT Disability Strategy will enrich our collective efforts to ensure that people with disability, including those who are deaf and hard-of-hearing, are able to access services without barriers.

Consultation for the ACT Disability Strategy commenced last year. Importantly, the consultation was co-designed and led by the ACT Disability Reference Group. The genuine co-design approach means that the strategy will be firmly anchored in the lived experience of people with disability and what they know services and systems need to be doing differently.

I am absolutely delighted that approximately 1,000 people took part in the consultation, including many Canberrans who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. I would like to share with the Assembly some of what we heard throughout this process, similar to many of the findings of the inquiry.

Canberrans who are deaf and hard of hearing want to feel part of the community and to know that they have neighbours and friends who can support them. They want to have fulfilling careers. We heard that they want to be able to use their first language as much as possible and have access to technology, such as voice-to-text, to overcome barriers when needed.

The deaf and hard-of-hearing community would like the wider community to understand the needs of a person with hearing loss. Like all people with disability, they want health care, including mental health care, to be accessible, along with other essential services.

They want access to technology to keep them safe at home and in other settings, such as flashing smoke alarms, videos for the front door and smart phones to make calls in Auslan. They would like the wider community to have more opportunities to learn Auslan to break down barriers.

As we develop the ACT Disability Strategy, input from the disability community, including people who are deaf and hard of hearing, will continue to be essential to informing intangible actions that ensure all Canberrans are able to fully participate in everyday life on an equal basis. The strategy will support a long-term vision of a genuinely inclusive and accessible community and implement a series of actions to achieve this vision.

In closing, I thank the standing committee for conducting the public inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan. I would like to thank all stakeholders who participated in the inquiry. I would like to particularly thank people for sharing their personal experiences with us. We know that sharing personal insights demands openness and courage, and we are grateful. I would also like to thank Mandy for interpreting today.

I present the following papers:

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan*—Government response—

Government response, dated June 2023.

Ministerial statement, 7 June 2023.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.13): I will speak very briefly on the government response. I would note that I have not seen the government response as yet, so I cannot speak in detail to what is in it.

I think it is disappointing from the deaf and hard-of-hearing community's perspective that two of, I think, their key and most important issues are not agreed by the government, according to the minister's statement this morning. They relate to an Auslan task force and recognising Auslan as an official language.

I understand the complexities involved with having an acknowledgement of Auslan as an official language. It is very difficult, but I think that is where the starting point was for the deaf community coming to the Assembly, which eventually led to an inquiry by the ECI committee.

The third one apparently not agreed to was about an educational facility. We know that there is a lot of mainstreaming of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. But this is not the right response for every student, and there are many students who are the only deaf or hard-of-hearing person in their class or even their school. I know that the public inquiry heard that these are kids who are looking for their tribe and wanting to be a part of a bigger community. So it is sad that this particular recommendation is not agreed.

Again I stress that I have not seen the full government response; so I cannot comment much further. But I would like to reassure the members of Canberra's deaf and hard-of-hearing community that I will continue, as I have always done, to advocate for what they need.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Debate resumed from 23 November 2022, on motion by **Mr Steel**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (10.16): The Canberra Liberals will be supporting the Road Safety Amendment Bill 2022 in full, and we share in the government's commitment to Vision Zero on roads here in the ACT.

Road safety, as I am sure you would agree, Madam Speaker, should not be a political issue. We acknowledge the government's sensible steps in this space and very sensible steps with this piece of legislation. I, for one, am of the belief that, once this bill is passed, our roads will be a little safer—and, really, that is all we should ask for.

I think we should be very clear that this bill does not seek to demonise Canberrans who find themselves on occasion straying over the speed limit. Its focus is instead on those who turn our roads into racetracks and risk lives in the process.

I want to thank Minister Steel, his staff and staff from the directorate for the extensive briefing on this bill.

Currently in the ACT, drivers who recklessly exceed the speed limit do not face consequences such as instant loss of licence and seizure of vehicle, and can simply hide their vehicle across the border for a few days to escape ACT Policing seizing that vehicle. The bill gives ACT Policing power to seize both the licences and vehicles of people involved in reckless and dangerous speeding and increases the time the ACT police have to seize the vehicle they suspect to be involved in reckless and illegal behaviour. I am not sure how anyone could sensibly argue against that change.

With regard to the changes to legislation leading from the coronial inquest into the death of Blake Corney, I want it to be very clearly put on the record that the Canberra Liberals are very much in favour of these changes. I am not sure that the Corney family will ever fully recover from that tragic event. If we can assist in any way to stop that from ever happening again, that has to be a good thing.

The final coronial report into the death of four-year-old Blake Corney recommended tougher health screening for truck drivers and incentives for autonomous emergency braking and fatigue sensor systems to be placed in trucks.

Young Blake died of head injuries when a truck ploughed into his family's car as they waited at lights on the Monaro Highway in July of 2018. A key issue that arose from that case was the fact that the truck driver had been referred to a sleep laboratory with suspected sleep apnoea at least twice in the years before the crash but had not followed up those referrals. After the accident he was diagnosed with severe obstructive sleep apnoea, and at the time the doctor noted that he "should not be operating a motor vehicle or heavy machinery until his severe obstructive sleep apnoea is adequately treated and he can demonstrate compliance to CPAP therapy."

After the coronial inquest into the death of Blake Corney, recommendations were made to increase the ACT's fitness-to-drive regime for heavy vehicle drivers. This bill will require the mandatory medical reporting for all heavy vehicle drivers in the ACT, including interstate licence holders. This implementation of mandatory reporting would bring the ACT into line with almost every other Australian jurisdiction and, by diagnosing potential conditions of concern, it will help make ACT roads safer.

This is a sensible bill that aims to make ACT roads safer for all of us without unfairly targeting everyday Canberrans, and it has the full support of this side of the chamber.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.19): The Greens will be supporting this bill. We will be supporting this bill because it very specifically targets penalties for the most serious and deliberate forms of dangerous driving.

There are two flavours of reform in this bill. Firstly, there are the reforms concerning the flow of information about a person's fitness to hold a driver's licence. There are a

range of very good reasons why someone may not be eligible to hold a licence, often on medical grounds. This is not intended to discriminate but to respect the fact that someone can be so physically or medically impaired as to be unsafe to drive.

Where people do not acknowledge or disclose these impairments and surrender their licence but actually continue to drive, they create a significant risk on our roads, not just to other drivers but also, even more so, to themselves.

Recognising that there are reasons why an individual may struggle to acknowledge their impairment, these reforms tactfully take some of the human risk out of this situation by ensuring medical practitioners can disclose important impairments to the Road Traffic Authority in the interests of their patient's health and safety. In a similar vein, it allows interstate communication of such matters, facilitating similar efforts across the country and, in particular, with New South Wales, whose drivers are prominent on the ACT's roads.

I would like to take a moment to reflect that these changes arise from the circumstances surrounding the tragic and needless death of Blake Corney. My heart goes out to Blake's parents. It is my hope that we as a jurisdiction have learned the necessary lessons from this incident.

Secondly, there are reforms which target the very serious cases of excessive speeding. It is a simple function of collision physics that, as speed increases, the energy in a crash also increases, exponentially so. The time that a driver has to react to a road hazard also comes down, as does the capacity for a driver to lose control of their vehicle during an incident—all of which means that speeding is dangerous and excessive speeding is excessively dangerous. Both the government and police have a right to take every measure they can to discourage speeding.

Driving a car is an inherently risky behaviour that we as a society have been conditioned to accept. A similar level of risk in any other context would be met by overpowering societal pressure. Speeding by even a small amount dramatically increases the level of risk to yourself and others. Excessive speeding is to run a stupidly high level of risk.

Driving is frequently seen as a rite of passage, a way of life, a matter of identity, an economic necessity or a critical component of modern life. But none of these are reasons to justify the running of exceptionally high levels of risk.

By specifically targeting penalties at speeds of more than 45 kilometres over the speed limit and at inherently unsafe street racing, this bill ensures that police will have the enhanced tools they need to target those drivers who have made a very deliberate decision to excessively speed, while ensuring that accidental speeding does not get caught up in the enhanced penalty framework.

Accidental speeding warrants a very different approach to ensure that the human rights of people who make mistakes are protected. But this bill is not about those who make mistakes. It ensures that minor offences and associated fines can be a conversation for another time—and one I look forward to happening very soon in the JACS committee.

I have two remaining observations on this bill. The first is that, while inquiring into the bill, the JACS committee recommended that the government continue to explore how oral fluid drug testing can be improved so as to correctly demonstrate driving incapacity. I am keen to see us get closer to a world where medicinal drugs that do not impact one's ability to drive, such as some forms of medicinal cannabis, are not caught up in a zero tolerance approach to roadside drug testing.

In the government response to the inquiry, tabled last week, I am pleased to see the government agreed with this recommendation. It acknowledges that, "To date, no major international or technological developments have been able to categorically establish a direct causal link between a specific level of drugs and impairment which can be consistently applied across the population."

It is a field in which a significant amount of work remains to be done. The Greens will continue to speak up for people who find themselves unreasonably stigmatised due to their medical circumstances and drug-related needs.

The second remaining observation I have is about intelligent speed adaptation technologies. Members may recall me raising this before in the Assembly. These are technologies that attempt to reduce the capacity for human error and support drivers to make safe driving decisions.

In the case of excessive speeding, speed limiters on vehicles would make it much more technically difficult to commit those excessive speeding offences in the first place. I expect it would be too soon to expect the minister to have incorporated those ideas into this very bill. Nevertheless, I wanted to reiterate their importance and note that I am looking forward to the government's response to the JACS inquiry on dangerous driving.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.25): I am pleased to stand today in support of the Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. This bill contains amendments that are designed to save the lives of Canberrans by improving road safety through deterring dangerous driving behaviours. These practical amendments build on the government's focus of working towards Vision Zero, no deaths or serious injuries on our road transport network.

Road safety is everybody's responsibility. This bill therefore targets those people who are wilfully and, at times, tragically disregarding this responsibility by threatening other road users by engaging in dangerous driving behaviours.

These amendments are designed to deter the types of dangerous driving incidents that have plagued our roads and led to tragedy, and they represent a firm commitment to ensuring safer streets, protecting innocent lives and holding accountable those who choose to put themselves and others at risk.

First and foremost, these amendments will increase the penalties that apply to dangerous driving. We recognise that high-risk dangerous driving behaviours are not limited to just furious, reckless and dangerous manoeuvres. It includes a range of behaviours such as drug driving, street racing and attempts on speed records,

speed trials and other hooning behaviours and high-range speeding. By increasing the penalties for these behaviours, we will continue to effectively address the multitude of dangerous driving practices that threaten our community.

These amendments also support health practitioners to contribute to our efforts to reduce road trauma and strive for Vision Zero. The amendments allow for a mandatory medical condition reporting scheme to be introduced within the Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Regulation, which responds to Chief Coroner Walker's recommendations, following the tragic death of Blake Corney.

We recognise the role that health practitioners can play and continue to play in keeping our community safe. We will continue to work with our community stakeholders to ensure that an appropriate regulation scheme is developed and information-sharing arrangements are implemented to strengthen and deliver this critical measure.

To enforce these measures, the government will continue working with ACT Policing to enhance their law enforcement capabilities. We will continue to engage and listen to ACT Policing and other stakeholders about how to practically address dangerous driving behaviour on our roads. By bolstering our law enforcement efforts, we will send a clear message that dangerous driving behaviours will not go unpunished.

Additionally, these amendments will include stricter penalties for those convicted of these offences. We are determined to send a message that will make individuals think twice before engaging in such reckless behaviour.

These amendments are designed to work alongside the prevention and education measures that we have rolled out in the community. Our road safety public awareness campaigns play a key role in fostering a culture of responsible driving that emphasises the importance of safe driving practices, encourages behavioural change and highlights the devastating impact of dangerous driving on individuals and the community.

I strongly support Minister Steel's amendments and the fact that these amendments are not solely about stricter rules and punishment; they are about protecting lives and fostering a collaborative sense of responsibility. We all have a duty in our community to make our roads safer, and these amendments serve as a critical step in that goal.

I want to acknowledge the families who are deeply suffering from the horrendous year on our roads last year and subsequent years and to all those families that are victims of dangerous driving crime in the ACT. I feel very deeply sorry for what you go through every day.

Let us stand united in our pursuit of safer roads and our commitment to Vision Zero, and let these amendments serve as a strong example of our unwavering commitment to making our ACT roads safer.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (10.29), in reply: I am pleased today to close the debate on the Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill, which focuses on

addressing the higher-end dangerous driving behaviour that we unfortunately have seen on ACT roads, particularly last year.

The ACT government is committed to the realisation of Vision Zero, which means zero road fatalities and serious injuries. We can achieve that goal by addressing a range of different factors that contribute to crashes and deaths, and that goes particularly to speeding. Speeding is one of the leading causes of accidents on our roads that results in those serious injuries and death, and that is at both the lower end and the higher end.

I have to say it is incredibly disappointing that, while the Canberra Liberals are supporting this bill, they have suggested a very casual attitude to speeding at lower-speed limits. It is one of the reasons why, together with other jurisdictions like New South Wales, we have been running the Every K Counts campaign, which is focused on that casual speeding behaviour. Going five kilometres over in a 60-kilometre zone doubles your risk of having a crash. Going 10 kilometres over in a 60-kilometre zone means that you are four times as likely to be involved in a crash. If we all had a less casual view and attitude towards speeding and did not drive above the speed limit, together we could help prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roads. I am incredibly disappointed by the comments that were made by the opposition in a very short speech on this.

This bill is focused on those higher-end dangerous driving behaviours. In some ways this is a significant response to the dangerous driving that we have seen on our roads, particularly last year, when we tragically saw the loss of 18 lives on Canberra roads. It was the highest death toll recorded in the ACT in a year for over a decade. Eighteen is too many, and the losses that we have seen this year are too many as well.

The key action of the ACT Road Safety Action Plan 2020-2023 is to review the ACT's road transport penalties framework to ensure that they are operating as a sufficient and effective deterrent. The penalties review will result in significant reforms being brought forward to our road transport legislation. The Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 will implement the first tranche of these reforms. It will improve road safety in Canberra by providing enhanced penalties to deter dangerous driving behaviours and strengthen the reporting and monitoring of driver licence holders' fitness to drive.

This bill will enhance the penalty framework in the road transport legislation by targeting risky behaviour in four main areas: high-range speeding; street racing; attempts on speed records; speed trials and other hooning behaviours; furious, reckless and dangerous driving; and also drug driving.

The practical amendments in this bill are expected to have an immediate effect on improving road safety. They target dangerous driving on ACT roads and are particularly aimed at repeat and severe offending. Ensuring that ACT police have appropriate penalties and enforcement tools is essential for providing a safe road environment for the community. A key outcome of this bill is that it will increase ACT Policing's ability to act immediately to stop dangerous drivers and protect the lives of other road users in the ACT. The bill strengthens police and court sanctions by expanding the list of serious road transport offences that are subject to immediate

licence suspension and disqualification, vehicle seizure and impoundment, and increased penalties.

The bill also improves the reporting and monitoring of driver licence holders' fitness to drive by introducing a regulation-making power to require health practitioners to report information relating to a person's fitness to drive to the Road Transport Authority, which addresses recommendations from the coronial inquiry into the tragic death of Blake Corney.

It is also important to recognise that the government's approach will continue to go beyond punishment alone. We strongly believe that prevention and education are key components in curbing dangerous driving, and that is why we will continue to invest in road safety public awareness campaigns to educate drivers about the grave consequences of their actions. I mentioned the Every K Counts campaign. That is just one of them that we will continue to run on a rolling basis. We will also continue to work closely with schools, community organisations and the media to spread the message of responsible driving and to foster a culture of safety on our roads.

Following the passage of this bill, the government will be rolling out a community and education awareness campaign on the dangerous driving behaviours that the bill addresses. The campaign will highlight the government's zero tolerance stance on dangerous driving and make the community aware of the potential penalties that they will face. It is a matter of when, not if, offenders will be caught by police for dangerous driving.

This bill was drafted in consultation with key government stakeholders and was subject to a detailed inquiry by the Assembly's Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. I thank members of that committee for their work on reviewing this bill and for recommending that the bill be passed by the Assembly. I also thank all community members who provided submissions to both the standing committee and the consultation on the draft Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Amendment Regulation 2022. Your voice on this issue plays a key role in making Canberra's roads safer places.

Today, I want to also acknowledge the victims of road trauma, those injured, and the families of those who have tragically lost their lives. The grief, pain and lifelong impacts are extreme. It has a significant impact on families and friends who have been affected by these tragedies on our roads, and some of them never quite get over it. I thank those people for their courage and commitment to improve road safety in the ACT in the wake of their tragic and heartbreaking losses. The government remains committed to pursuing practical legislative changes that prevent these tragedies from continuing to cause that unimaginable grief and loss.

These reforms strengthen our road penalties to help protect all Canberrans from dangerous driving behaviour that is not sufficiently captured by our current laws and ensure that all Canberrans are aware of their obligations to be safe and protect other road users. This is an important first stage of the ACT government's penalty review and I am looking forward to introducing the next tranche of the road transport legislation reforms towards the end of the year, which will focus on road transport penalties for drug and alcohol related offences. Achieving Vision Zero is not going to

be easy, and our penalties framework plays an important role by clearly outlining what we expect and what we require of Canberrans on our roads—that is, safe, considerate and responsible behaviour.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank officials from Transport Canberra and City Services, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, ACT Policing, and the Parliamentary Counsel’s Office for their input to this bill. In particular, I would like to thank Kirra Cox, Luke Garrett, Murray Nichol and Alexander Ingham for their involvement in developing this bill, which will have a direct impact on the safety of Canberrans on our roads. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Planning and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Debate resumed from 8 February 2023, on motion by **Mr Gentleman**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (10.38): I note that this bill is an omnibus bill that enables minor amendments to a range of legislation in the planning and land management portfolio. I accept, on behalf of the Canberra Liberals, that it is not a significant bill, and we will be supporting it.

The bill makes amendments to the City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017 to enable the City Renewal Authority to undertake repairs and upgrades to the Sydney and Melbourne buildings, in agreement with owners. The amendment ensures that revitalisation work can be conducted on private land within the Sydney and Melbourne buildings with the owners’ approval. The definitions of “urban renewal” and “urban renewal precinct” are amended to harmonise current drafting practices and specifically include the Sydney and Melbourne buildings.

The bill also makes amendments to the Dangerous Substances Act 2004 and the Dangerous Substances (General) Regulation 2004. It clarifies requirements for advice about the likely location of asbestos in buildings built or started before 1985 to instead provide advice for buildings built before 1990. Provision of this advice, based on the later date, provides greater assurances for the risk assessment and safety management of homes with materials containing asbestos. The amendment brings the ACT in line with the nationally agreed asbestos awareness messaging and will commence 1 July this year.

The bill also makes changes to the Government Agencies (Land Acquisition Reporting) Act 2018 and the Government Agencies (Land Acquisition Reporting)

Regulation 2019 by exempting the reporting of land acquisitions by government agencies from registered community housing providers. I note there is also a schedule of minor and technical amendments.

The Canberra Liberals will be supporting this bill.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.40), in reply: I thank members for their input into the bill. It is, as you have heard, a technical omnibus bill that amends the City Renewal Authority and SLA Act 2017, the Dangerous Substances Act 2004, and the Government Agencies (Land Acquisition Reporting) Act 2018. The government continues to modernise the statute book. Also, Minister Vassarotti will be moving government amendments to the bill to include amendments to the Professional Engineers Act 2023 a little bit later.

The bill provides for minor and technical amendments to enable the City Renewal Authority to undertake repairs and upgrades, as you have heard, to the Sydney and Melbourne buildings, with the consent of the building owners; clarifies requirements for advice about the likely location of asbestos in buildings built or started before 1990; and ensures that privacy principles are extended to the occupants of community housing when the government acquires land from community housing providers.

The Sydney and Melbourne buildings are landmark buildings and they are a significant element of Canberra's history and continue to be a defining feature of our city. The Sydney and Melbourne buildings frame the gateway from Northbourne Avenue to City Hill, with a view to being the city's premier retail traders block.

The Sydney Building was finished first, in 1927, and part of the Melbourne Building was completed at that time, but construction lagged and it was not finished until 1946. The buildings characterise the origins of the city centre and continue to shape the urban landscape of Civic today. It is pertinent to pause and reflect that the Sydney and Melbourne buildings have been with us through the Great Depression and World War II. They predate the opening of other Australian icons such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. In contemporary times, the buildings have survived the Canberra bushfires, the global financial crisis and, most recently, the global pandemic.

Many Canberrans have a connection to these buildings. Canberrans know the significance of the Sydney and Melbourne buildings as icons of our city. They support the work for repairs and upgrades to the facades. Touching on that linkage, I had the pleasure on Saturday night of attending the Architecture Awards here in the ACT at the National Arboretum and had a great conversation with Spyros Cassidy. Spyros Cassidy is the son of another Spyros Cassidy, who owned the Blue Moon Cafe in the Sydney Building. I have very fond memories of attending the cafe, where you could purchase four cobbles for a penny, musk sticks and really good milkshakes. We had a great conversation about early Canberra and a lot of the construction that occurred at the time. Of course, the Cassidy family also had the Spyros Hotel on Northbourne Avenue and a couple of famous restaurants as well.

The government, through the City Renewal Authority, will continue to work with the lessees of the buildings, their tenants and the Canberra community to identify appropriate ways to rejuvenate the buildings; celebrate their heritage values in a contemporary manner that also retains their character; create a highly curated and vibrant destination; and contribute to the city centre's social economy. It will also improve the quality and utilisation of the public realm, particularly the internal laneways of the buildings; break down the physical barrier created by Northbourne Avenue traffic; and improve linkages to future Civic arts and cultural precincts. The Sydney and Melbourne buildings' property owners recognise the opportunities and the benefits stemming from these improvements and they recognise the benefits of being able to work together to achieve a good outcome.

The bill amends section 47M of the Dangerous Substances Act 2004 to align it with the revised nationally agreed approach to the registration and notification of homes that may contain loose-fill asbestos. Section 47M will be amended to replace "1985" with "1990". The commencement of part 3 of the bill will be delayed until 1 July 2023. Until this time, the Loose-fill Asbestos Coordination team, with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, will continue to consult with key industry stakeholders about this amendment, and, as part of the government's continuing community education program, ensure the safety and wellbeing of Canberrans.

The remaining amendments to the bill relate to section 10 of the Government Agencies (Land Acquisition Reporting) Act 2018. This amendment has been made to protect an individual's right to privacy and reputation. Part 4 of the bill requires that information about land acquired from a registered community housing provider must not be disclosed in the government's quarterly reports about land acquisitions. This means that the tenants of community housing properties will have the same privacy protections as public housing tenants and land rent lessees.

The government amendments to the bill relate to the Professional Engineers Act as well, passed by the Assembly on 23 March 2023. The Professional Engineers Act is intended to commence on written notice by the responsible minister, which is the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction. This period is to support the completion of necessary regulations, disallowable and notifiable instruments, and education and awareness activities with the community and industry. Public communications have indicated an intention to consult further with industry on key implementation components of the scheme—for example, a code of practice; continuing professional development requirements; qualifications, experience and competency requirements; guidelines on areas of engineering and scopes of work covered by the scheme within those areas; and, of course, some fees.

Due to an administrative oversight in the drafting of the Professional Engineers Act 2023, section 79 of the act was not disappplied. This section provides for the automatic commencement of legislation six months after notification if the relevant minister has not made a commencement notice. Thus, the Professional Engineers Act 2023, as passed, automatically commenced on 11 October 2023. The implication of this is that those engaging in professional engineering services, as defined by the act, will be committing an offence if not registered at that time, even though the registration scheme will not yet be operational. The government amendments seek to disapply

section 79 of the act to align with the government's intentions relating to the commencement of the Professional Engineers Act 2023.

In summary, the bill will ensure that the Sydney and Melbourne buildings are able to be revitalised for the enjoyment of all Canberrans. It expands the scope of requirements for the notification of likely asbestos affected properties and applies protection to the privacy of community housing tenants. Finally, government amendments to the bill address an administrative oversight relating to the commencement of the Professional Engineers Act. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (10.48), by leave: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 circulated in my name, together [*see schedule 1 at page 1795*]. I table a supplementary explanatory statement.

I move amendments to the Planning and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and dispense with standing order 182A on the grounds that amendments are urgent, minor and technical. The amendments being moved are to the Professional Engineers Act 2023, passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 March 2023. The Professional Engineers Act 2023 included a delayed commencement to support the completion of necessary regulations, disallowable and notifiable instruments, and education and awareness activities with the community and industry. The act provides a clear intention to set the commencement date by a written notice.

Public communication supporting the introduction and the passage of the act have indicated an intention to consult further with industry on key implementation components of the scheme, including a code of practice; continued professional development requirements; qualifications, experience and competency requirements; guidelines on errors of engineering; and scopes of work covered by the scheme within these areas.

Due to an administrative oversight in the drafting of the act, section 79 of the legislation act was not disapplied, and thus the act, as passed, will automatically commence by default on 11 October 2023. The implication of this is that those engaged with professional engineer services, as defined in the act, will be committing an offence if not registered at that time, even if the registration scheme is not operational. The amendments seek to disapply section 79 of the legislation act to align with the government's intentions related to the commencement of the act. The period of 18 months is provided as a contingency period. It is my intention to set the commencement of the scheme by written notice at an earlier time.

I will have more to say in the coming months on the commencement date of the act and the registration scheme, and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and Access Canberra will continue to progress the implementation work.

Amendments agreed to.

Bill, as a whole, as amended, agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Debate resumed from 30 November 2022 on motion by **Mr Gentleman**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.52): I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill, which I and the Canberra Liberals will be supporting today. This bill is an omnibus bill and amends the Corrections Management Act, the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act, and the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Regulation 2006. Each change is important to improve the correctional system in the ACT and the majority of the changes echo issues that I have either spoken about or called for in the past.

One of the changes is declaring the ACT a participating jurisdiction in community based sentence transfer. This is a small change but an important one. The ability to transfer community based sentences between jurisdictions allows offenders on non-custodial sentences to transfer to different parts of Australia. This allows them to move with their families in the case of their family moving interstate or if the offender starts a new career or new educational course.

One of the biggest changes in this bill will be the move to grant the director-general the authority to declare the entire Alexander Maconochie Centre a smoke-free zone. This move has been a long time coming and one of the major issues identified by the Inspector of Correctional Services in his 2019 *Healthy prison review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre*. Canberra has lagged behind most of the rest of Australia, with other states and territories banning smoking at prisons, indoors and outdoors, as early as 10 years ago. Banning smoking here in its entirety should have occurred some time ago. Not only would it be beneficial for the health of everyone at the AMC but it is also beneficial for the personal finances of the detainee and for the taxpayer. Millions of dollars in health expenses and infrastructure damage could have been saved if smoking had been banned earlier. The health benefits have been known for decades and the government should not have needed a review to tell them the obvious fire risk of smoking indoors and of detainees possessing cigarette lighters.

I note the legislation adds that the director-general may declare the whole of a correctional centre as a non-smoking area only if the director-general is reasonably satisfied that appropriate therapeutic support is available to help detainees at the

correctional centre to stop smoking. This may imply that if, at any time, there is not appropriate therapeutic support available, then the correctional centre may allow smoking once again. Given this, I believe it would be prudent to define what appropriate therapeutic support entails. This could include a fixed and minimal supply of traditional nicotine replacement therapies, such as lozenges, sprays and patches, in addition to free 24/7 addiction counselling. Overall, I welcome the move to ban smoking and encourage the government to make the transition as steady and consultative as possible.

The streamlining of the scanning and searching procedures to complement the introduction of body scanners is another welcome change. While the introduction is good news for the AMC and will help reduce the number of strip searches, which can be degrading and extremely uncomfortable for both staff and detainees, it should not be forgotten that these body scanners did not come without personal cost. The decision to expedite the procurement of body scanners came only after a tragic, violent and graphic account of an Aboriginal woman who was subjected to the use of force before a strip search was undertaken. It should be noted that this horrible story could have been avoided if the body scanner that had previously been in the AMC had not been switched off and removed two years prior. Had the government properly maintained the machine so that it was working as intended and been using the machine to its fullest extent, perhaps that strip search could have been avoided.

It was also disappointing that, even after a successful expedited process by ACTCS to obtain the body scanners, it was still almost a year before they could be used. Getting relevant licensing and approvals from ACT Health was extremely slow and it is estimated that close to 300 strip searches could have been avoided had ACTCS received the approval sooner. I am glad they are finally operational, though, and will be keeping a close eye on their operation so we do not end up in another situation where they sit mostly unused. I also hope that this is a step forward in phasing out routine strip searches even more.

Another change that I will watch with a keen and careful eye is the decision to allow community corrections officers a degree of discretion in reporting breaches of good behaviour orders. For those who do not know, as a general rule, a good behaviour order is given to those who have committed relatively minor offences that do not constitute any jail time at all and have been deemed to not be a threat to those around them. They must abide by certain conditions, such as correctional therapies, fulfilling community service and being supervised. If a person breaches the conditions of the order, they can be subjected to harsher conditions. Examples of a breach can include something as serious as committing another offence or something less serious such as missing an appointment.

This bill allows community corrections officers discretion as to whether they report when someone has breached the conditions of their order or all breaches will continue to be reported. It will still be the case that if a breach would constitute an offence, then the breach will be reported. This is good and appropriate; but in cases where the breach is relatively minor or out of the control of the offender, such as a bus not arriving on time and subsequently arriving late for an appointment—something many Canberrans would be familiar with—the community corrections officer may choose not to report it to the sentencing court.

There are potential benefits to this, including reduced court administration times and increased empathy and understanding between the officer and the offender, opening opportunities to work closer together to help the offender improve their behaviour over the long term. There are also potential down sides. The application of discretion could go too far. Officers may be too lenient and not report something that should have been reported. Reporting is a valuable tool in ensuring good behaviour, and not utilising that tool effectively could cause an officer to miss an opportunity to prevent further breaches. I will be carefully reading the framework that will be created to regulate this discretion and will absolutely raise any concerns that I have with it directly with the minister.

The final significant section of this bill is in response to a bill I presented previously in the Assembly, which tightens up the language that makes the transport of a prohibited thing into the AMC an offence. Remotely piloted vehicles, commonly known as drones, are rapidly disrupting life as we know it. Prisons are no exception. Prisons all around Australia and the world are having to deal with individuals using drones to fly over security fences and drop prohibited things like drugs and mobile phones onto prison grounds. Prisons are working on acquiring technology to intercept and disable drones, but work must also be done on the legislation side to clarify that using a drone as a vehicle to deliver prohibited things is an offence.

New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have already made changes to their legislation to this effect, and I am glad to see that we will be joining them in adapting to this security threat. I thank the minister for agreeing with me to address this and for working with me to see this done. There are many things that must be improved at the AMC on the policy, procedure and operational side of things. I look forward to those issues being addressed.

In closing, I wish to thank those who worked on this bill with me and the minister, and thank the corrections officers and the ACTCS staff, who are unsung heroes working to keep our community safe. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (11.02): I feel that I need to start with an expression of frustration. For me and my staff, this bill was a bit difficult to deal with. We had a better time deciphering the bill by reading the legislation itself, rather than the explanatory notes. We got there in the end, but it was a journey.

Firstly, there are elements of the bill that are fine and straightforward. These include the provision for the Sentence Administration Board to issue notices; the discretion not to report very minor breaches of good behaviour orders; and the interstate transfers of community based sentences. These include provisions on deliveries, such as by drone, and visitor scanning.

I do, however, have concerns about components that amend the Corrections Management Act around strip searches on admission and declaring the whole of AMC smoke free. I draw the chamber's attention to the *Scrutiny report*, which requested further information about:

... how the amendments to the CM Act relating to strip searching detainees on admission to a correctional centre are intended to operate to ensure that any discretion is exercised with minimal intrusion on detainees' human rights, and how any discrimination will be appropriately subject to scrutiny.

The minister responded on 24 May, but that response did not contain any new information. It did not actually explore how strip searches on admission are intended to operate and largely described existing practices in place under current law. The government's response to the JACS inquiry into the bill, tabled just yesterday, also did not provide this information.

This amendment is more about providing legal certainty to the conduct of strip searches rather than reform to improve the situation in AMC, and therein lies the rub. There are a lot of things we would like to think this bill should do that simply are not in it. To point out just one glaring issue, which exists right now and remains unaddressed: if the purpose of requiring a strip search on admission includes ensuring the health of a detainee, then where is the medical practitioner to provide an assessment and assurance?

In the end, we will support these amendments to pass as a small improvement on the status quo; however, we will continue to campaign for substantive and actual reform in this space. The exact wording of the laws will not help to address some of the big issues that we see at the AMC, which are more cultural in nature and require a minister's attention in non-legislative ways.

Those who have some familiarity with prison culture will know that prison slang refers to correctional officers as "screws", a term derived from the screws used to shackle prisoners to their chains. I understand that ACT corrections officers also use this term to describe themselves. It reflects a legacy culture where the purpose of a prison is to punish people rather than reform behaviour and where consideration of a detainee's human rights is not prioritised.

This can be seen in multiple court cases brought forward by detainees about the denial of their human rights, and the ACT Supreme Court is finding that detainees' human rights are not being upheld. I look forward to when detainees can bring human rights matters to the Human Rights Commission and, hopefully, eventually, one day, also to ACAT so that they have more access to processes that respect their human rights as granted to them under legislation.

Debate on this issue needs to consider the incident where an Indigenous woman detainee was subjected to the use of force involving multiple correctional service officers in riot gear in an attempt to strip search her. The ACT Inspector of Correctional Services found that whilst the conduct of the strip search was lawful under the Corrections Management Act, the attempt to forcibly remove the detainee's clothing was inconsistent with the Human Rights Act, which requires human rights to be considered in all decision-making by a public authority.

It is also worth remembering that it is because of the obstinacy of correctional officers that we still do not have a needle exchange program set up in the AMC, despite it

being ACT government policy. This also leads to my concern about the smoke-free AMC, not because it is not a good idea or should not be supported. But I ask: is the culture ready to implement a smoking ban for the whole centre? Are the support services in place to support this change? The legislation will give the directorate the power to do so, and that is a good thing, but we need to think very carefully about when is the right time to hit that “go” button on this reform.

ACT corrections staff need to display personal leadership in supporting this reform, and there needs to be meaningful support for detainees going through the nicotine withdrawal process. With existing difficulties already in getting inmates to their existing health appointments with organisations like Winnunga, that sounds like it is going to be a challenge.

It is important that any reforms in ACT Corrective Services ensure the modelling of human rights-compliant behaviour at all times and at all levels throughout the leadership chain. Otherwise, we open ourselves to suboptimal outcomes for the corrections system, failing our detainees and failing our community. We will be watching.

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) (11.07), in reply: The Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 continues this government’s work to improve the administration of correctional services, both for those in custody and those serving their sentences in the community. The bill reflects the ACT government’s commitment to continuous improvement and to promoting a safe and peaceful community in the ACT. It balances the need for offender rehabilitation with the need for victim safety, and upholds the paramount safety of everyone at our correctional facility while maintaining the dignity and human rights of individual detainees. The bill makes important changes to ACT legislation through amendments to the Corrections Management Act 2007, the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 and Crimes (Sentence Administration) Regulation 2006.

The bill creates clear authorisation for correctional centres to be declared smoke free by the Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and, when such a declaration is made, requires the Director-General to be reasonably satisfied that there are appropriate therapeutic supports available to help detainees at the correctional centre to stop smoking. This amendment and any declaration made under this amendment aims to improve health outcomes for both staff and detainees. Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable health burden in Australia, and the leading cause of cancer.

The ACT government has listened to feedback from detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre through a 2016 survey, which found 79 per cent of the respondents reported smoking tobacco in the 12 months prior to incarceration; 60 per cent of the respondents had tried to quit smoking while in detention; 57 per cent indicated a need for assistance to quit smoking; and 67 per cent indicated they would like to quit smoking. The transition to a smoke-free AMC seeks to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of staff and detainees at the AMC. It also aims to address

secondary issues related to smoking and tobacco. These include: the use of tobacco as a currency; improving health and wellbeing outcomes for detainees pre- and post-release; decreasing tobacco dependence by vulnerable groups; and reducing the property damage and false fire claims caused by lighters and cigarettes.

The government response to the JACS committee report into the inquiry into the Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 details the work being undertaken in preparation for the transition to a smoke-free centre. The transition plan has been developed in consultation with Justice Health, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, and representatives from the Community and Public Sector Union. Taking a staged and constructive approach acknowledges that transitioning to a smoke-free environment in AMC poses challenges for everyone involved. ACT Corrective Services is ensuring clear communication with detainees and staff to ensure that the necessary supports are in place.

It is important to note that alongside this legislative change, there are a range of therapeutic supports supporting detainees and staff in the move to a smoke-free AMC. These include access to nicotine replacement therapies, intervention training by Cancer Council ACT, access to Quit resources and additional activities that provide an alternative to smoking. I am encouraged by the responses of both detainees and staff to the provision of supports, and I understand that approximately 200 detainees have already accessed nicotine replacement therapies in preparation for AMC becoming smoke free. Although this change will directly benefit smokers, it will also have health benefits for non-smokers, as they will no longer be subjected to second-hand smoke and the associated health impacts. Making the AMC smoke free will ensure that ACT Corrective Services is meeting its obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and continues to provide a safe work environment for correctional officers.

In addition to the amendment to allow for a smoke-free declaration, the bill includes several amendments related to searches. One of these amendments will clarify the arrangements for searches of detainees on admission. Searches on admission are essential to assess the immediate health needs of the detainee, to protect the safety and security of other detainees and staff, and to maintain the good order within the correctional centre. There is a recognition that detainees entering a correctional centre have not been under the control or supervision of a corrections officer, which brings a heightened risk of a detainee bringing dangerous contraband into the centre. The amendment removes ambiguity in the current provision around strip searches on admission whilst protecting the statutory obligations of correctional officers, which are conditional when considering the human rights implications.

A two-year review mechanism has been built into the bill to allow for this provision to be reassessed after two years. This review will allow consideration of any alternative approaches for searches on admission that would be less restrictive and act as a safeguard to ensure that a blanket approach to strip searches is not permanently adopted.

The bill also includes amendments to promote operational flexibility amongst correctional officers, including amendments that allow a corrections officer of any sex to conduct searches that are confined to the use of scanning devices such as a metal

detector gate, handheld metal detecting wand and X-ray machines used to search property. These searches do not require any physical touching of the person being searched. This overcomes the need for corrections officers of both sexes to be present at the entrance to the AMC. The bill will remove the requirement for a view to be formed on each occasion, prior to undertaking a scan or ordinary searches, of non-detainees upon entry to an ACT correctional centre. This amendment will authorise the routine scanning and ordinary searches of non-detainees, including staff, contractors and visitors, as a condition of entry to an ACT correctional centre. The amendment will support corrections officers by reducing opportunities for harmful contraband to be brought into a correctional centre. It will also ensure that the form of search performed is the least intrusive search that is reasonable and necessary in the circumstances.

This amendment will not compromise the confidentiality or legal privilege of material being taken into a correctional centre, and there are strong safeguards in place to protect against corrections officers reading or using confidential material. The theme that underpins the Corrections Management Act, and the changes to search provisions proposed in the bill, is that ACT Corrective Services will continue to use the least intrusive kind of search that is reasonable and necessary in the circumstances and will conduct searches in the least intrusive way.

The bill also amends the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 and the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Regulation 2006 to support a national system of interstate transfers for community based sentences. The amendment provides freedom to detainees to allow them to serve their sentences interstate for reasons such as proximity to family and community, employment opportunities or escaping domestic violence. An assessment framework will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, which will be used to determine suitability for a transfer, subject to consideration of any impact on the safety of victim-survivors or domestic and family violence.

The bill also allows minor infractions of good behaviour orders to not automatically result in a potential court sanction. This amendment makes permanent a temporary, emergency COVID-19 measure and better supports the rehabilitation of offenders. ACT Corrective Services are working with a range of stakeholders—including ACT Courts and Tribunal, the ACT Director of Public Prosecutions, the Victims of Crime Commissioner, and the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety—on new guidelines that will provide a framework to guide corrections officers in the use of the new discretion of not to report breaches of good behaviour orders to the sentencing court. The Aboriginal Legal Service, Legal Aid, the Sentence Administration Board and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service will also be consulted on the guidelines to ensure that they provide appropriate guidance to corrections officers on when and how this discretion can be applied. Corrections officers will be provided with sufficient resources and training to ensure that the implementation of the discretion is undertaken in a consistent way by all corrections officers.

Finally, the bill streamlines the administrative processes and provides legislative clarity in response to modern technology interventions. It achieves this by minimising delays to intensive correctional order breach inquiries and removes any doubt that it is an offence to introduce prohibited material into a correctional centre by any means,

including by remotely piloted aircrafts or drones. The reforms brought forward in this bill reduce red tape and improve efficiencies for corrections management processes. Creating clear and efficient processes that are complied with will have a positive effect on the safety of the correctional centre as a whole and on the wellbeing and safety of detainees, staff and visitors in the centre as well.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (11.18): Mr Assistant Speaker, I wish to speak briefly today on the amendments to section 70 of the Corrections Management Act—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question has been put without debate. You may seek leave afterwards.

Bill agreed to.

Corrections and Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 Statement by Minister

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (11.19): Mr Assistant Speaker, I seek leave to speak briefly today on the amendments to section 70 of the Corrections Management Act, as described in part 2, section 4 of the bill that was just passed.

Leave granted.

It is a longstanding policy at the Alexander Maconochie Centre that detainees are strip searched on induction into the centre unless there is a decision made by the corrections officers that a less intrusive search can meet needs. Sections 113A, 113B and 113C of the act provide that a strip search may be conducted only if there are reasonable grounds that the detainee has a seizeable item concealed, or if it is prudent to search the detainee for a seizeable item that may be concealed on the detainee. By excluding the application of these sections of the act from section 70, which enables the strip search of detainees on induction, it will no longer be necessary to make an objective assessment of whether there is suspicion that the person may have a concealed seizeable item. Strip search on induction will effectively become the default by legislation, not simply by policy.

When a procedure is defined in policy, it is easier to change than when it is defined in legislation. To make an intrusive and potentially traumatic procedure the default by legislation is not something that should be done lightly. I am therefore relieved that the bill that has just been passed also incorporates a requirement for a review of these

amendments to strip-search provisions two years following commencement, with a report to be tabled in this Assembly six months after the review commences.

This scrutiny in the Assembly is important. As a human rights jurisdiction, we should always be looking for the least intrusive way to ensure safety in facilities like the Alexander Maconochie Centre. A custodial sentence does not remove a person's human rights; it just deprives them of their liberty for a set period of time. It is my hope that by the time these amendments are reviewed, the body scanners that were installed in the centre in 2022 will be able to be used for searches when there is no reasonable suspicion of concealed items.

As Minister for Justice Health, I have a particular focus on the wellbeing of people in the Alexander Maconochie Centre. This includes mental wellbeing. With the proportion of people detained in the Alexander Maconochie Centre who have previously experienced abuse and trauma being higher than in the general community population, intrusive strip searches do have an impact on mental wellbeing.

Something that gives me hope that we will see an improvement in our ability to care for the health and wellbeing of people in the AMC has been the work by Justice Health with ACT corrections over the past six months towards how we can improve on two specific barriers to accessing health care. One of these has been the dispensing of night-time medications that have an impact on sleep. When dispensed too early in the afternoon, these medications can negatively impact on sleep hygiene. This means health outcomes from these medications are not as good as they could be, and it can be harder to regulate emotions and behaviour when a person is feeling tired.

Another barrier to accessing care is the efficient use of waiting rooms at the Hume Health Centre and enabling detainees to be escorted in and out of the health centre to increase the number of routine, or non-urgent, appointments that Justice Health are able to provide to detainees each day. I understand that progress is being made towards resolving these barriers to accessing health care, and I thank Justice Health staff for their work on this.

I am hopeful that ACT corrections will be able to support more time-appropriate dispensing of sleep-affecting night-time medications and an increased number of detainees being able to access the Hume Health Centre for routine and non-urgent appointments over the coming months. Progress on these issues gives me hope that we can continue to implement human rights compliant policies for people in the Alexander Maconochie Centre. For that reason, and because of the review requirement, I have been able to support the amendments to section 70 of the act today.

Environment—feral horses

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (11.23): I move the motion standing in my name on the notice paper relating to the impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps.

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that:
 - (a) the impacts of feral horses on the environment and biodiversity is in most cases catastrophic and leads to a loss of vegetation, the trampling of soils, the spreading of weeds, the erosion of stream banks and damage to threatened species, their habitat, and aquatic environments;
 - (b) there are significant populations of feral horses over the border in NSW that pose a significant threat to the ACT should incursions occur;
 - (c) in February 2023, the Senate referred the impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps for inquiry;
 - (d) the ACT Government made a submission to the Senate inquiry that describes the critical need to protect the ACT's highly sensitive water supply and conservation areas from the feral horses; and
 - (e) the ACT Government continues to deliver monitoring and control programs to protect the ACT from feral horses and as a result there are no established populations of feral horses in the ACT; and
- (2) supports:
 - (a) the ACT Government's ongoing zero-tolerance policy on feral horses in Namadgi National Park, outlined in the *Namadgi National Park Feral Horse Management Plan 2020*, which includes integrated best practices such as trapping, mustering, removal and aerial control management;
 - (b) ongoing detection and control action by the ACT Government to protect Namadgi National Park and other reserves from feral horses;
 - (c) the ACT Government position that there remains a misalignment of policy between the ACT Government and the NSW Government about the management of feral horses in the Australian Alps as described in the *NSW 2021 Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan*;
 - (d) the ACT Government position that these sensitivities must be addressed and that the ACT and NSW must continue to work towards achieving a coordinated and cohesive approach to feral horse management between the two regions; and
 - (e) that the Australian Government has significant powers and responsibilities to protect matters of national environment significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and has an important leadership role to ensure that state and territory initiatives to control feral horses are consistent with this Act.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I stand to table this executive motion regarding the impacts and the management of feral horses in the Australian Alps. Recently the ACT government submitted a response to the parliamentary inquiry on the impact and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps.

I stand before you today to speak to the submission and address potentially one of the most significant causes of environmental degradation in Australia's alpine and south alpine parks: feral horses. These animals pose a significant threat to our biodiversity and sensitive sub-alpine wetlands, particularly in Namadgi National Park.

The detrimental impacts they have on the environment can be severe including trampling and damaging sensitive bulb and fern environments, affecting waterways which can put pressure on already threatened and vulnerable native species. The negative consequences of feral horses on our fragile alpine environment cannot be overstated. They can damage and destroy vegetation, compact and trample soil and compete with native wildlife for vital resources like food and water. Feral horses can also contribute to the spread of invasive plants and alter waterways, which in turn impacts aquatic environments.

Within the ACT, the potential for feral horses to cause catastrophic damage to sensitive sub-alpine wetlands in the national heritage listed Namadgi National Park is of grave concern not only to the ACT government but also the ACT community. This includes critical areas such as the Cotter Catchment which supplies water to Canberra Namadgi National Park safeguards in the Ginini Flats Wetland Complex—the most significantly intact Sphagnum bog and fen community in the Australian Alps—listed under the Ramsar Convention on wetlands.

With the highest density of feral horses in the Kosciusko National Park occurring just west of this wetland, their presence poses a significant and an increasing threat. To address these challenges the ACT adopts a zero tolerance policy on feral horses in conservation areas. Under the *Namadgi national park feral horses management plan 2020* several best practice strategies are employed, including population control through multiple methods including the use of lethal methods such as ground and aerial shootings, a method preferred by the ACT and endorsed by the RSPCA. The ACT actively monitors for incursions through remote cameras on ground and aerial surveys, ensuring that no feral horse populations establish in the ACT.

As a founding member of the interjurisdictional Australian Alps Liaison Committee, the ACT collaborates with the commonwealth, Victoria and New South Wales to protect the heritage values of the alps numerous parks and reserves including Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. The committee will provide to the commonwealth inquiry committee all recent and historical reports, emphasising the need for coordinated action.

The ACT government supports the creation of exclusion zones for feral horses in key areas and identifies the importance of habitat restoration and conservation efforts such as invasive plant and erosion control in areas impacted by feral horses. Recognising the vital role of headwaters in the region's ecological health, the ACT worked closely with conservation groups to identify areas of significant environment importance and used these to inform feral horse monitoring and management decisions. Additionally, consultation with local First Nations communities is prioritised to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and ensure culturally sensitive management strategy.

The ACT acknowledges the Australian government's responsibility to protect matters of national environment significance under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999; listing threatened species, developing a national feral horse management plan, meeting international commitments and implementing the threatened species action plan are essential duties. The ACT government supports the review of options under the EPBC Act by the Australian government to better protect the Australian Alps from the threat of feral horses.

However, we must address one of the key challenges we face in managing the impact of feral horses in the Australian Alps. This lies in the inconsistencies that exist between feral horse management programs in different states and territories. While some jurisdictions, like the ACT, have taken significant steps to manage feral horse populations, others appear to be slower to act. As the ACT Minister for the Environment, I must express my concerns regarding the disparities between New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT in addressing this important issue. This lack of uniformity has resulted in a concerning increase in feral horse numbers across the alpine region and the detrimental impact on our environment continues to escalate. It is essential that we strive for consistency and collaboration amongst all jurisdictions, particularly the ACT, New South Wales and Victoria, to ensure the effectiveness of our collective efforts in protecting our unique alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems.

I acknowledge some jurisdictions may have influences that prohibit the same strong stance that the ACT has on feral horse management but the ACT firmly believes that any plans or policies to retain populations of feral horses in national parks, including the Australian Alps, are counter-productive to conservation and may jeopardise the survival of many of our fragile ecosystems. Together we must work towards harmonisation and stronger collective approaches to protect these ecosystems and we must understand the success of feral horse management is only as strong as our ability to manage these issues together.

At this stage I would like to recognise the new Minister for the Environment for New South Wales and express my renewed hopes for a shared vision and hope to save the Alps. I look forward to progressing discussions and strategies that result in further collaboration and action on this very serious environmental issue.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra—Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.31): I rise to speak in support of Minister Vassarotti's important motion. Feral horses are an issue that I have a history with and remain incredibly passionate about. In fact, I am more concerned than ever.

It is almost five years since I moved a motion in this place condemning the New South Wales government's decision to afford protections to feral horses through the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act. That was an appalling piece of legislation. Together with the management plan that followed it in 2021, it prioritised the protection of an introduced animal above a national park. Unthinkable. A number of eminent organisations spoke out against it, vehemently. A scientific adviser to the New South Wales government resigned. We moved a motion because that legislation not only posed enormous risk to Kosciuszko National Park but to the ACT. Because feral horses do not recognise borders.

It is the feral horse populations in the northern plains of Kosciuszko, extremely close to the ACT, that are the greatest risk to us. Not horses in the ACT, or domestic horses that might escape, but existing feral horse populations that have not only been poorly managed for years but actively protected. It is why we have taken such a consistently strong stance, as a government and in that motion. It is worth reflecting on what

happened with that resolution back in 2018. It passed but without the Canberra Liberals' support. They actively voted against it. We divided. You can see how they voted. They voted no, under the leadership of their then shadow environment minister, Ms Lee. I hope they and she have come to their senses since.

Since that time, I, and others like Minister Vassarotti and Ms Lee, have seen firsthand the destruction that feral horses have caused, and just how close they have come and continue to come to the ACT border. In late 2019, I, together with Minister Gentleman and Ms Lee, was able to get an aerial view of feral horses in Kosciuszko thanks to the National Parks Association of the ACT. What I saw shocked me, and it still makes my skin crawl to think about it: hundreds of horses, during a drought, looking for water, and in extremely sensitive environmental areas. They were not majestic. They were not beautiful. Anything but. The sight of so many of them from the air, scattering and trampling and having very little care—no care—for what was around them, reminded me of rats.

When we landed, near a stream, a feral horse was just metres away. There was significant evidence of feral horses having been near the stream. This does not seem unusual in and of itself; of course they were looking for water. It is the effect of their numbers in a very sensitive area that has the impact; the contamination of the water; the trampling in and around the banks causing those banks to collapse in, potentially altering the water course.

Before we had arrived in Kosci, we had flown over the Corin and Cotter Dams and up into Namadgi. There, we had landed near an area in the peaks that was plentiful in sphagnum moss. Sphagnum moss is like a sponge, and it is fragile and it is critical. It is an incredibly important water source. Members will recall how dry that period was in late November 2019, just before the bushfires began; just before the crippling smoke haze. Yet this moss held water. So much water. You could pick a piece up and squeeze it, and the water would trickle out in your hand. You could drink it and I did. It is remarkable to see and experience. It is a life source for us in the ACT. The water it holds flows into our water catchments, our drinking water. It is the habitat for endangered species like the Northern Corroboree Frog.

This precious water source is right on the border of New South Wales. You can imagine what just a few horses trampling through fragile sponge-like moss would do. The absolute destruction that could be caused. This is not something where there is just vague potential for harm. It is at serious risk, every day, while substandard policies exist over our border.

I have focused a lot on water and threatened species, but there are also risks to vegetation, some incredibly rare. One of these is the Max Mueller burr-daisy. This is a very pretty flower. The Reclaim Kosci website describes its richness and its threats:

The Max Mueller's burr-daisy forms large mats in the herb-rich grassland of sub-alpine treeless plains.

It was first recorded in Victoria in the 19th century, but was not seen in that state again until 2009.

It has been found in only five sites in NSW, four of which lie within Kosciuszko National Park.

Ox-eye daisy is highly competitive in the habitat of this species.

Horses browse on the Max Mueller's burr-daisy and spread ox-eye daisy in the process. They also trample, causing direct damage and disturbance.

In 2020 I was gifted two beautiful hand-sewn replicas of the Mueller's burr-daisy in a vase of Australian timber, thanks to crafters Kerry Moir and Sharyn Wragg. They have been a feature in my office ever since: a daily reminder of what is at stake. There is so much at stake and it is getting worse. Since 2018, the numbers of feral horses in New South Wales have not been managed. They have not declined. They have exploded. The New South Wales government's Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan does require numbers in Kosciuszko to be reduced to 3,000 by 2027. That target was set in 2021 when there were around 14,000 horses in the park. Now there are 19,000. That target was set with largely a removal or a transfer requirement. As you have heard, numbers are higher than they have ever been. I think I can say with a lot of confidence that target will not be met.

Thankfully, here in the ACT, we have an outstanding Feral Horse Management Plan. It has integrated best practices, as Minister Vassarotti has described. It is implemented by a committed and hard-working team who understand this threat and are actively monitoring it and working to stop any incursion. I thank them so sincerely. This is hard work, but because of them, there are no established feral horse populations in the ACT.

I also want to place on the record how utterly appalled and disgusted I am at the treatment of New South Wales staff who have been carrying out their feral horse management work. They have been harassed, intimidated, abused and threatened. They have been forced to wear body cameras! They have been asked not to wear their uniform, because they become targets when they do. Just weeks ago, a horse head—a horse head!—was dumped at one of their offices near the park. All for a feral animal. It is hard to comprehend.

Soon we will hear from the Senate inquiry into feral horses. As you have heard the ACT government provided an exceptionally strong, unequivocal submission to that. I hope that our points and our recommendations are heeded. I also hope that with a new government federally, and in New South Wales, this represents a fresh opportunity to align our policies so we have a coordinated and cohesive approach to feral horse management.

In commending this motion to the Assembly, can I thank Ministers Gentleman and Vassarotti for their leadership on this issue, and can I thank all those associated with Reclaim Kosci and Save Kosci, the organisation that proceeded it, together with National Parks Association of the ACT and the many volunteer and conservation organisations that work so incredibly hard. Thank you. Through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, thank you for showing incredible leadership, sometimes at great personal cost and for continuing to advocate on behalf of our futures. There is so much at stake.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (11.40): I will speak very briefly in support of Ms Vassarotti's motion. It is the case that the impacts of feral horses on the environment and biodiversity are, in most cases, catastrophic and lead to a loss of vegetation. There is the trampling of the soil, the spreading of weeds, the erosion of stream banks, and the damage to threatened species, their habitat and aquatic environments, as Ms Vassarotti has pointed out in the first part of her motion. I am in support of this motion. Although I am a little unsure why we are talking about it today because we know that Ms Vassarotti is about to go to a meeting of environment ministers where this is likely to be discussed, so it seems a little pre-emptive to bring the motion today for debate. Is it going to be adjourned and then perhaps we will have amendments? So I will say very little more now because if there are amendments before we finish this motion, I would prefer to speak to those. I thank Ms Vassarotti for bringing this motion and acknowledging the impact of feral horses, and we will wait to see where the debate goes next.

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

Sitting suspended from 11.42 am to 2 pm.

Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (14:00): The Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister Gentleman, will be absent from question time today on ministerial business. I will endeavour to assist members with questions in Minister Gentleman's portfolios.

Questions without notice

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, yesterday you amended Ms Castley's motion to remove the guarantees that the ACT government would maintain the current staffing levels at Calvary Public Hospital. Minister, will you guarantee to maintain current staffing levels at Calvary Public Hospital and, if not, why not?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: In my amendment yesterday one of the key things we committed to was, of course, continuity of services at Calvary Public Hospital and ensuring that those clinical services remain. The reason that we are not going to sign up to the kind of guarantee that the opposition is talking about is that if, for one day, we had one fewer staff member, they will claim that we somehow breached some kind of guarantee.

We are committed to continuity of services across our hospitals—Canberra Hospital and the Calvary Public Hospital—and we are absolutely confident that we will be able to achieve that. We are also confident that, as we move forward, we will not only have the same number of staff at our north-side hospital but also continue to grow the

hospital system, as we have been doing over the last number of years, where we have more than met our election commitment to 400 additional frontline health staff, which was delivered in this term of government. We have already more than delivered on that commitment.

MR HANSON: Minister, what impact would backstopping Calvary staff using other CHS staff have on already overstretched clinical services at the Canberra Hospital?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: As I said in the debate yesterday, Canberra Health Services regularly has to surge and backstop when other services in the ACT are unable to provide the services they normally would.

We had an example just over the weekend where Calvary John James went on bypass for maternity services, and all of those people who were due to give birth at Calvary John James were therefore bypassed to go to Canberra Hospital. Similarly, when we had the theatre fire at Calvary Public Hospital in December last year, the entirety of the birthing, other than elective caesareans, went to Canberra Hospital.

This is the way that our system works, and this is one of the things that we are trying to address with this decision. It is always Canberra Health Services that is backstopping our system. When we have two public hospitals under a single network provider, that will enable much better load-sharing between the north-side and south-side hospitals as well as better infrastructure planning across the whole of the territory and territory-wide waiting lists that do not currently exist in many areas.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, what is your latest estimate of staff who will transition from Calvary to CHS?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: As I have said many times, we have no indication that there will be a significant number of staff who will not transfer to Canberra Health Services.

In fact, I was just on a call with the Health Care Consumers Association doing a Q&A over the lunchtime period, and Cathie O'Neill, our transition lead, confirmed yet again that there is absolutely nothing that we are hearing from Calvary Public Hospital staff that would indicate that there is a significant number of them that will not transition across.

Ms Castley: Point of order, Madam Speaker. I did not ask about people who will not transfer; I am asking for the latest estimate of people who have. How many have signed the form?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: That is not actually what you asked.

Ms Castley: Yes, it was.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: No, it was not.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members! There is no point of order.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to her comments yesterday that the Calvary National CEO raised concerns on 18 May about two members on the PwC transition team that had previously undertaken audit work for Calvary. Minister, how long were these members working on the transition team before 18 May, and are you concerned that PwC did not remove these members?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take the first part of the question on notice. As I said yesterday, PwC advised at the time that there was no conflict, but, for the avoidance of doubt, they had removed these two team members from the project.

As I also stated yesterday in my response to the opposition's questions, this issue was identified during the negotiations in 2002. Calvary identified that PwC also undertook Calvary's financial audits, and this was noted by the negotiation committee that includes Calvary. Calvary, at the time, did not identify any issues with PwC providing advice to the ACT government.

As I have also previously indicated in this place, Calvary was advised in April 2022, at the commencement of those negotiations, that the ACT government would consider compulsory acquisition of the land that it required to build a billion-dollar new public hospital if that was necessary to get on with the job of investing a billion dollars in a new north-side hospital.

Ms Castley: I asked the minister how long they had been on the team.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Castley, there is no point of order. You have a supplementary.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, what advice and what roles did these members provide to the transition team?

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

MR HANSON: Minister, how many PwC staff in total are currently being used by the ACT government to support your takeover?

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

Vaping products—nicotine

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Health. The federal government has recently announced measures to limit the use of nicotine vapes or e-cigarettes to prescription use only. The ACT has the harshest penalties for possessing prescription drugs without authority, with prison for up to two years or fines of \$32,000.

How will the ACT government enforce territory law and penalties around the non-authorized possession of prescription drugs in relation to e-cigarettes and nicotine vapes once the federal policy changes take effect?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: To put some background on the table for Mr Davis: it is currently the case that nicotine e-cigarettes are only legally available on prescription from pharmacies; they are not legally available from any other source and without prescription. That is the current circumstance that we are in. That was introduced by the previous Liberal government and the health minister Greg Hunt, who was very committed to addressing the challenge of e-cigarettes and vaping, particularly among young people, but was unable to take a number of actions because of his party room, and particularly the joint party room including the Nationals. This is the current situation. This is not a legal change in relation to the legal availability of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes.

In relation to the particular issue that Mr Davis is referring to, it is important to note that the figures that have been discussed in the media about these fines refer to penalties under the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act, which mainly regulates health practitioners and veterinary practitioners. The MPTG Act does have a maximum court-imposed penalty of a \$32,000 fine, imprisonment for up to two years or both for the unauthorised possession of schedule 4 substances. While those significant penalties can apply, the ACT government has no intention of targeting individuals for the unauthorised personal use for possession of vaping products. That is not the intention or the general use of the MPTG Act.

In the ACT, the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1927 is the relevant legislation that regulates the sale of recreational smoking products. Under these laws, as I have said, it is already illegal for vapes containing nicotine to be sold by anyone other than pharmacies.

MR DAVIS: Minister, given that a large proportion of people who currently possess or have access to non-prescription vapes are young people, how will these existing laws around penalties be applied to individuals and what will we do to make sure young people are not unfairly penalised by these laws?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Again, these are existing laws and existing penalties that are not being used to apply to people who are in possession of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes, but we as health ministers across the country are absolutely committed to ensuring that more is done to reduce the uptake of smoking and e-cigarette use among young people. What we know is that, currently, e-cigarettes that are sold in convenience stores are advertised in a way that is attractive to young people and as if they do not contain nicotine, but we know that many of them do contain nicotine and that is illicit. So the federal government has taken a number of measures and has flagged a number of measures to reduce the supply of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes.

In the context of doing that, as health ministers we have also discussed that nicotine-containing e-cigarettes do have a place in smoking cessation and that the current arrangements that relate to requiring a prescription to access nicotine-containing e-cigarettes for the purpose of smoking cessation are quite a challenge for some people, particularly in a place like the ACT with poor access to GPs and primary care—to have to get a prescription. The flip side of stopping the illicit sale through convenience stores of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes is ensuring there is appropriate access for people who are using them legitimately as smoking cessation devices while removing the availability of e-cigarettes for young people so we do not

see another generation of young people—the first generation we are seeing increasing smoking rates—addicted to nicotine.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, will the ACT government increase the supports available to reduce nicotine dependence consistent with our approach to focus on harm minimisation?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Yes, we already have a number of measures to reduce smoking and e-cigarette use in the ACT. Indeed, we have just rolled out a new program for teachers of years 7 and 8 to be able to talk to students about e-cigarette use, and we are developing a program for years 5 and 6 as well. So those efforts across directorates will continue, as well as efforts supporting the commonwealth's extensive advertising campaign and supports for people to understand the harm that e-cigarettes can cause.

This is absolutely in line with our harm minimisation strategy under the National Drug Strategy. Harm minimisation has three pillars: supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction. Supply reduction and demand reduction are exactly where we are in this space with e-cigarettes at the moment. It is fantastic to have a commonwealth government at the table not being held to ransom by a National Party that is the only major party in Australia that continues to take donations from big tobacco—a Labor party that is once again at the forefront of reducing the harm associated with tobacco and nicotine use.

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, yesterday you took on notice whether the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit at Canberra Hospital has been warned that they will lose their training accreditation. We have also been made aware that a large number of staff have left the unit in the past year. The Canberra Liberals have heard that the Executive Director, Women, Youth and Children has been unavailable at times as they were a part of the secret Calvary takeover and transition team. Minister, can you confirm that the Executive Director Women, Youth and Children has been absent working on the takeover while a major unit has been warned by RANZCOG about its training accreditation?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I am aware that RANZCOG visited the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children to talk to obstetrics and gynaecology there. I think it was the day before yesterday. I will take the second part of the question in relation to the Executive Director Women, Youth and Children on notice. It has been no secret that she has been away and she is part of the transition team. Absolutely. As soon as the decision was announced it was very clear that she was, but in her absence there is an Acting Executive Director Women, Youth and Children. She is a very competent clinician in her own right and she is doing a good job in the role as Acting Executive Director.

This is preliminary information, but I understand from the RANZCOG visit they expressed some concerns, but my understanding is that these are concerns that are already well understood and shared. I think we all have some frustration at the speed of some of the changes in Women, Youth and Children. I will be getting a briefing on

the exact extent of that but I think the opposition's scaremongering about losing accreditation is absolutely misplaced. There is nothing in the information I have had to date that would indicate that is the case. We all share some frustration about the speed of some of the changes we want to see in Women, Youth and Children but we also understand those changes very well, and I can assure the Assembly the Chief Operating Officer, Dr Grant Howard is absolutely directly involved in those conversations.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, how do you justify taking the Executive Director Women, Youth and Children away from their role to work on your hostile takeover when we know the unit is in turmoil?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: The unit is not in turmoil. It was a very deliberate decision that the Executive Director step away and that somebody else move into that position in an acting role, supported by the senior executive of the hospital. As I said, the Chief Operating Officer of the Hospital, Dr Grant Howard, is a very experienced clinician who has been directly involved and engaged in this process. My understanding is that the clinicians from obstetrics and gynaecology within Women, Youth and Children have very much welcomed Dr Howard's engagement in this process.

MR HANSON: Minister, how many staff have been moved from other clinical areas of the Canberra Hospital to work on the Calvary takeover and transition?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: It is not a very large number, but I will take that question on notice.

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit

MS CASTLEY: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, FOI documents revealed that you were briefed on extensive recruitment requirements in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit and that Women, Youth and Children have undertaken workforce modelling to fill gaps and leave in the division. Since you have received this brief, I have been told that the staffing issue is alarming in the unit. Are you aware of serious staffing shortfalls and issues in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit? If so, what are they?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I think I indicated in my previous answer that some of the challenges that have been identified are ones that we are well aware of. That is why the specialist recruitment talent acquisition team within our People and Culture area in Canberra Health Services has been specifically focused on recruitment in obstetrics and gynaecology. I will take on notice to provide the outcomes of that recruitment, but I understand that it has been successful and more obstetricians and gynaecologists have been recruited, including backfilling in the foetal nursing unit and VMO positions.

I will take on notice the question on the exact numbers. To answer Ms Castley's question of whether I was aware: yes, we are aware of the ongoing challenges in obstetrics and gynaecology in Women, Youth and Children's and, yes, we are focused on ensuring that that talent acquisition process results in substantial recruitment there.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, I believe you said you would take it on notice, but we would like to know how many staff have gone on leave or left the unit in the past 12 months.

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

MR HANSON: Minister, what are the ongoing issues that you have referred to during question time, and do these ongoing issues present any clinical risk?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: It is no secret that there are some cultural issues in Women, Youth and Children's. That is an ongoing matter of concern. As Ms Castley has indicated, there have been some recruitment challenges over time. That is why the talent acquisition team in People and Culture has been specifically focused on this area, both in obstetrics and gynaecology and in paediatrics. It is why there has been a very significant focus from the senior leadership of Canberra Health Services, including the chief operating officer, Dr Howard, to get to the bottom of exactly what we can do to support this team to come together to build a more positive working environment for everybody involved, as well as undertaking that targeted recruitment, which, my understanding is, has been successful and will continue.

Gordon—playing fields

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Minister, can you provide an update to the Assembly on the fire at the Gordon oval and how the government is working to rectify the issue?

Mr Hanson: I've heard a rumour they weren't fixing it.

MS BERRY: I thank Dr Paterson. I can update you today, Mr Hanson; you will be able to hear what is happening at Gordon. I am very happy to provide all members of the Assembly with an update on this issue.

As members may know, on 5 December 2022 there was a fire in the pavilion at the Gordon oval in Tuggeranong. Emergency services arrived at approximately 5.30 am to extinguish the fire. The fire resulted in severe damage to the Gordon pavilion and the loss of a large amount of sporting equipment which was stored inside. The government is working with the insurance provider and other parties to get the pavilion repaired after the significant damage. In the meantime the government is providing temporary facilities for the users of the pavilion.

Earlier this year, when the aftermath of the fire was becoming more evident, the government jumped in to provide some short-term relief, with a \$10,000 donation to the Tuggeranong Valley Australian Football Netball Club's fire appeal. I know that Ms Lawder also made a personal donation to the appeal, which should be commended.

Not only was the pavilion severely damaged by the arson; so was a lot of the gear owned by the club. Sadly, irreplaceable memorabilia was also destroyed. However, the fire appeal and the \$10,000 donation by the ACT government will help with the purchase of new uniforms and equipment for junior teams.

DR PATERSON: Minister, what temporary facilities is the government providing at the oval?

MS BERRY: The government has been undertaking an innovative approach to provide temporary accommodation. Following the ACT government's procurement process, the government liaised with local company Canberra Containers to help develop shipping container change rooms and other facilities for sportsgrounds as a temporary measure at the Gordon playing fields. One of these shipping containers, in the form of a solar-powered canteen, has been temporarily installed at Gordon. This canteen was originally powered by a diesel generator. The government worked with a local solar installation company, Hive Electrical, on a concept design to retrofit the container with solar supply, including a battery and six solar panels to provide 2.2 kilowatts of power.

MS ORR: Minister, what other opportunities does this collaboration with Canberra Containers present?

MS BERRY: A temporary solar-powered portable container change room has also been provided for use by the Hall Bushrangers Rugby Union team at the Hall sportsground. More portable change rooms were installed at Taylor playing fields for the Gungahlin Bulls Rugby League Football Club and at the Kippax playing fields while the Kippax pavilion undergoes structural upgrades. This collaboration helps to meet the short-term needs of some sporting groups in need of facilities, whilst also supporting local jobs and industry in the territory.

In total, there are five solar-powered shipping container facilities in use across the territory, with calls from more stakeholders to be provided with one. This innovative approach has received positive feedback from sports organisations, which is why the government will continue to invest in similar solar-powered shipping containers which can be placed on other grounds where required to support the growth of community sport in the ACT.

Canberra Hospital—Neurology Unit

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the Canberra Liberals have also heard that the Australian and New Zealand Association of Neurologists is also reviewing the training accreditation of the Neurology Unit due to staff numbers being far below what is necessary. We have also been told by patients that it is not likely that they will be seen in their lifetime and that doctors have told them that EEGs are no longer available publicly due to the long wait times.

Can you confirm whether the neurology unit is also facing the loss of its training accreditation?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: That was a very confused question with a lot of different parts to it. In response to the actual question, I will take it on notice. But, again, visits from colleges around training programs are a normal part of managing training programs in hospitals. Colleges visit and accredit training programs on a regular basis. When concerns are raised, it is appropriate that colleges come and visit. Most often

what happens is that they support the hospital and they support the staff to figure out what is going on, and they provide some recommendations. Those recommendations are acted on and then we proceed to implement those recommendations and continue to undertake the training.

So the idea that the fact that a college has come and visited is an indication that you are going to lose training accreditation is just not based on the way that hospital training systems work.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, how many staff are currently providing EEGs for patients at TCH?

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

MR HANSON: Minister, how many positions are vacant at neurology?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take that question on notice. But, in doing so, I would note that this is an exact example of the way that the opposition have behaved for years, where they ask detailed questions about Canberra Hospital and they have never asked this kind of detailed question about Calvary Public Hospital, Bruce.

When it becomes part of Canberra Health Services, I am sure there will be a lot more scrutiny of the north-side hospital. That is something that I welcome in the interest of transparency for the people of Canberra.

Mr Hanson: Point of order, Madam Speaker. Was the minister debating or is she being relevant?

MADAM SPEAKER: I think she was responding to the question.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, how many staff are currently providing EEGs for patients at TCH?

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

MR HANSON: Minister, how many staff positions are vacant at neurology?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take that question on notice, but, in doing so, I would note that this is an exact example of the way that the opposition has behaved for years, where they ask detailed questions about Canberra Hospital and they never ask this kind of detailed question about Calvary Public Hospital, Bruce. When it becomes part of Canberra Health Services, I am sure there will be a lot more scrutiny of the north-side hospital, and that is something that I will welcome in the interests of transparency for the people of Canberra.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order: is the minister debating or is she being relevant?

MADAM SPEAKER: She was responding to the question.

Canberra Health Services—staffing

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to reported comments by Canberra Health Services CEO, Dave Peffer, in the *Canberra Times* on Monday, following a COVID outbreak in the Canberra Hospital's general medicine ward:

Canberra Health Services chief executive Dave Peffer said the rising numbers meant some “very, very heavy lifting” at the hospital.

The burden on the hospital and its staff from COVID was exacerbated by flu.

He expected the pressure from the two viruses to continue through the winter.

Minister, was it prudent to embark on a disruptive winter takeover of Calvary Hospital when you did not know how many Calvary staff will not transition to Canberra Health Services and when all hospital staff in Canberra, including those expected to backstop at Calvary, will be susceptible to COVID and the flu?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: This is what happens every winter. It is Canberra Hospital that carries the load whenever there is pressure on the hospital system.

Ms Castley: So is it a good time for the takeover?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: The advice that we have taken is clinical advice—expert advice—about this transition being done at this time. Part of that was, of course, taking into account the time of year we are in and the importance of ensuring that this transition was managed—

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, the minister referred to advice that she has received. Under the standing orders, could you provide any guidance as to whether she should table or is in a position to table the advice she has received that she should do this takeover in the middle of flu season.

MADAM SPEAKER: It is up to the minister. She is providing an answer. She was asked a question. She is providing an answer.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What I was saying was that we are acting on the advice that we have received that we should minimise the period of time that there is this uncertainty during the transition period so that staff have an opportunity to transition, so that clinical services can continue uninterrupted, and so that, for example, recruitment processes can continue or recommence because people will have certainty about which organisation they are recruiting to.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, will your failure to guarantee staffing levels at Calvary be exacerbated by the foreseeable impact of COVID and the flu on hospital staff?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I completely reject the premise of Ms Castley’s question.

MR HANSON: Minister, did you consider waiting until after the flu season to commence this disruptive takeover of Calvary?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: We have been very clear about the reasons for the timing of this decision. We were in negotiations with Calvary Health Care for almost all of last year, and we need to get on with building a new north-side hospital. We need to get that process sorted out so that we can get on with planning for the new north-side hospital.

The flu seasons sometimes starts early in April; sometimes it does not start until June and runs through until September. If we were never to do anything in the health system during the flu season we would have a limited period of time to make changes in, and we also would not be able to do it during summer, because people are on holiday and need to take leave. When you have to take these actions, you have to take them. It is not an easy decision; it is not a decision we have taken lightly, but it is a decision that we have taken on the basis of expert advice.

Transport—traffic management

MS CLAY: My question is for the Minister for Transport. Minister, groups including the Public Transport Association of Canberra have called for increased investment in public transport priority measures on our high-capacity bus corridors like the city to Belconnen. What is the ACT government doing to ensure that bus commuters are not stuck waiting in traffic during peak hour and other busy periods?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. The ACT government has already been looking at bus priority measures. We have done that most recently as part of the Disruption Taskforce's work considering what the impacts of major infrastructure projects, and private infrastructure projects, have been on the traffic network and some of our rapid buses that run from the south into the city.

Of course, we already have bus priority measures in Canberra, including in places like Adelaide Avenue but also in Belconnen as well. Some work was undertaken through a Belconnen to city transitway report that was a feasibility study from 2011 that analysed bus priority options in the Belconnen area. As a result of that—and that feasibility study did not sit idle—we did complete two stages of improvements in 2013 and 2014 based on the advice from that feasibility study to improve bus priority in the city and around the University of Canberra, Radford College on College Street and Haydon Drive.

MS CLAY: With light rail to Belconnen not expected until sometime in the 2030s, what will government do in the meantime to address traffic congestion on the Belconnen to city bus route?

MR STEEL: We will continue to monitor traffic around the Belconnen area. We are certainly updating population projections around the growth of Belconnen which will be taken into account. We continue to undertake modelling on what potential measures could be taken to improve traffic circulation in the north of Canberra, noting that is where a significant proportion of our population is growing.

We also need to be clear that bus priority measures can have an impact on the broader traffic network and traffic circulation. I think it has been suggested by some stakeholders that we should have a bus priority lane on Haydon Drive. That would need to be seriously considered in terms of the impact on the broader network. In fact, the feasibility from 2011 said that there is not a strong case for extending bus lanes in the section of Haydon Drive from Purdie Street to Belconnen Way, based on the outcomes of the microsimulation modelling of future traffic conditions on Haydon Drive. Since then we have seen large increases in population, so any further measures that would be considered would need to be considered in the context of updated population data that would feed into the assumptions for modelling.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, has consideration been given to bus priority measures in the Gungahlin town centre?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. As he is aware, and as I have updated the Gungahlin community and community council, the ACT government is undertaking a range of traffic modelling studies at the moment which will feed into future consideration of improvements—whether it is bus priority or road augmentation improvements in the Gungahlin region to support the growing population. As we look at what those augmentations might deliver in terms of benefits, bus priority would be one potential consideration there in terms of supporting the efficient movement of public transport and light vehicles and freight.

Calvary Hospital—acquisition

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, last week you told the Assembly that 120 of 1800 Calvary staff have made the move to transition to CHS. In relation to staff who resign from their current positions at Calvary but do not wish to join ACT Health, are they entitled to redundancy payments? If so, what terms are being offered?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: If staff resign, generally speaking they are not entitled to redundancy. What may happen is that staff will not choose to transition to Canberra Health Services and that Calvary not having a public hospital to run, would therefore offer them redundancy. If that is the case, the regulations very clearly provide for the ACT government to fund the redundancy beyond the liabilities Calvary would currently be holding in relation to those staff. That is a matter that is part of the ongoing conversation with Calvary. In relation to the individual entitlements of individual staff who work for Calvary Health Care ACT, not for the ACT government, that is a conversation they need to have with Calvary.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, what is the current figure of staff who have advised the transition team of their intention to come across to CHS?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: There are a number of staff that have attended forums or been in touch with the team who have indicated their intention to come across who have not necessarily completed the transition form at this time. I cannot provide the total number of those indications. What I can say is that yesterday the latest number I had of staff who had completed the transition form was 153, but as I indicated to

Ms Castley in the debate yesterday, it was not our expectation that a very large number of staff would complete the transition form before the formal transition process commenced. Many staff are quite worried about doing that. I think also the information has gone back to staff about the fact that a fair bit of the information had been removed from the transition form that they were being asked to complete.

As I said yesterday, in the latest union meeting we made it clear to unions that a number of those things that had caused concern for staff in terms of providing tax file numbers and bank details have been removed from that transition form. I am confident that more staff will be happy to complete that form but I imagine a number of them are awaiting the outcome of the court hearing today.

MR HANSON: Why have you rushed this process through if you did not have simple forms that were adequate for purpose?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: We did have forms that were adequate for the purpose but they were designed to capture a great deal of information. As we have done since this announcement was made and we started providing the opportunity for Calvary Public Hospital staff to provide us with feedback, we have responded to that feedback. We have responded to that feedback of “Could I bring across my flex leave? I am not going to be able to use it before the acquisition day.” We changed our position, “Yes, absolutely you can bring across your flex leave. You can transition that as part of your entitlement.” “Do I have to resign?” The initial position on our IR advice was “Yes, you will have to resign”. We have actually changed the regulation in line with IR law so that on acquisition day the cessation of employment with Calvary Health Care for those people who have accepted an offer with Canberra Health Services will be automatic, so they do not have to resign. Similarly we took advice from the staff that there was too much information being requested in that form. The team had a look at it and said, “Actually, you know what, we do not need all that information at this point. You are right. We will take some of those boxes out of the form.” The form was ready to go when we made the announcement and we have been responding to feedback as we would be expected to do.

Municipal services—lighting

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for City Services. Minister, automatic dimming of lights between 11 pm and 5 am has been demonstrated to reduce power usage, reduce the impact on local wildlife and improve human health, while also having no discernible impacts on road safety or crime rates. Interestingly, it increases perceptions of safety. Has the government considered dimming our public space lighting during the middle of the night?

MR STEEL: There is no need to take a dim view, Mr Braddock. You have a bright future ahead. The ACT government, as you are aware, manages around 82,000 streetlights across the city, including 1,200 streetlight control boxes and over 4,200 kilometres of associated underground and overhead cabling. We are always looking at ways that we can improve the streetlight network in terms of both safety and efficiency. We closely monitor the impacts of light pollution from our streetlight network.

The ACT government has been undertaking feasibility studies and trials into the use of time-based dimming and activity-based dimming on our streetlight network to reduce light pollution, support safe lighting and promote energy efficiency. In February 2023 a dimming trial took place in the Molonglo Valley of approximately 800 lights within the suburbs of Wright, Coombs and Denman Prospect. The trial was successful and showed that a large-scale dimming capability can safely be implemented.

We have also been undertaking more localised trials of dimming, including in a cul-de-sac in Throsby that demonstrates on-demand lighting. That trial enables the dimming of lighting to a set level, in the absence of movement. There is further work that we will need to do to consider the outcomes of those trials before they are potentially implemented more broadly. I understand that the energy efficiency gains have not been as significant as first thought in relation to the dimming trials that have been undertaken.

We will also need to consider the current safety standards. There is an Australian standard for lighting. One of the reasons that standard is in place is to ensure that people can safely move around our neighbourhoods, particularly at night. We will continue to consider the outcomes of those trials, but we are certainly interested.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, thank you for the illuminating answer. Has consideration been made to incorporate motion detection as part of the broader rollout of dimming during night-time hours?

MR STEEL: Yes. The trial that was undertaken in Throsby was a motion-activated trial. That is something that we are interested in looking at, for the potential benefits but also the risks. We have not made a decision to extend the use of dimming and these types of technologies to the rest of Canberra. It is certainly something that we are interested in, given that we have great capability now on our streetlight network as a result of the rolling upgrades and luminaire replacement, including smart lights that have been installed.

Children and young people—mental health services

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, can you outline what services and supports exist in the ACT for young people experiencing mental health challenges?

MS DAVIDSON: I thank the member for the question. Given the high concentration of young people living in her electorate, I can understand why this is so important to her. We have a number of youth mental health services and programs to support children and young people and their families. The first place I would go looking for supports and services would be mindmap.act.gov.au. This service provides help to young people up to the age of 25, as well as to their families and carers, to navigate the services available and help them to quickly find what they need at the right time. There is also a holding service for MindMap that provides access to a clinical youth navigator who can talk to people by phone and keep them engaged with working on their mental health while they are waiting for their first appointment in a service, if that is what is needed.

We know from the data that we are seeing from MindMap that an increasing number of young people are looking for support, particularly to manage eating disorders. That is why we have been doing so much work over the last few years in particular on making sure that we are increasing the number of services available for young people and their families.

We are about to commence construction on the new eating disorder residential treatment centre being built in Coombs. An eating disorders clinical hub was launched in January last year as a central referral point for public ACT Health eating disorder services. One of the services that they can now refer people to is the support for early intervention for eating disorders program, which is operated by CatholicCare and commenced receiving referrals on 20 February this year. It works in close collaboration with ACT Health and with that clinical hub. The result of that is earlier intervention and more joined-up services, and better outcomes for people with eating disorders and their families. For young people who need inpatient care, we also have an increasing number of— *(Time expired.)*

MS ORR: Minister, what sort of training and supports are given to the people providing these services?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for the question. Ensuring that our mental health workforce is appropriately supported and credentialled is really crucial to providing safe and high-quality care for young people who are experiencing mental health challenges. Child and adolescent psychiatrists undertake an additional year of advanced training to work in their area of subspecialty. This training is provided through the CHS medical credentialling committee. All of the nurse practitioners who work with young people in mental health care must also be credentialled through Canberra Health Services. We currently have a nurse practitioner working in CAMHS who is credentialled by the executive director of nursing. Allied health staff are also credentialled. That is by the executive director of allied health.

I have heard lots of positive feedback from young people about the Safe Haven in Belconnen. That particular Safe Haven has peer mental health workers with lived experience and qualifications who can provide support for mental health. The young people who have provided feedback to me have really appreciated the ability to hear from someone who has been through that experience, has qualifications and can tell them what recovery looks like.

I would also like to thank Minister Steel for the work he has been doing in making sure that we continue to have fee-free CIT courses in mental health qualifications as a career opportunity for people who want to be able to use their lived experience to be able to support others and to do some really good, meaningful care work that we need a lot more of in our city.

For young people who are thinking about a career in mental health and have lived experience, I can also recommend volunteering with MIEACT, whose “do no harm” training for volunteers with lived experience provides some really good opportunities to put their lived experience into practice to support others.

DR PATERSON: Minister, how are young people involved in the prioritisation and design of these services?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for the question. There are a number of ways in which young people get involved in the prioritisation and design of services and supports for young people experiencing mental health challenges. I think everyone knows I am a big fan of co-designing services with people with lived experience.

Last year the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, in partnership with ACT Youth Coalition and Capital Health Network, released a report that addressed the issues and challenges facing children and young people with moderate to severe mental health concerns. It also addressed some of the challenges in the mental health sector in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

There were some particular things in this report that talked about young people with highly complex needs, including people who have been impacted by trauma, people with autism or ADHD, people with disabilities and with established or emerging personality disorders, eating disorders, and limited family involvement, to name just some of the challenges.

At the service level, system gaps and limitations were identified that included workforce challenges. One of the key outcomes of this project was the establishment of the ACT child and youth mental health sector alliance. This alliance brings together the mental health sector to break down silos and encourage connection and collaboration. That has representation from government, non-government organisations, young people with lived experience and the broader community.

As part of this alliance, we have also established a youth reference group. That reference group has 15 young people with lived experience that meet monthly to support the work of the alliance and the youth mental health sector more broadly. That group is also meeting with other existing youth groups in the ACT to support advocacy and collaboration and work towards enhancing the experience of young people accessing the mental health sector. I would like to thank all of the members of that group for their ongoing work in supporting our mental health sector.

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

Motor vehicles—government policies

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (2.48): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that the ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia with an end date for the registration of new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and that after this date it will be illegal to register a new ICE vehicle in the ACT;

- (b) after signing up to support the C40 Green and Healthy Streets initiative the Government has effectively agreed to the creation of petrol-powered car free zones by the year 2030 in significant sections of Canberra;
 - (c) that Government members voted against an amendment calling on them to rule out the establishment of such zones;
 - (d) that Advocacy for Inclusion declared any such zones would be discriminatory against those who cannot afford to drive electric vehicles, particularly those with a disability who are totally reliant on cars and lack the upfront funds to transition to an electric vehicle;
 - (e) that the Government is giving serious consideration to further changes to the car parking construction code which would allow for the construction of apartments without any provision for car parking;
 - (f) that the Government has announced it will be conducting a so-called car-free day in Canberra in the Spring, but is yet to provide any further detail on how this will be rolled out;
 - (g) that anti-car government policies tend to have a high impact on families with children who often need a private car for multiple pick-up and drop-off points across any day; and
 - (h) that anti-car government policies tend to have high impact on people who live in the outer suburbs, those on lower incomes and those with a disability; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to stop pursuing its anti-car, anti-family agenda.

Mr Barr: Let the comedy begin!

MR PARTON: This motion is far from comedy, despite the retorts from the Chief Minister. This motion sends a very clear message to every single car owner in the ACT that Labor and the Greens do not want you driving a car in our city. They have made this position abundantly clear, and it needs to be called out. Everyone who drives a car today needs to be very clear about the fact that Labor and the Greens—particularly the Greens!—do not want you getting behind the wheel.

Mr Rattenbury can snigger away as much as he likes, but the proof is in the pudding in terms of what has been laid out. They want you walking, cycling, e-scooting or catching a bus or a tram. Although they would rather you were driving an electric vehicle, their preference would be that you do not possess a vehicle at all. This is something that is not often articulated. This is not just about emissions, internal combustion engines or EVs: they do not want you to have a car.

This extreme position by the Greens has been crystal clear. I want to make mention of the Greens transport spokesman, Ms Clay. Ms Clay, who believes we can save the planet from right here in Canberra, is hell-bent on getting people out of cars. She emphasised in the recent hearings into our city's EV transition that the Greens do not want to see a like for like replacement of ICE vehicles for EVs. She was very clear about it. The Greens want your car off the road!

Now, I spend a helluva lot of time online, probably too much time, but engagement is engagement. I spend a lot of time online batting away cooker conspiracy theorists who believe that we are seeing some secret agenda rolled out here—this 15-minute cities agenda—and they all believe that we are in the pockets of the world economic forum. Now, they are somewhat misguided but you can understand why they have arrived at the conclusion. They are wrong, but you can understand why they have arrived at the conclusion. Ms Clay, in particular, does not want you to drive your car anywhere, and what makes her position difficult to swallow is that Ms Clay is a constant thorn in the side of her government when it comes to the bus service.

Ms Clay continues to expose the gaping holes in the bus network. She continues to berate her own government on the cutting back of suburban services. She continues to highlight the major problems facing bus commuters who wish to travel on the weekend. She continues to remind the government that we have fewer buses in Canberra now than we did a decade ago. She continues to shine a light on that, so Ms Clay knows full well that overall the bus network here is diabolically bad. But when it comes to getting people out of their cars, she does not really care. She still wants you out of your car; huddling at a bus stop in the sleet, waiting for a bus that may or may not come.

Most of the cities which are embracing and going down an anti-car path—and there are some examples, many of them in Europe—at least they tend to be cities with a serious public transport network in place. You may wish to argue, and I am sure those opposite will, that Canberra does not currently have anti-car policies in place. I would refer you to the Australian Automobile Associations Report from earlier in the month, the *Transport Affordability Index March Quarter 2023*. This report showed that by far and away Canberra is the most expensive city in which to own and run a car, and most of those expenses are within the control of this government. This government will insist today that it does not prosecute anti-car policies, yet has the most expensive vehicle registration, the most expensive compulsory third party insurance, the most expensive driver licensing charges—higher than any other city in Australia. The average ACT household pays \$40.10 a week per vehicle for those charges. So we are by far and away the most expensive. I think Perth is the second-most expensive city, and they are around \$6 a week less.

All of those charges are under the remit of this Labor-Greens government. We were in this place several weeks ago debating the Suzanne Orr motion which successfully got the Assembly to sign up to the C40 Green and Healthy Streets Agreement. This is the one that locks us into declaring a significant section of our city as a zero emissions zone. The corresponding C40 healthy street zone in Barcelona is 14 kilometres long and four kilometres wide. So, with that in mind, I moved an amendment calling for the government to rule out the establishment of a petrol-powered car free zone in Canberra over the next decade. Labor and the Greens combined to defeat that amendment, which can really only lead us to one conclusion. There is only one conclusion that that can lead you to. Given the government has signed up to the C40 Green and Healthy Streets Agreement, which locks you into the establishment of a zero emissions zone and given the government voted against an amendment ruling out the establishment of a petrol-powered car free zone, it is very clear what is ahead. If that were not the case, you would have supported the amendment. This government has a long track record of introducing new laws at the drop of a hat on which it has

publicly said: “We would not do that. There is no way we would do that.” For argument’s sake: “We would not compulsorily acquire Calvary Hospital. We would not do that.” Ask the staff at Calvary about that and they will tell you all about it.

Banning petrol-powered cars in certain sections of the city does not work for people in the outer suburbs. Based on Mr Steel’s comments in the *Canberra Times* today, the answer would simply be—because he pointed to the fact that in the month of May the Tesla Y was the highest-selling SUV—so, I am sure the answer would be for struggling families, just buy a Tesla Y. I will pass this advice on to the single mums in Banks and Richardson and they will be most pleased to know that the Tesla Y is only going to cost them around \$70,000! That is all, Madam Speaker. It is only about \$70,000.

Mr Steel spent a long period in the chamber yesterday talking about supply chain issues, and he would be fully aware that supply chain issues are actually the biggest single reason that the Tesla Y has led those SUV sales in the last month. Those sales figures are based on actual deliveries and the May figure includes an accumulation of vehicle sales that were initiated at various times in the last year, but that only became full sales upon the delivery of those vehicles in the last month. I am not arguing about EV sales being on the increase, and I am also not arguing about the inevitability of what is before us; the inevitability of the fact that the world is transitioning to electric vehicles. There is no argument about that. My argument is, given that inevitability, do we really have to push things? Do we really have to come up with legislation? Do we really have to come up with rules that impact on people and somehow signal virtue that we are on board.

Those single mums in Banks and Richardson may tell me that the little Tesla Y, because it is a SUV in name only, is not really going to fit the bill. They might say it does not have enough seats for them. So they can just buy a seven seat EV. There are a very limited number of fully electric seven-seater vehicles in the EV Australian market. Currently the cheapest fully electric seven seat vehicle is the \$92,000—it is only \$92,000—the \$92,000 Mercedes Benz EQB250. The recently discontinued Tesla model X cost upwards of \$148,000, with most seven-seater electric vehicles costing upwards of \$100,000! If you have a big family and you are being pushed by whatever mechanisms to say you have to get out of your internal combustion engine vehicle, yes, it is a little anti-family. They are big numbers.

Of course, we have spoken about Barcelona and their zero emissions zone; we have spoken about Paris and we have also spoken about London. Again, all of these cities have much higher density than the ACT. London have instituted their ULEZ zone. What does ULEZ stand for? The Ultra Low Emission Zone. We discussed this a little during the Suzanne Orr motion. So they have a zone in place in which you can drive in it in a petrol-powered vehicle. You have to pay for the privilege. It is about A\$50 each time you go there. It is not working out all that well for Londoners, particularly in outer suburbs. This is from the Daily Mail last month:

Frustrated motorists have resorted to stealing Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) cameras in protest at controversial expansion plans by London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

Protestors have been climbing traffic signals to take the vehicle registration detection devices out of action in boroughs across the capital including Kingston, Sutton, Heathrow, Bromley and Greenwich.

There are reports that ULEZ cameras have been ripped from their bases, have had their wires cut or bags placed over them in protest against the plans.

My understanding is that there is a highly organised group of vigilantes calling themselves the Blade Runners who have declared that they will disable every single ULEZ camera in London. I certainly do not, and I cannot, support their actions, because they are breaking the law, but I think you cannot ignore such widespread action against a mechanism in London; you cannot ignore the community outrage which has led to that action.

There are those who are painting this motion as being a motion from conservative dinosaurs, climate change denialists. I can imagine that ACTCOSS and Advocacy for Inclusion must be included amongst those dinosaurs, amongst those far-right-wingers because ACTCOSS stepped into the debate after the Suzanne Orr motion and they pointed out that any move to restrict the movement of petrol-powered vehicles would have a very high impact on low-income earners, because it would.

Advocacy for Inclusion released a very strong press release. I will quote from their press release in which they expressed concerns about any moves to restrict older vehicles from parts of the city as the ACT signs up to the C40 cities agenda. Mr Wallace from AFI said:

This follows the defeat of a Canberra Liberals amendment, by Shadow Transport Minister Mark Parton MLA, calling on Government to rule out a ban of petrol powered cars in specific sectors of the city in the next decade.

Craig Wallace from Advocacy for Inclusion went on to say:

... legislators needed to be mindful of unintended and disproportionate impacts of climate adjustment measures.

As we talk about transport equity it is over-simplistic to assume that only high-income people have polluting vehicles and can therefore easily bear the costs of fines and fees. Some people with disabilities drive older vehicles (and larger vehicles) due to poverty and practical issues in the design of new vehicles. Placing additional charges on low-income people who have no alternatives to older vehicles is not an equitable feature of a just transition.

The reality is that some people with disabilities and older people are totally reliant on cars for essential travel for work, education, services, family, recreation and medical appointments. Active travel remains a dream for Canberrans ...

And that is the thing that is often missed in this whole debate. Mr Wallace continues:

Active travel remains a dream for Canberrans still unable to access older inaccessible diesel buses in the network and confront hurdles like inaccessible unbroken paths and streetscapes.

I greatly look forward to hearing the response from various members on the other side and I will deal with those responses and the amendments when I close this debate.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.02): I move:

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

“(1) notes the ACT Government:

- (a) has committed to applying to be part of the C40 Green and Healthy Streets Accelerator, which aims to provide better opportunities for the take up of zero emission transport, including zero emission vehicles, public transport, walking and riding;
- (b) has not restricted or banned the use, or purchase, of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, and has actively reduced the cost of operating these vehicles by adopting the FuelCheck App;
- (c) has signalled the intent to transition to a zero emissions vehicle fleet and phase out light ICE vehicles from 2035 to cut emissions and improve air quality in our city. New ICE vehicles will be completely phased out from 2035, however, Canberrans will still be able to continue using existing ICE vehicles already on the road;
- (d) is taking nation leading steps to encourage the uptake of new and used zero emission vehicles by supporting Canberrans to make the shift through two years free registration, stamp duty exemption and zero interest loans for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure;
- (e) is enabling and supporting the uptake of zero emission vehicles by expanding the electric vehicle charging network, with an additional 53 chargers to be installed this year and a commitment to ensuring there are at least 180 chargers across the ACT by 2025;
- (f) is avoiding a future of traffic congestion and gridlock, reducing reliance on privately owned vehicles (which not all Canberrans own), and is providing alternative transport options by:
 - (i) making future focused investments in all transport modes, including public transport, roads, and active travel;
 - (ii) committing to achieve a zero-emission public transport system by 2040, with 106 battery electric buses joining the Transport Canberra Fleet by 2026 and extending light rail to Woden; and
 - (iii) increasing walking and riding in Canberra by ensuring our intersections and streets are designed to support all forms of transport with the introduction of a new Active Travel Plan and accompanying Design Guide;

(2) notes:

- (a) Canberra was ranked the most affordable capital in the country in which to own and run a car, with 14.4 percent of household income committed to transportation in the ACT, and is leading the way in electric vehicle sales, with over 20 percent of new cars registered in April 2023 being zero emission vehicles;

- (b) the Climate Council's recent report '*Shifting Gear: The Path to Cleaner Transport*' has recommended our cities and public spaces should be designed for people, rather than how they are presently designed: for private vehicles that run on fossil fuels, causing our streets to be congested and polluted; and
 - (c) the latest research from the Melbourne Climate Futures (University of Melbourne) indicates air pollution from vehicles is linked to more than 11,000 premature deaths in Australia each year; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to continue supporting Canberrans by making it easier and more affordable to use a range of transport modes, including zero emission vehicles, public transport, and active travel."

The Canberra Liberals said that they were different, but the same old Liberals are insulting Canberrans' intelligence on climate change and peddling mistruths and fear on climate action. They said they were supportive of addressing climate change; but, when it comes to action, they are not interested.

Let us be clear that climate change action in this city means action on transport. Transport emissions currently make up 60 per cent of total carbon emissions in the ACT. The Canberra Liberals have vacated that space today, and today's motion is confirmation of that.

The ACT government is making some promising progress on achieving this goal. The latest data from April 2023 shows that zero emissions vehicles now make up over 20 per cent of new vehicle registrations in the ACT. That was again confirmed in the May figures, released just this week.

There are some positive signs at a national level. We have heard that the highest selling SUV in Australia in May 2023, and the third highest selling model overall, was in fact an electric vehicle. This is a very positive sign of uptake of electric vehicles both in Australia and in the ACT.

It did not happen in a policy vacuum; it happened because of deliberate policy actions that have been taken by governments, particularly here in the ACT, which is one of the reasons why our level of uptake is so much higher than other jurisdictions, in the face of continued policy failing by the Liberals when they were in government federally, particularly in refusing to implement fuel efficiency standards, which had a direct impact on the availability of the number of models, and particularly affordable models, of zero emissions vehicles in this country.

Not only that; it also had an impact on ICE vehicles and the number of more efficient ICE vehicles with the latest safety technology here in Australia. That resulted in consumers paying more for their vehicles and having to pay more for the operation of their vehicles, with less efficient vehicles being available in Australia.

It has not been the case that there has been no action from our side while this has been occurring. We have been undertaking a significant amount of work, including under Minister Rattenbury and the Chief Minister, with the electric vehicle plan. We expect that the increase in demand will continue because we know that these electric vehicles are more affordable to operate. Madam Speaker, if you look at the actual cost of

operating a vehicle, including the cost of purchasing a vehicle, models like the Model 3 are actually more affordable than a Toyota Corolla. It is more affordable for consumers who are able to get hold of these vehicles, and we want to provide more Canberra families with the option and choice of getting these vehicles which were not previously available under the previous government because of their anti-zero emissions and anti-climate agenda.

There is a real impact on the upfront costs in that we have put in place a range of different policy measures to support families to take up zero emissions vehicles, which are a very competitive alternative to purchasing a new internal combustion engine vehicle. That is why we are seeing a turnaround in sales, particularly for those vehicles that typically have been used by families, like SUVs.

By switching to a zero emissions vehicle, Canberrans can save approximately \$2,000 on running costs each year, while also reducing their individual emissions footprint by almost three tonnes a year. They can provide a cleaner and more affordable option for Canberra families looking to purchase a new vehicle.

That is not to say that Canberrans do not still have an option to purchase a new internal combustion engine vehicle; they do. The key point is that we are providing Canberrans with another affordable and clean transport option. We are giving Canberrans a genuine choice.

The current incentives and programs are targeted at consumers purchasing a new vehicle. However, this will benefit all Canberrans in the long term with improved access to electric vehicles with cheaper operating costs, producing cleaner air for a better quality of life in our city.

The current incentives and programs are making a difference. We understand that a lot of Canberrans still do not have an option to purchase a brand-new vehicle, and we are not asking them or forcing them to. Increasing the percentage of new zero emissions vehicles purchased now will increase the availability of zero emissions vehicles in the second-hand market in the future.

Canberrans looking to purchase a second-hand car will soon have more options for purchasing a zero emissions vehicle with lower operating costs and less maintenance required. That is having an effect on how long people actually own a vehicle for. They may not be turning over their vehicle every few years. They may be holding on to them for a very long period of time because they last longer, and the maintenance and operating cost benefits are there in the longer term.

The ACT government is helping Canberra families by providing more opportunity to reduce their transport costs. We understand that many Canberrans rely on using a private motor vehicle as their main form of transport, and that is why the ACT government is actively helping Canberrans to make a zero emissions choice when purchasing a new car, if they can. We are providing them with more opportunities to access both cheaper and cleaner transport modes.

We are providing the community with more transport options which are cheaper and cleaner. It is the Liberals that want to stop Canberrans having that choice, and that

goes to the work they are doing to try and stymie the uptake of zero emissions vehicles and other sustainable transport modes in our city.

I am really struggling to see how Mr Parton thinks our zero emissions vehicle incentives are disadvantaging families. We are providing Canberrans with better access to vehicles which cost less to operate, are easier to maintain and provide us with cleaner and healthier air. The latest research from the University of Melbourne indicates that air pollution from vehicles is linked to more than 11,000 premature deaths in Australia every year. That is almost 10 times the average national road toll.

The Liberals are very quick to criticise the ACT government for the action we are taking to improve transport in Canberra. However, any question about their own transport policy is answered with uninspiring silence. They do not have a transport policy or any solutions for moving Canberra's growing population around efficiently. Under the Liberals' leadership, Canberrans would not even have been given the opportunity to choose zero emissions vehicles to the extent that they have now.

They would not have been given the opportunity to choose light rail because they would never have built it, and they will not build stage 2. And now we have confirmation, even to their own anti-tram group, that they would not be given the option to choose trackless trams—the apparently amazing, new technology of guided buses.

If the Liberals had been in power, Canberrans would not have been given the opportunity to catch an electric bus anytime soon. We remember what the Liberals said when we first trialled our electric buses. They were not supportive of electric buses when the ACT first commenced the groundwork to prepare an electric bus fleet, and since then they have now come out against the pledge we have made through the C40 Green and Healthy Streets initiative, which would see no more new diesel buses purchased from 2025.

The Liberals' vision for Canberra would see lower income families forced to pay for expensive fuel to power their internal combustion engine vehicles over the long term, travelling on a congested, gridlocked highway from sprawling outer suburbs. That is their vision for the future of Canberra. There is a better quality of life in the government's vision. With the Liberals, it is tough luck for anyone on lower incomes and those with a disability who would not have the options that we want to provide—cleaner, healthier transport options, zero emissions vehicles, public transport, and more opportunities to walk and ride for those that can.

We know that every person that walks, rides and take public transport takes more vehicles off the road, helping us to tackle the congestion on our city streets as we grow. Whilst we are a small city at the moment, we are growing rapidly—500,000 people by 2026, much earlier than expected, and three quarters of a million by around 2060. Congestion will get worse as our population increases, if we continue to rely only on the private motor vehicle to get people around our city.

Other transport options, making those available through initiatives like the low emissions and zero emissions zone commitment, will allow us to provide more opportunities for more sustainable ways to get around the city, with lower transport

costs for consumers. It is not about banning private motor vehicles and it is not about banning the use of petrol or diesel motor vehicles; it is about providing more options to more Canberrans and for them to be able to take up more affordable options to move around our city.

We had this debate in the Assembly just two weeks ago, and the Liberals wanted to have it again. Unfortunately, they are just confirming that they do not support climate action in our city, and they do not support people having more affordable options to move around on public transport, in zero emissions vehicles and by walking and riding. They have no plan for transport in our city. I commend the amendment that I have put forward to the Assembly, which confirms the government's vision, and the action that we are taking to make sure that we have more sustainable ways to move around our growing city.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3.12): When Mr Parton stands up and gives a speech like that, I feel like I am an extra in a mockumentary, because it is hard to take him seriously. Mr Parton's approach to these matters is to take a very narrow view of how people like to get around our city. There is a complete absence of nuance. When he talks in absolutes in the way he does, it is very hard to have a useful or serious policy discussion.

There are plenty of people who choose to walk, cycle and catch public transport to work, school, sport and other activities in our city. This government, both the Greens part of it and the Labor part of it, are working to make sure that our transport network meets the needs of the community and helps to shape the city that we want for the future; that is, a smart, livable, connected and zero emissions city. I have no doubt that cars will continue to play an important role in that city, as will efficient public transport and walking and cycling options.

We all want our city to be an enjoyable and sustainable place to live, with clean air, walkable streets and a transport network that enables us to efficiently move from place to place and get on with the day-to-day things we need to do in our lives. We also want public places that are inviting and people-friendly, and we want our roads to be safe.

Cars are a useful tool that we can use to get around our city; and, like any tool, we can weigh up whether cars are the best fit for the job. Sometimes they will be, and sometimes they will not. As our city grows and changes, we need to adapt and think about what the future of our city will look like.

Mr Parton, in the way he speaks about it, seems to suggest that the car is sacred and anyone who questions the role of the car is threatening our independence and freedom. In fact, it is entirely the opposite. If we want our city to be the best it can be, we need to grow and adapt to a changing world. Keeping things as they are will not lead to a world-class city.

That is why we are looking to the future and implementing the changes that are needed to make sure Canberra is a zero emissions, sustainable city by 2045 at the latest. With over 60 per cent of ACT emissions coming from transport, we do need to change how we get around Canberra—whether that is shifting from an internal

combustion engine to an electric vehicle, or shifting from driving to catching public transport, walking, cycling, or all of the other options that are available to us.

Let us talk about some of the things outlined in Mr Parton's motion and make sure that we are clear on the public record as to what the actual situation is. To guide us on the journey to electrifying the passenger vehicle fleet, we have the ACT Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy set of targets. There are a couple of them. One is that 80 to 90 per cent of new light vehicle sales will be zero emissions by 2030; and the other is to begin phasing out light internal combustion engine vehicles from 2035.

This policy sets a clear direction and provides certainty to our community and the vehicle sector that we are serious about electrifying transport here in the territory. By signalling this intent early, we are giving our community members plenty of time to make the switch, to be prepared and to know what is coming. Twelve years from now, which is 2035, is certainly a long time in the life of most cars.

Alongside these targets, the strategy includes a range of measures to encourage the uptake of zero emissions vehicles. There are actually quite a lot of them in the policy. I will not go through it all now; members can read it online. There are a whole series of initiatives that are designed to make it easy. They include incentives such as two years of free registration, stamp duty exemption on zero emissions vehicles and zero interest loans. It also looks to expand the EV public charging network by delivering 50 new chargers this year and increasing the total network to 180 chargers by 2025, as well as assisting those who live in multi-unit buildings by thinking about how to provide charging infrastructure for them. It seeks to address all of the facets of the transition in a way that makes it easier for our community to work through this transition.

As has been noted in the discussion, it is clear these measures are having an impact, with one in five new vehicles being registered this year being an electric vehicle. This is certainly a dramatic increase on the previous year. I am sure Mr Parton is right, in that it has to do with supply cycles and the like, but it shows that Canberrans are embracing the future.

This is where it comes to the nuance. Mr Parton made a great deal about the price of these vehicles, and there is no doubt that some of them are quite expensive. But I make this point: there are Canberrans out there today who spend \$60,000 to \$80,000 on a petrol vehicle. I repeat: \$60,000 to \$80,000 on a petrol vehicle. If you are spending that much money, why would you not buy an electric vehicle? It is cheaper to run, with better performance and less maintenance.

By contrast, there are some people in this city who will possibly never buy a brand-new vehicle in their life, because they cannot afford it, they choose not to, or for whatever reason. I think we need to be clear about what we are talking about. I would never suggest to someone who is driving around in a second-hand vehicle that they should suddenly dash out and spend 60K to 80K on a car; they are not going to do that. But for the people who are, why wouldn't you?

In that vein, it is worth reflecting on cost of living issues, because car ownership is expensive. I was interested that Mr Parton referred to the recent report by the

Australian Automobile Association. I was somewhat surprised; I may have misheard him, and I am sure he will have the opportunity to correct the record if he wants to when he stands up later. He might have been talking about a different report. I have the AAA report in front of me. Of course, in this day and age, I have it on my iPad, so I can't table it. If any member wants the link, I will personally send them the link, if they need it.

Total transport costs are identified in that report, and they do it by capital city and by regional city. The average for capitals across the nation is \$21,704; then it has each of the capitals. I am pretty sure Mr Parton said Canberra was the most expensive, but when you look at the table, Sydney is the most expensive at \$25,600-or-so a year. Melbourne and Brisbane sit in the \$24,000 range. Canberra is fourth, at \$20,590; and Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Hobart are all \$1,000 or thereabouts less than that.

I do not know where the figure showing Canberra being the highest came from. It is clearly not the case. The report is right here. It makes an important point. The report found that the average Australian household spends around 15 per cent of household income on transport costs, and the vast majority of this is on car ownership. Insurance, service, repairs, fuel, registration and loan repayments all add up to become a substantial line in the household budget.

Many of these costs are not directly visible, and we may not realise just how much owning a car is costing us, but the point is this: the report found that the average Canberra household spends about \$396 per week on transport costs, and 93 per cent of that, or around \$360 a week, is on car ownership and use.

At a time when many households are feeling the pressure of rising costs, it is about making it easier to find alternative ways to get yourself around town, or maybe not needing a second car—just needing one car in your household. These figures underline that a government that seeks to give you alternative transport options is taking real steps to reduce your cost of living. That is the bottom line here.

Mr Parton says that everyone should be able to drive everywhere all the time. That is fine, but there is a cost to that. If we can give you a decent alternative—this is what we are aiming to do—that means you can say, "For some of my trips, I don't need to take the car," and we can cut that cost for you that has a serious impact on cost of living pressures, and that is what our policies are all about.

We know that switching to electric vehicles does not solve all of our transport problems. As our city grows, congestion and air pollution will become more problematic unless we get smarter about how we travel. In many cities, you would not choose to drive your car through the CBD because it is slow, expensive or probably both. Central city areas have high numbers of pedestrians and cyclists, and we can make the best use of space and bring life to our CBD by designing for these modes of transport. This makes our streets safer and more enjoyable places to be. This is the point: we want cities that are human friendly, where you can move about safely and comfortably, without needing to be inside an aluminium shell.

This goes to a point that is picked up in Mr Parton's motion. He made some alarming observations about car-free day events. These events are held all over the world, and

offer an opportunity for the community to experience a pedestrian-friendly environment, rather than one designed to give priority to car travel.

We have talked about wanting to hold an event along these lines. We have talked about this a number of times in this place. I did not catch Mr Parton's interview on radio this morning, but I heard the reactions afterwards. I presume he was basically saying that we are going to try to stop everyone driving to work on some day. I find that pretty insulting, in the sense that we have talked extensively in this place about the government's intent—and it has been in the press as well—which is to put on an event which gives Canberrans the opportunity to explore alternatives.

We want to make it a place where people can come along and learn about things they may not know much about, and they can get information on different ways to travel about. We are not talking about people who live at the top of a large hill in Gordon, Theodore or any of those suburbs—Calwell, and all of those hilly suburbs in the south of Tuggeranong—and stopping them driving. We are not saying, "You can't drive your car on a certain day." I implore Mr Parton to stop suggesting that is the case. There is no need—

Mr Parton: Give us the details of exactly what you are doing.

MR RATTENBURY: I have spelled it out in the press, Mr Parton. It is not my fault if you choose ignorance, because I have explained it plenty of times in this place. The government is going to put on a festival where it invites the community to come and explore these alternatives. We have never—I repeat, never—said that somebody in a hilly suburb in the south of Tuggeranong will be prevented from getting in their car on some day.

Mr Parton: So we could do a Mustang convoy on that day, if we wanted to?

MR RATTENBURY: You can do what you like on that day, Mr Parton, but stop misleading the community about what is actually happening. That sort of sowing of fear is, frankly, unfair to our community.

This goes to one of the points that I will finish on. We also see this suggestion about being anti-car and anti-family. Frankly, it does not reflect well on the author of the motion. There are plenty of families who regularly choose to travel by public transport, walking or cycling and would like to see safer roads, safer bike paths, better lighting and all of the things that make those sorts of active travel better and more convenient.

Certainly, from my knowledge, there are plenty of families who enjoy fresh air that is not polluted and streets that are designed for easy walking and cycling, and where they feel safe from car traffic. Plenty of families use our public transport network to get where they want to go to, and they are keen to switch to an electric vehicle when they can.

I also note that plenty of families are concerned about the number of cars that circulate around their child's school. We have seen moves in other parts of the world where people are looking for efforts to cut the amount of idling that goes on at schools,

because they are aware that young children particularly are vulnerable to the airborne pollutants that come out of those car engines. There are all sorts of discussions by people who have children about how they can make their spaces safer and friendlier for their own families.

I want to finish on a quick note. I was pleased that Mr Barton mentioned the Blade Runners because it reminded me of how disappointed I am by his lack of conviction. This is the man who wants to protect every square metre of asphalt in this city with his heart and soul, yet we have just seen a road close down in Canberra and transition to a pedestrian zone. Scotts Crossing, over in the city, used to be a street; now it is a very nice pedestrian area, with greenery, gardens and public furniture.

Where was Mr Parton when they sought to close down this road? He should have been out there. If he had real conviction about this, he would have been out there gluing himself to the road and saying: “No, don’t close this road down. It’s an outrage. It’s anti-family.” Come on, Mr Parton; try a little harder. There could have been TikTok videos about “Here I am, getting my breakfast ready so I can sustain myself for a whole day of gluing onto the road.”

I am being a little tongue in cheek, but the point is this: this is not a debate of absolutes. This is a debate about how to make our city better. Clearly, the Canberra Centre, in what I think is a private project—because I am pretty sure that the government did not fund it—has said, “It would be better for our customers—the families that come to the Canberra Centre—to make this nice, green space in the city and actually—heaven forbid—close down a road.”

Let us bring a little bit of nuance to this discussion. Let us stop talking in absolutes. Let us have sophisticated policy analysis. Let us stop scaring the bejesus out of people by suggesting they are going to have to hobble down the hill to get to the bus stop. Let us have a sensible discussion about how we make this city better for all of us.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.27): I thank Mr Parton for bringing this motion forth today. It is always interesting sitting here and being lectured by those opposite. We are not anti-EVs. I note that probably half of the people opposite are not anti-EV either. If you look in our car park each morning you will see that probably half the cars are internal combustion engine cars. So people come in here and lecture us and give their virtue signalling, but they have not actually put their money where their mouth is either.

There does appear to be an anti-car agenda from the Labor-Greens government, despite most of them driving to work each day. They want to force Canberrans out of their vehicles and onto a public transport system that just is not up to the job. If we really want people to use public transport, we need a better bus network. In the network 19 changes a while ago, in my electorate of Brindabella, so many bus stops were closed down and bus routes abolished.

If Labor and the Greens really want people to engage in active transport, they would look after our footpaths better and have better lighting. Just last night at Tuggeranong Community Council I heard a report from the Youth Forum, talking about lighting and that young people do not feel safe in the evening.

I fear that there will be a disproportionate impact on people in my electorate of Brindabella from the anti-car agenda. I have already mentioned in the Assembly that Tuggeranong was originally designed with high car ownership in mind. It was in the town planning documents at the time, from the 1960s. To quote Canberra writer Jenny Horsfield's *Voices Beyond the Suburbs: the Soldier Settlers of Tuggeranong*:

The town was to be part of a modernist vision of a young capital, with the valley and its new suburbs connected to the rest of the city by a freeway stretching from south to north. It was a layout based on an ideal of private transport and high car ownership, with citizens commuting to work then returning to their life in pleasant, low-density neighbourhoods. A mid-20th century ideal of living.

This is the way that Tuggeranong was designed. We cannot go back and change it now. The whole design was predicated on this. It is recognised also in the draft district strategy for Tuggeranong, which notes:

The dispersed and suburban street layout of Tuggeranong and wide road corridors mean that enhancing connectivity for active travel can be difficult and that the district is generally more car dependent.

For example, I live in a suburb in Tuggeranong that is probably one of the closest to the city. I am 20 kilometres away from the city. It is 20 kilometres to get here in the morning and 20 kilometres to get home in the evening. Over the past few years I have had some mobility issues. I had my foot in a moon boot for months; I have had two knee replacements. Without a car I would have been a prisoner in my house. All those medical appointments with surgeons, at the hospital, at rehab, going to the pharmacy and going for images, scans and blood tests—how would I have got there? It was hard enough for me to walk around the block because of the uneven footpaths.

An anti-car agenda overwhelmingly impacts residents in outer suburbs, like those in my electorate of Brindabella. I have not even mentioned car parking, which is difficult enough for people. Mr Steel told us that people would save around \$2,000 a year if they switched to an EV, which is great. However, a car loan is going to cost you a lot more than \$2,000 a year. For young people especially, many of these EVs are out of their budget. Young people often have part-time jobs and may still be at school or university. They are buying cars for \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$15,000—second-hand cars. They cannot afford these EVs.

Consider the lifestyle of young families in Tuggeranong. Take, for example, a family in Gilmore with three children, two at primary school and one in child care. One of these people works in the building industry, so they are up very early in the morning to go to work. The other parent gets the kids up and about and gets themselves off to work. Then one comes home a bit earlier and picks up the kids, whilst the other one stays at work a bit longer.

Not only are they trying to get kids to school and child care, and then get themselves to work, but they have after school activities as well. This particular family, on Mondays, has dance classes at Erindale with Kulture Break. Tuesday is soccer training at Wanniasa. Wednesday is dad's footy training at Isabella. On Thursday it is Oztag training at Gordon. On Friday it is swimming lessons in Calwell.

On Saturday there is soccer for one of the girls and Aussie Rules football. The soccer is at Wanniasa; the Aussie Rules football can be anywhere. On Sunday there are AFL games, which can be all over the place. That is not to mention things like grocery shopping, vet visits, kids' birthday parties and family events all over the place. Also, they have to go and pick up the kids when they are sick.

We have seen this before. For many, many families public transport and active travel just does not work. It just does not work. We need to not discriminate against those families. I will give you another example, in Gordon, of two high school aged children. One goes to Canberra College, one to Erindale College. They have netball training a couple of times a week at Calwell and part-time jobs at the Hyperdome. They might be coming home late, these two teenagers, at nine, 10 or 11 o'clock at night. On the weekend they go to netball games, again in Calwell. The buses on the weekend, we know, are a joke. They cannot get from their house to Calwell in any reasonable time for their netball games. Again, that is not to mention groceries, vet visits, family events and medical appointments, and mum and dad getting to work or to the gym. Why are we discriminating against these families? They are usually at a point in their life where they have to pay a mortgage. They are running their cars into the ground until the cars stop working before they buy another car.

They probably want to buy an EV. They probably have an aspiration to buy an EV, but right now is not the time for them. Financially it does not fit within their life. An anti-car agenda overwhelmingly impacts residents in areas like my electorate of Brindabella. It should not be the role of the government to restrict the personal choices of these residents.

Not just for people in Brindabella but generally, I fear that stopping internal combustion or petrol-powered cars coming into the city for some period of time will also have an impact on those people working in our night-time economy. I am talking about people like hospitality and retail workers, and those in the entertainment industry, who, again, are relatively low paid. They are usually working at night. How are they going to get home, especially to my electorate of Brindabella, but elsewhere as well?

We must call this behaviour out. We must stop discriminating against people who are at a point in their life where they just cannot make some of these choices. It is not right. It is not an affordable option for them. Those people who cannot afford a new car at this time should not be discriminated against. We should do what we can, in a cost-of-living crisis that we all talk about, to support those families, not make their lives harder.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (3.37): This has been quite an extraordinary debate. I will not go through the points that have already been made. But I am really, really pleased to see that we are moving forward on a vision for a fully electric city. We are tackling the climate crisis by rolling out real solutions. We are doing it quickly. We are doing it in a really sensible and orderly manner. In a world that needs to cut its global emissions in half in the next seven years, this is exactly the kind of climate action we need to be taking.

We have had some comments about accessibility and inclusion for people who have a disability. This is a really, really important topic. I have heard a lot about these concerns. I have been really honoured to speak to a lot of people with disability, and more people who are advocating for those with a disability, in my committee work, including on the EV inquiry and the inquiry on the recent Planning Bill. It has come up in all of our inquiries.

I am a guardian for a family member who has several disabilities, and I have several other family members with a disability, so I am familiar with this area from a personal context as well. More than one in six Canberrans identify as being someone who has a disability, so we have a lot of people to look after and we need to make sure that our city is working for everyone.

Some of the recent changes we have made to transport in Canberra are moving us towards a more accessible city. This is great news. I recently spoke to a constituent of Mr Parton's. She lives in Tuggeranong and she told me her favourite part of Canberra was Anketell Street. The modern and accessible paths in that area are making it much easier for her to get around. She is someone with a hidden disability; people probably do not realise she has a disability. But she really, really appreciates those better paths.

I do thank Mr Parton for bringing forward a motion on transport. It is a very important topic for us to be talking about. I have been doing a bit of work in this area. I have asked a lot of questions. I have passed a lot of resolutions about buses, light rail, active transport and our path network. It is really important that we improve on all of our transport options here. Improving our path and shared network actually helps everyone. It helps people who walk and ride for active travel. It also helps people who are using a wheelchair, a walking frame or a pram, and it helps people who simply need to take care because of their different life stage or their different ability level.

I did some volunteer work for Pedal Power for a number of years. One of the training exercises we did that helped the ACT government was to practise pushing one another around in prams on different types of verges and different angles of paths. We quickly realised that if you build paths that work well for people in a wheelchair, they actually work well for everyone. They work well for people pushing a pram, they work well for people on a walking frame, they work well for people on a bike and they work well for walking. You just need to build really good infrastructure, and that works for everybody.

When we update our paths to that modern standard, when we maintain them well, when we ensure that we have a city-wide, safe and connected path network with a lot of pedestrian infrastructure, we help everyone get around more easily. When we ensure that our public transport system is 100 per cent Disability Discrimination Act compliant, when our buses run frequently, when we build and extend light rail, we give so many more people a real opportunity to get about our city and to participate in all of the things that some of us take for granted.

A couple of years ago I led a change to our laws to better protect vulnerable road users. I am pleased to see that Minister Steel has extended that work much further since. I began that work really focused on a bad accident that had occurred between

an active road user and someone who was driving a car. But, in actual fact, that vulnerable road user work is really important for everybody. I regularly ride home on the same network as a man who lives in my suburb and is in an electric wheelchair. He is using exactly the same infrastructure I do. We need to protect all of our vulnerable road users in exactly the same way.

There are some people with a disability who will need to drive or just find that driving is their best option. I recently heard from a couple of people who gave evidence to my committees who were in that situation. There are also quite a lot of people with a disability who will find that being driven by somebody else is their best option. There are also some people with a disability who find that public transport or a good network of paths actually gives them better access than any car could to the places they want to go and to the people they want to see. They find that a non-car solution is actually their best option.

Our needs also change over time. I know this from personal family history experience. I also know a lot of people who once drove everywhere and can no longer drive a car. Of those people, the ones who already knew how to catch the bus or already knew how to ride a bike are finding that they have much better access around Canberra. For the ones who ever only drove a car, this a real loss; it is like a grieving process.

We found a survey—in Western Australia, unfortunately, not the ACT; we could not find one locally—of 608 people with a disability in 2012. According to that survey, 45 per cent of the people surveyed never drove a motor vehicle. That is almost half of the people with a disability who never drive a car. It just goes to show that half of the people living with a disability will always drive or sometimes drive and half will never drive. We cannot have a one-size-fits-all transport solution in Canberra. We need to make lots of different transport options that work for lots of different people in lots of different situations.

I want to speak briefly to Mr Parton's comments about parking provision in buildings. I think it is important to clarify some of the information here. Our laws in the ACT already allow you to build an apartment which does not provide private car parking for each dwelling. We have got a lot of dwellings in Canberra already that have private car parking. We have got some dwellings in Canberra that do not have private car parking allocated to each unit.

Most of these will have car parking nearby for people who need it. Some will have provisions for visitor parking. But the important thing is that we should be forcing everyone to pay for a private car park if they do not want one and do not need one. It costs tens of thousands of dollars, up to \$100,000, for a private car space that goes with a new apartment. The housing affordability crisis means it is unconscionable to force an unnecessary extra expense, particularly one so large—tens of thousands of dollars, up to \$100,000—on someone who is already struggling to meet the rent or mortgage repayments.

This is a change in planning law that is responding to a changing situation. It is responding to a growing city that simply will not work the way it did in the past, and it is responding to the climate crisis. But it is also responding to a change in culture. These days not every adult wants to own a car. Those who choose not to drive do not

want to be forced to pay for a private car space that they will not use and cannot afford. I was discussing this the other week with a journalist. I said that quite a lot of people under the age of 30 do not drive or own a car. Quite a lot of them do not even get a licence, and, when they live in an apartment, they do not want to be forced to pay for a car park that they cannot use.

We had to stop our conversation because my adviser was laughing. He is 22 years old. He lives in an apartment. He does not drive. He has an empty car space he has never used and he would much rather have some money back on his rent, instead of having to pay for that empty car space. I think it must have looked to the journalist like we had put together some kind of set piece of drama. We had not. It was just the simple truth. This is what happens when you talk to somebody at a different life stage. You find that they have different needs.

I really do admire Mr Parton's advocacy for Tuggeranong. It is genuine and it is admirable. But I think it is important to make sure that we address the needs of everybody equally. Almost 10 per cent of people down in Greenway do not own a car. That is quite a big chunk who either do not wish to own or cannot afford a car already.

I also want to have a quick check-in about the comments that we are pursuing an anti-car and anti-family agenda. I think my family disagrees with this. I take this one a bit personally. My family does not find the policies we are running out to be anti-family. We find that a little insulting. I have one partner and one daughter. We live in a house. We own a car. It is an EV. We own three bikes and we all have bus passes. That works for us. It will not work for everyone, but that works for us. My daughter rides to school. She has been riding to school since she was at day care. This is the benefit of planning a city so that you have schools and shops quite close to where you live. This is why we do it.

My partner and I take it in turns; sometimes we ride and sometimes we drive. That kind of shared arrangement means we are only running one car. We have only been running one car for two decades. That is an immense saving in our budget. We have heard quite a lot of figures already today about how much a car is costing people. It is costing people, households, up to \$20,000 a year. If you can move from three cars to two cars or from two cars to one car, or if you are one of the people who do not want to own a car at all, that is \$20,000 a year that you save.

To say that building a city entirely geared for cars, in which we do not really support other transport options, is somehow better for people from a cost-of-living basis is simply not true. I am very pleased to see that we are once again discussing transport. I am pleased to see that we are discussing the electrification of the city. I am pleased to see that we are all supportive of active and public transport. I would just like to see a more sensible policy debate in the future.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (3.47): This is an important motion that my colleague Mr Parton has moved, relating to the government's outrageous policies against petrol-powered vehicles and internal combustion engines in particular. As a supporter of the principle of allowing people to take control of their own lives and to enjoy Canberra without unnecessary rules, I cannot accept the government's attitude towards imposing prohibitions on petrol-powered cars in suburbs.

The ACT government is really scraping the bottom of the barrel in social experimentation with this raft of unbelievable proposals. The subject of this motion is a classic example. If the government has its way, these types of cars will not even achieve classic status, unless they are confined to museums, never to grace the streets of Canberra in years to come.

I am appalled to hear that the Labor-Greens government is against the continued use of petrol cars in the ACT, in selected suburbs. This is blatant over-regulation. It is very difficult to reconcile how these principles will provide favourable outcomes for local residents. The negative effects will be felt in both practical and monetary terms. The mind boggles at the likely ramifications of this new policy. Unless residents in planned petrol-car-free zones are being provided a free replacement vehicle by the ACT government, most, if not all, will be severely disadvantaged.

The disadvantage will extend beyond financial issues and will have social impacts. People with a disability could be burdened by extra costs way beyond their capacity to pay. Typically, anyone with a disability earns far less than the national average income. How could they necessarily be expected to buy an EV? Mr Steel mentioned earlier that Toyota Corollas and model 3 Teslas roughly end up costing around the same by the time you purchase the car and add in operating costs.

I am not sure of last time Mr Steel went and looked at the price of cars but a Toyota Corolla ranges from \$28,000 to \$39,000 and a Tesla model 3 starts at \$60,000. It is going to take a lot of years to recoup those operating costs. I am not sure anyone with a disability will be able to afford that, or anyone who is buying their first car or who is on P plates, let alone taking into account the modifications and paying for the engineering changes to that vehicle to suit the person's disability.

It is a kick in the guts. The affected residents will wonder what form of state they live in, while other states are not subject to similar restrictions. They will undoubtedly question why they are being picked on. While I am on this theme, there are areas of concern about the levels of unfairness in this proposal. Will the government's diesel buses still be permitted to enter these zones? I note that the government has plans to move its bus network to electric vehicles by 2040; however, diesel buses will still be in the fleet at the start of these planned petrol-free zones in 2030.

Will parking areas be provided on the zone boundaries for petrol and diesel vehicles, as they will not be permitted to enter? Will appropriate shuttle services be provided for residents who visit and who do not have the approved vehicle types to enter into these zones? How will the process be policed or regulated? On the other side, what will happen for people who have purchased hybrid vehicles? There are people who have purchased hybrid vehicles, taking into account the cost of running a vehicle, and who also may want to move away from internal combustion vehicles. They have invested in hybrid vehicles. Will they be allowed to enter into these zones? Why should residents not be permitted to retain petrol vehicles by choice?

These proposed measures fly in the face of the concept of free enterprise. They significantly impact the notion of choice. They have major implications for a broad range of businesses. We make our choices about our vehicles for a wide range of

reasons. These new measures impose very significant restrictions. They will impose some extra costs on residents living in the affected areas. They also offend the rights of people who are not able to afford to purchase a replacement vehicle.

Businesses involved in the motor trade industries will be affected by the proposed changes. They will require significant warning to prepare for potential loss in trade. I am also concerned that the government will not give enough consideration to addressing economic disruptions to the broad range of businesses involved in the industry. The real burden from anti-car government policies will be felt by both business and families. Are families affected by the proposals expected to switch to public transport as a primary or alternative means of travel? How effective is public transport for families attending sporting and other social events?

Users of petrol cars will be impacted by car-free days and massive restrictions on the availability of parking. Will people be expected to be fully aware of the restrictions? How is it going to be communicated to the public and people visiting the ACT? One can imagine the imposition of travel zones for future residents and workers, where special permits will be required to transition across zones. Will vehicle parking spaces be excluded from new apartments and multistorey apartments? Will residents get safe and convenient access to vehicles for transport and deliveries if pick-ups and drop-offs or loading areas are not available? What solutions will be offered to businesses involved in deliveries or attendance at the homes of clients?

I agree with the calls that the ACT government should cease the social experiment with regard to cars. I agree with the calls for the ACT government to stop pursuing its anti-car, anti-family agenda. Industries and users should be consulted about the proposed mandated policies. The proposals threaten such high degrees of social and financial impact that a massive amount of consultation will be essential.

The release of the proposals will hugely add to the burdens of people in the ACT already suffering from massive cost-of-living pressures. We have had a recent interest rate hike. We all know the cost of living in the ACT is at an extreme high. Now the government wants to put an extra burden on families, who may have to buy an electric vehicle to move around this city! It is an added cost to families that I do not think they deserve right now. I think this is a motion that should be discussed and debated, and I thank Mr Parton for bringing this motion on today.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.55): I thank Mr Parton for the motion, because about 2½ years ago I was elected to this place and it is fair to say that there were a lot of people inside and outside of this place very surprised that the people of Tuggeranong had elected a Greens MLA. The debate today shows exactly why the people of Tuggeranong elected a Greens MLA—because if you want to see not just statements around climate action but a policy agenda that reduces emissions and tackles the climate crisis, you cannot look to the platform of the Canberra Liberals. If you want to see investment in a city-wide mass transit light rail network that gives Canberrans choice about how they get around this city, you cannot look to the Canberra Liberals. If you want to see strong investment in your bike paths and footpaths—not unlike the motion proposed by my colleague, Ms Clay, earlier in the Assembly—you cannot look to the Canberra Liberals.

In fact, it was Ms Lawder who said in her speech, “We can’t go back and change it now,” in reference to the way Tuggeranong was designed. As a member for Tuggeranong—as someone who lives in Tuggeranong and was born and raised in Tuggeranong—I have a greater aspiration for my community than do the Canberra Liberals and the Liberals who represent Tuggeranong. I believe that we can look at things from the past that have not been working for our changing and growing community, and make deliberate choices and investments in a way that makes not just our whole city better, but particularly makes living, educating and working in Tuggeranong even better.

I thought the selective quoting by Ms Lawder of last night’s presentation by the youth committee of the Tuggeranong Community Council was particularly interesting and telling, because I was at the same Tuggeranong Community Council meeting and I heard the youth committee’s presentation, where they made it very clear that the youth of Tuggeranong support light rail, and they support light rail coming to Tuggeranong. I am very pleased to be one of three members in this place that support the people of Tuggeranong having access to light rail.

Mr Parton: When—2070, 2080?

MR DAVIS: I will take that interjection, through you, Madam Speaker. Mr Parton asks, “When is it coming?” It will be coming a helluva lot quicker than if anyone ever lets him sit on the other side of this chamber. I think it is fair enough to remind members that the very first costed city-wide light rail policy presented to the Canberra electorate was presented by the ACT Greens in 2008, and so far, in the intervening time, we have built stage 1, we are building stage 2A, and we have plans for stage 2B.

I find it pretty shocking that, because it cannot be built in six to eight weeks, we have the Canberra Liberals opposing a city-shaping mass transit network. The fact that Mr Parton’s and Ms Lawder’s position to our shared constituency in Tuggeranong right now is that what is good enough for Gungahlin ratepayers is not good enough for my community. “Gungahlin will get light rail, but the people I serve”—Ms Lawder and Mr Parton would say—“will get the buses and they will like it. They will get to use their cars and they will like it.”

I find it staggering that if the ambition of the Canberra Liberals—as a political party and as political candidates—is to win more votes, win more seats and win government, its members could go out into our community and, with a straight face, say that under their government one part of Canberra would get something new, fresh, modern, frequent, safe and reliable; and their own constituents would get jack! I find that cognitive dissonance staggering. I find it staggering particularly because they have young people in our community coming to them and saying that their ambition for their community is light rail; they came to the Tuggeranong Community Council, standing metres away from Ms Lawder yesterday evening and said that their ambition for their community is a city-wide mass transit network that would allow them to get to any part of Canberra safely, frequently, reliably and affordably.

Mr Parton: By 2095?

MR DAVIS: Was Mr Parton listening? No. And that is the whole point, because the Canberra Liberals do not listen, and that inability to listen to new concepts and new

information is personified by Mr Parton. It is in the word, isn't it? They are conservatives. They are conserving their opinion, they are conserving their thought, because they clearly have not listened to Mr Rattenbury's speech today in the Assembly outlining the government's policy on the pathway forward, particularly when it relates to car-free zones. They clearly have not listened to Mr Steel's presentation about the government's policies around public and active transport, and the investments being made in that space. Mr Parton has clearly made a very troubling, sinister political judgement.

Mr Parton: Sinister?

MR DAVIS: A political judgement—a judgement that he can scare enough of our shared constituents about change and progress that it will see him having a safe long-term seat in this place. Well, Mr Parton, if we find ourselves working together in this place over the long term, I look forward to having many more robust debates like this, and I look forward to continuing to see your seat be on this side of the chamber. Because at the last election we saw—

Members interjecting—

MR DAVIS: Yes, and don't the members of the executive know it! At the risk of repeating myself, I just cannot understand how members for Brindabella in this place can have the position that their community deserves less than Gungahlin—that their community does not deserve something that Gungahlin has. I find that staggering. I also find the hyperbole and the dramatization staggering.

Let's return to Mr Parton's original speech and references to an anti-car, anti-family agenda. Let's unpick that. There is only one government in this country that provides interest-free loans through the government to help people go out and buy—wait for it!—brand new cars. It was not a Liberal-National government, and it was not a Labor government. Right here there are interest-free loans to go out and buy new electric vehicles. I am not entirely sure how that fits in with the anti-car agenda. I can guarantee this, though: it is not going to stop Mr Parton from saying it ad nauseam in here and on his TikTok!

In fact, I would like a word count. If I had a dollar for every single time Mr Parton mentioned Ms Clay's name in this chamber, or my name on TikTok, I could pay down the deficit. The Treasurer would think I was a very helpful person, indeed! I am convinced that, in the nightmares of Mr Parton, Ms Clay and I star as cast members. We perform nightly in the nightmares of Mr Parton. Mr Parton, I would strongly encourage you, when you are developing your social media plan—largely by picking from things that I have said on my page, or picking from things that Ms Clay has said on her page—to book a meeting with the youth committee of the Tuggeranong Community Council. Let them explain to you how your future constituents would like to see you back light rail. I am surprised with Mr Parton, an active bike rider—

Mr Parton: How did we end up talking about light rail in this?

MR DAVIS: The Canberra Liberals have just asked me, "How did we end up talking about light rail?" Well, I welcome those in the public gallery to the Chuckle Hut!

It is the midnight lounge and Mr Parton is on the mic. He asks why we are talking about light rail. We are talking about it because he has hitched his entire wagon to not building it—not building something that Canberrans and the people in Tuggeranong, particularly the next generation of young people, want. So, no, I will not support Mr Parton’s motion.

It is always a bit flattering when I cannot hear myself over the interjections of the Canberra Liberals. It suggests that there is a raw nerve, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: You may be encouraging them, Mr Davis, so please stop that, as well.

MR DAVIS: Well, all good comedians like a bit of audience feedback, Madam Speaker. All comedians like to know that their routines get a rousing reception.

I am going to end, in the remaining 25 seconds, on a serious note, because we have had our fun. I am only in this place—to the surprise of the Canberra Liberals, a large part of ACT Labor, and the broader political establishment—because the people of Tuggeranong want strong climate action, active and public transport, and light rail. They want politicians and political parties to articulate a vision for a growing future city, and they do not have that in this opposition.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.05): As confirmed in a 2011 article in the *Journal of Transport Geography*:

Car use is higher among households with children than households without children ...

I feel confident that the majority of Canberrans would agree with this. The reality is that many parents with small children, or several children, find it difficult to perform everyday tasks without access to private transportation. This can include shopping, attending medical appointments, getting to and from school, and even attending social activities or visiting families and friends.

The logical and inescapable conclusion is that policies making it more difficult to own or operate a car disproportionately impact families with children. Ongoing difficulties associated with access to transport are commonly referred to as “transport disadvantage”. A policy paper from the Australian Institute of Family Studies identifies families with young children as one of three key groups who experience transport disadvantage—along with Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities. These families, like some in the suburbs of my electorate of Ginninderra, often live where public transportation is poor.

To give just one example, the Charnwood Group Centre is still not serviced by a rapid bus. It is unfortunate that a shopping centre does not have a rapid bus service, because it places families at a disadvantage in terms of convenient transportation options. This is certainly a serious matter that affects the accessibility and convenience of the shopping centre for families, but the reality is that for many families even adequate public transportation cannot match the day-to-day demands of raising a family,

including the reality of multiple pick-up and drop-off points across the day. And as the AIFS policy paper states, “Parents who have no option but to walk everywhere with young children face mental and physical burnout.” Parents find themselves juggling prams laden with shopping bags and tired little ones.

Cars provide families with a convenient and flexible mode of transportation, especially when travelling with young children or carrying groceries, prams and other necessities. Limiting car usage can make it challenging for families to access essential services such as healthcare facilities, schools or recreational activities. In addition, cars grant families the freedom to explore and travel beyond the limits of public transport networks. The flexibility is particularly valuable during holidays, family outings or visits to relatives who live in areas with limited public transportation. For many families, access to an affordable car is, quite literally, a necessity.

Today I speak on behalf of these families. As they face rising cost-of-living pressures and struggle to cope with the daily demands of life, the government’s obvious anti-car agenda is a slap in their faces. It comes across as the ideological pipedream of politicians who have completely lost touch with what life is like for many families in Canberra. Ironically, in this morning’s *Canberra Times*, Minister Steel accused Canberra Liberals of being out of touch on this matter and noted that last month the highest selling SUV in Australia was an electric vehicle. I looked up the data. The car in question is the Tesla model Y, which currently costs \$68,900 before on-road costs for the base model; \$81,900 for the long-range model.

I would like to remind those opposite of a few things. First, according to the latest census, residents in my electorate of Ginninderra have the lowest average income in the ACT. This is true for personal income, family income and household income. The average family in Belconnen earns nearly 21 per cent less than the average family in Mr Barr’s and Mr Rattenbury’s electorate. The 2021 census also revealed that more than one quarter of rent-paying households in my electorate were in rental stress, spending more than 30 per cent of their combined household income in rent. This is the highest rate across the ACT. Nearly 10 per cent of Ginninderra households with home loans were in mortgage stress, with repayments consuming more than 30 per cent of combined household incomes.

According to the Vital Signs Canberra 2021 report, one third of adults in the territory had limited ability to cope with events such as loss of income or sudden large expenses, such as purchasing a new car. No doubt these figures have all worsened over the past two years. The families in these households, and others that are just scraping above these levels, are not planning to run out and buy a new EV for \$70,000 or \$80,000. They are not.

I am reminded of something Mr Barr said at a Committee for Economic Development in Australia event last year. He said:

It’s pretty clear if you are on a high income, housing affordability is not an issue in Canberra. The issue is if you’re not on a high income.

Well, yes, very high incomes often are safe from bad policy. What is clear is that in this territory Labor and the Greens represent, speak for, govern for and make policies

for the affluent and the privileged—those with incomes so high that they can escape the damaging impacts that such policies inflict on everyone else, including struggling families in my electorate and right across the territory. Mr Steel may well rise today and say that it is pretty clear that if you are on a high income, live in central Canberra and/or have no young children, this government’s anti-car agenda is not an issue—not at all. This is an issue only if you are not on a high income and/or have kids.

Affluent privileged Canberrans are well represented in this Assembly by both ACT Labor and the Greens. In this debate, it is my duty to speak up for everyone else. I stand today to speak on behalf of families who rely on a third-hand car to get the kids to school and mum or dad to work. I speak on behalf of families who, in the future, may be forced by their lower incomes to rent a flat that does not include anywhere to park that third-hand car. I am speaking up for families who, under this Labor-Greens government, will be banned from driving through parts of their own city because they do not have a spare \$75,000, which they do not need for food, rent, school fees, clothing, medical expenses, or for electricity, gas, phone, or water bills. Today, I speak on behalf of Canberrans who have no idea how they will cope as this progressively arrogant, out-of-touch government caters to its elite, well-connected, high-income supporters, with increasingly extreme policies.

Mr Parton’s motion rightly calls on the government to stop pursuing its anti-car, anti-family, agenda. I found Mr Rattenbury’s earlier remarks appalling. This is the Attorney-General encouraging an elected official to commit an offence and obstruct traffic by chaining himself to the road! This is disgraceful, and I call on him to apologise to Mr Parton.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.14): I am speaking to Mr Steel’s amendment, but I am also extremely mindful that Ms Orr has a matter on the notice paper which a number of people are waiting for. My apologies for holding you up on getting to that, but I would like to move the amendment circulated in my name to Mr Steel’s amendment.

I move an amendment to Mr Steel’s amendment:

Add new paragraph (4):

“(4) calls on the ACT Government to rule out the establishment of any petrol-powered car-free zone in Canberra in the next decade.”.

I promise that I will be brief. It is no surprise that Mr Steel wants to instantly claim that sticking up for families in the suburbs is somehow climate-change-denialist. It is just not. People in the suburbs of my electorate are extremely mindful of climate change, as are we, but at the end of the day their biggest focus is getting through the day, getting through the week, getting through the year. People are petrified about potential petrol-powered-car-free zones being instituted by this government. Members have the ability to allay those fears right here, right now. Mr Rattenbury is the number one star of the virtue-signalling mockumentary known as *Canberra Greenspeak*—and it is an absolutely hilarious comedy!

I just have to briefly mention that I was doorknocking in the Lanyon Valley recently and I came across a bloke in his 50s washing his Ford Ranger on the front yard.

He had heard that this was the only place in Australia where it would be illegal for him to register a new Ford Ranger by a certain date. I confirmed that that was the case. He wanted to know if there would be a car-free day in spring. I said that, yes, there was. But despite the protestations from Mr Rattenbury, it is still not absolutely clear what will be involved. “How am I supposed to get around?” he said. I said, “Look, e-scooters have come to Tuggeranong, and there are buses and the tram,” and he looked at me as if I was from another planet. But he knows that Mr Rattenbury and Ms Clay are from another planet. It is not the same planet that I live on; it is not the same planet that most suburban Canberrans live on. So, that is all I have; I will keep it moving because I know there is more to come.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.16): I, too, will keep my comments brief in what has been quite a lively debate, because, as Mr Parton said, there are quite a few people here waiting for the next item of business. I must say that when I saw Mr Parton’s motion on the notice paper this week I scratched my head and said, “Why are we back here?” We have just had this debate. We have had a lot of discussion about how the government is not banning diesel cars. The government is not banning fossil fuel cars from any part of Canberra.

The minister has come out in the weeks since Mr Parton’s first effort to raise everyone’s fears and to scaremonger around this, and the minister has said that it is just not going to happen. It is not going to happen.

Ms Lawder: Point of order, Madam Speaker. Is “scaremongering” parliamentary?

MADAM SPEAKER: I am letting it stay. I know that it has been ruled out of order in 2004. There are a whole lot of other words that have been ruled out of order that have been allowed to flow in this place. As I have reminded people, it is about the context of it. It is borderline—I will give you that—but I am letting it be at the moment, Ms Lawder. I just encourage everybody not to go into the realm of borderline. It is better to be a bit cleaner.

MS ORR: I appreciate that Mr Parton has a particular position that could be seen as a little bit alarmist and perhaps is not particularly helpful to what is quite a serious debate.

I note that Mrs Kikkert, in her comments just referenced the *Transport Geography Journal*, which is one of my favourites. So, Mrs Kikkert, if ever you are sitting down reading the latest edition, you know where my office is. I am happy to swap notes on it, because it is quite a fantastic journal which has a lot of leading information, insight and knowledge about how we can better respond to the transport task in our city.

What really took me with Mrs Kikkert’s comments was that she had one very short sentence, which basically was about people with cars who can do all this stuff. Often, though, you will find that articles are talking about “transport disadvantage” because the only option that people have is a car. And it is a well-known and held view amongst transport planners, of which I am one, that there needs to be a diversity within our transport options in order for people to have equity. We see the most disadvantage occurring in those places where people live further away from the centres of cities—from the areas that Mrs Kikkert actually outlined.

Mrs Kikkert: Where is West Belconnen?

MS ORR: So, West Belconnen is—

Mrs Kikkert: It is a bit further away from the city.

MS ORR: Mate, I have lived in Belconnen longer than you.

Mrs Kikkert: They do not even have a Rapid bus going to Charnwood—

MADAM SPEAKER: There should be no interjections, Mrs Kikkert. Please come to the point, Ms Orr.

MS ORR: Okay. I am sorry; I do tend to digress when we start talking about transport planning. I could sit here for a few hours, but I will not. Needless to say, transport disadvantage usually occurs in areas that are further away from central city districts, because people only have access to a car. And we know that when they only have access to a car, they need to have finances, they need to have a licence, and they need to be a of a certain age. The complexity of the trips becomes much higher, and some of the people who are most disadvantaged by this are women, because the caring burden still falls to women.

Just the other week I heard a presentation on a project that basically had proven that men have very simple transport tasks. They go to and from work each day. That is because the women are still doing all the caring. They are the ones running around looking after the kids. They are the ones making sure that everyone gets everything picked up. They are the ones picking up the groceries on the way home. This study was fascinating in how that worked.

So, I put it to everyone that it is very complex how we plan for transport within our city. The more options we have, the more variety we have within our transport tasks, the better off we are going to be in meeting those needs. Mr Parton has many times spoken about car-free zones and banning stuff. I have rebutted this on many occasions—and I will do so again now in this chamber. The C40 sign-up has very few cities that have put in a car-exclusionary zone. There are even fewer that have done that in city centres, which is what Mr Parton wants to go out and say that we are going to do.

There are a range of examples where cities have taken very different approaches to how they implement a range of transport options across our city for everyone in an inclusive way. Paris, for example, put in school streets, which is where they reduced car access around schools so kids could walk and cycle those short journeys from their houses to their schools. Copenhagen is currently having a look at how they can do a child-friendly area, because we know when you remove cars it is much safer for kids.

We have had a lot of other examples. There is an example in in Europe—in the Netherlands—where they have put in a freight hub which has gone emissions-free, and they are looking at how they can better get people to the freight hub. It is not a

city centre; it is an industrial park on the edge of the city. There is a lot of diversity within this program, and there is a lot of knowledge that has been generated and is world-leading in how to start to respond to these needs.

This brings me to a comment Mr Parton made, and the only sensible comment I have heard from Mr Parton in this debate. It is the only one that can have a sensible answer. Mr Parton said, “If this is going to happen, why wouldn’t we just let it happen?” I do not think that is the sensible part; the sensible part is about being prepared. Maybe that is because I was a Girl Guide and that was drummed through me my whole life, but if we know this is coming, why don’t we sit down and come up with the ways to make this work best for us?

That is exactly what this motion is about. This is exactly what the C40 motion is about, and this is exactly what the minister has been doing and what Labor has been doing, with the support of the Greens, for a very long time in making sure our city adapts to its future needs in a way that meets everybody’s requirements.

In closing, I note Mr Parton’s amendment. I do not quite agree with it, because I think there is a very serious conversation we have to have here that does not go purely to trying to run one particular line for political convenience. I move the amendment circulated in my name—an amendment to Mr Parton’s amendment to Mr Steel’s amendment:

Omit paragraph (4), substitute:

“(4) notes Mr Parton’s scaremongering and not let it distract from providing mature and sensible transport options for all Canberrans.”.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.23): While I am speaking to the amendment, Madam Speaker, you might want to look at standing order 55; I will seek some advice later as to whether the amendment is imputing improper motives on the part of Mr Parton—that is, scaremongering.

Going to the substantive element, Ms Orr is saying that there are different ways that C40 Green and Healthy Streets can be rolled out. She is saying that there could be a freight hub; there could be this and there could be that. There could be—because it has happened in other places—the establishment of zones where you cannot have petrol-powered cars. Mr Parton is saying, “Okay, fair enough. There are lots of ways to do this. Rule that out. Rule out that it won’t be the option you choose. You’re saying it could be some other thing.”

This is the second chance to rule out that that will be the path that you choose. If you are not prepared to rule it out, I think it is a bit rich to accuse Mr Parton of scaremongering, because we on this side are saying, quite clearly, that there are many ways that you could introduce C40 Green and Healthy Streets. We are saying: as your pathway forward, rule out petrol car-free zones. You are refusing to do that, and that is the second time you have done that.

I think it is reasonable for a normal, reasonable person to conclude that, if you are failing to rule it out—

Mr Parton: Twice.

MR HANSON: Twice—you are obviously considering it; otherwise you would rule it out. We are giving you the opportunity to rule it out; otherwise it is reasonable for anyone to conclude that that is in the mix and that is what you are planning. Again, I suggest that you take the opportunity to withdraw your amendment or not vote for your amendment so that you can rule out something that otherwise is clear—you are essentially voting that you want to do that.

Madam Speaker, if I can raise a point of order, it is a bit vague as to whether scaremongering is in or out, but is this an imputation of improper motive? What Mr Parton is saying is pretty reasonable, in that they are failing to rule it out; therefore it is in the mix. That is hardly scaremongering, Madam Speaker. The standing order states that “all imputations of improper motives and all personal reflections on members shall be considered highly disorderly”. I would suggest that her amendment is out of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: I am ruling it in order; but, as I have said, it is borderline. I would encourage all members in amendments, motions and general commentary in this place to be more mindful and respectful of how things are considered and spoken. It is in order, Mr Hanson.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (4.26): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the chance to speak on this today. We should be celebrating the take-up of electric vehicles in the ACT and across the country. The innovation in this space is remarkable, and I am excited about the future world that our young people will take charge of after we have finished here.

Who knew that we would ever have a plug-in hybrid electric fire truck? That is remarkable. It is incredible. It was never in my imagination as a young person that this would even—

Opposition members interjecting—

MS BERRY: Madam Speaker, I think this is a pretty important discussion.

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, please contain your comments.

MS BERRY: As I said, in my imagination as a young person, I would never have thought that this would have been possible.

Having listened to everybody’s comments today on the motion and on the various amendments, I note that it is also true that not everyone can afford a second-hand vehicle, let alone a new one at the moment. That is a fact. It is something that we all agree on. Nobody is asking or forcing them to buy one or to get a second-hand one. But I, for one, cannot wait for the time to come when they become more affordable for everyone, regardless of their background or their income, so that they have a

chance to own an EV or a second-hand EV. It will make our world a better place, and it will make affordability something that can really be addressed for low income people.

I also understand that there is a way to go before we achieve that, but a lot can happen in 12 years, and I bring us back to the plug-in fire truck, which, as I said, is quite remarkable. Nor is everybody saying that we should ride a bus, walk or scoot to get around this city. That will not work for many people; I think we all acknowledge that. That has been identified in the speeches that everybody has made today. Nobody should be made to feel guilty or fearful or made to feel that they are doing something wrong because that is something that they cannot do, it is not ready for them or it is not an option that they might ever have.

At the end of all of this, surely, the thing that we can all agree on is that we want to leave this planet in a better and healthier place for our kids and their kids. I think that is agreed by everybody. Moving to electric vehicles and a more sustainable community will help us to achieve that goal, and scaremongering in this place does not help any of us.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, you have ruled that it is not out of order, but you have asked members not to go near it, and the minister is blatantly ignoring your guidance, because it was not a ruling.

MADAM SPEAKER: I would ask everyone to be polite in the chamber as we get to the end of a very long day. Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Thank you, Madam Speaker; I think I have been most polite today. Reflecting on the amendment that Ms Orr has moved, I will not speak to the wording of the amendment, on your direction, Madam Speaker, but I agree with the amendment. I do not think it helps anybody to go down that path, when I think we all have a united approach or agreement here that we want to leave this place a much better and healthier place than it was when we got here.

Question put:

That **Ms Orr's** amendment to **Mr Parton's** amendment to **Mr Steel's** amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Noes 6

Ms Berry

Mr Braddock

Ms Burch

Ms Cheyne

Ms Clay

Ms Davidson

Mr Davis

Ms Orr

Dr Paterson

Mr Rattenbury

Mr Steel

Ms Stephen-Smith

Ms Vassarotti

Mr Cain

Ms Castley

Mrs Kikkert

Ms Lawder

Mr Milligan

Mr Parton

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr Parton's amendment, as amended, to **Mr Steel's** amendment agreed to.

Mr Steel's amendment, as amended, agreed to.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.35): I want very briefly to go on the record and say that this was the second opportunity that this government had to rule out the establishment of a petrol-powered-car-free zone in Canberra, and they have chosen not to put it to bed; they have chosen not to rule it out. It was a very clear opportunity for them to do it. They have indicated they are not doing it, but they had the ability to rule it out, in the form of these amendments, and they have chosen not to do it. I think that is extremely telling.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022

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

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.36): It is a pleasure to rise today to speak in support of the Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022. Firstly, I would like to thank Ms Orr for all the work she and her team have done on this issue and for bringing forth this legislation today.

This bill aims to reduce and prevent period poverty in the ACT by providing period products at suitable places such as schools, libraries and other community facilities; by providing information on menstruation and menstrual hygiene; and by improving access to toilet facilities.

In 2021, a report commissioned by Share the Dignity, entitled *Period pride report: Bloody Big Survey findings*, examined the prevalence of period poverty within Australia.

Period poverty is a lack of access to menstrual products, education, hygiene facilities, waste management or a combination of these. The Bloody Big Survey found that more than one in five Australians are using toilet paper, socks or other unsuitable alternatives to manage their periods because they cannot afford menstrual products.

Period poverty is just one issue with the social stigma and the negative physical impacts periods can have impacting people's day to day lives. Of the 125,000 respondents, 48 per cent at least sometimes missed class due to their periods, 40 per cent at least sometimes called in sick to work due to their periods and 51 per cent at least sometimes missed out on socialising with their friends because of their periods.

Period poverty is an incredibly complex issue, which the stigma associated with periods only worsens. This legislation today aims to reduce period poverty within our community, and the Canberra Liberals are pleased to support this bill today.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.38): I rise today to speak in support of Ms Orr's period products bill and commend her for all the work that she has done to get this bill into the Assembly, including extensive consultation processes. It is just very cool today that this is happening. I know that this will impact many people across the ACT and further our mission for a more gender equal world.

We know that women's health is something that has, for a long time, been given very little attention. A 2021 Australia Talks National Survey found that one in three women feel their health concerns have been dismissed by their health professional. The survey also found that women were twice as likely as men to feel dismissed by their doctor, and there is a clear need for more to be done to support women and women's health matters.

Caroline Criado Perez's 2019 book *Invisible women: Exposing data bias in a world designed for men* highlights that the way we research and collect data is typically based on white cis men's experiences, not women's and—even more rarely—intersecting identities. One of the main reasons we need to address the gender data gap is to translate the data into policy outcomes.

One of many organisations who have seen this gap and aim to address it is Share the Dignity, who conducted the Bloody Big Survey in 2021. The survey asked people all over Australia about their experiences of periods—from access to products, to stigma, to levels of pain. The survey resulted in the Period Pride Report, which contains invaluable insights into the lives of women and gender-diverse people when it comes to the impact of their periods and period poverty.

According to the report, period poverty needs urgent attention and disproportionately impacts those who are unemployed, university and TAFE students, homeless people, women displaced due to domestic violence, refugees, people living with a disability and parts of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Forty per cent of survey participants had changed to a less suitable period product due to cost, with many people also reporting not being able to afford products at all. The report found that, in the ACT, 15 per cent of respondents had been unable to afford period products at some point in their life. We are a very high socioeconomic community in the ACT, so the fact that 15 per cent of people have been unable to afford period products at some point in their life, I think, is quite extraordinary.

We know that the ongoing cost-of-living impacts are making this more and more significant. Those numbers are increasing. We have just recently gone through the cost-of-living inquiry, where community pantries came to talk to us about the fact that period products are one of the main items that they are struggling to get enough of and to keep up.

A recent YouGov survey commissioned by Plan International Australia surveyed more than 500 Australians aged between 18 and 42 who menstruate. The survey found that 57 per cent of respondents were finding it more difficult to buy period products such as tampons and sanitary pads. The research also found that teens and those in their early 20s were most affected by the ability to afford products, menstrual pain management medication and treatment.

More than one in four respondents in their early 20s or younger said that they are currently experiencing difficulties in paying for period products and period pain management. The result of not being able to afford period products can be detrimental to women's health and can include missing school, work, sport and social events and contributes to the shame and stigma associated with periods.

The recent survey also revealed that period poverty negatively affects mental health. Research has found that stigma prevents women from seeking health care for menstrual-related pain. Since the topic of periods is often avoided in conversations altogether, there is a lack of understanding when menstrual symptoms require medical attention.

By bringing this bill to the Legislative Assembly and discussing periods in this place, we are a part of reducing the stigma associated with periods. It is important that everyone in the ACT knows that periods are not something to be ashamed of but are a normal part of life and that products should be easily accessible to all.

It is worth noting that there is only one male member currently present in the chamber which, I think, is problematic when we are trying to progress this conversation. Men in our community have women in their lives who menstruate. Welcome, Mr Parton—male member No 2. I think this is a conversation for everyone. We all need to be part of reducing the stigma. That means bringing men along and having men as part of the conversation and advocates for the women in their lives.

A couple of weeks ago I had the privilege of joining the Royals rugby team, who are playing their part in reducing period stigma. I felt very proud to attend the Royals rugby game, where they launched their free period products initiative. They are actively reducing stigma by raising awareness of period poverty, and providing free products in changerooms is something that should be commended. So go Royals!

The Bloody Big Survey report indicated that initiatives like the one that the Royals have taken leads to younger generations feeling less shame and stigma around periods. By legally ensuring that access to period products are available not only in schools but across the ACT to those who are experiencing period poverty, this bill will go a long way in reducing stigma and access.

I have two daughters and feel very proud to support this bill and to continue to take steps in our laws and in our community to see that my daughters and other young women are growing up in a different world where, I hope, the shame and stigma around periods is greatly reduced.

I am proud that we are the first jurisdiction to legislate this access. I again congratulate Ms Orr on her work and thank all the organisations and advocates who are here today and who have advocated for this for many years. May we continue to address the stigma and pave the path towards a more equitable future.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (4.45): The elimination of period poverty is such an important goal, and the Greens are really, really happy to support this bill and the amendments. We are very, very grateful to you, Ms Orr, for bringing this forward and

for doing the work with the stakeholders, and for working on this bill and developing it to the point where it is today.

The cost of living is really high. We heard this recently in the cost-of-living inquiry. We already knew it but it was stark to hear so many specific examples from so many people, many of whom are experiencing pressures they have never experienced before. People are struggling.

The costs associated with managing an entirely ordinary bodily function are disproportionately high for vulnerable people. Share the Dignity reports that people are often forced to choose between buying food to eat or buying period products to get through the month. It is not okay; it is not something we should accept as a society.

I am really pleased to see that this bill will enable the ACT government to reduce and prevent period poverty by providing free access to period products, by improving access to facilities and by providing information about menstruation and menstrual hygiene.

I am also very pleased to see that the bill explicitly gives examples of sustainable period products. Reusable period products like menstrual cups and period underwear are really fantastic options. They are also normal options. Historically, washable cloths were how our ancestors dealt with their periods. Modern reusable period products have really taken the old ideas, and they have reinvented them and improved them to make them much more comfortable and to make them last much longer.

The modern washable pads and period underwear are made with wicking fabric that sits next to the vulva, so that you feel dry and comfortable. They use really super absorbent fibres like bamboo and hemp, which are much more absorbent than cotton.

These products were rare or completely unknown when I was a kid. I had never heard of them. I did not know anyone who used them. I had never even thought about them. I have got one now and it works really well, but it was a completely foreign concept to me when I got my first period.

They are now becoming increasingly popular with girls and young women today. They are often found by mums who use cloth nappies and then become curious about other ways they can use these sorts of products. Our Standing Committee for the Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity, chaired by my colleague Dr Paterson, recently heard this exact story during one of our hearings.

It is still a relatively small group who have tried out these products. So I am really, really pleased to see that that option is also included in this bill. It means that more people will hear about them and more people will have that chance to choose them if it suits them.

Menstrual cups and discs are more like tampons. They are used internally. They do not absorb menstrual blood but they can be emptied and used over and over again, unlike tampons. A little slip-in cup might be all you need to manage your period for an entire decade.

The upfront cost for these products is higher than for disposables but, like a lot of sustainability upgrades, the long-term savings are immense. Cups cost around \$40. Period undies cost around \$15 to \$25 per pair. But, because these products can last for up to 10 years, the cost per use is much, much smaller.

If you take the lifetime of use into account, a disposable product costs six times more than a reusable. A menstrual cup might cost nine cents per use over its lifetime compared to 50 cents for a tampon. That is just on average. For people who bleed heavier and for people who have shorter cycles, the savings are even higher.

By including these products in the bill, it really helps us reduce period poverty over the long term, not just the short term, and it will help reduce the cost more effectively than by only offering disposables. It is also more sustainable in terms of waste. It will help us cut carbon emissions and it just is another choice.

This choice will not suit everyone. Not every woman or girl will want to use a reusable product. Not every woman or girl will have access to the facilities they need to wash them. Not every woman or girl will find that convenient. But it is great to offer it as another choice.

Like my colleagues, I am really pleased that we are also talking about menstruation more than we did and that we are taking tangible steps to destigmatise it. It is really, really important to do this to help people bleed in dignity.

I am really thrilled when we see media reports demonstrating public figures destigmatising periods. Last week there was an article about British triathlete Emma Pallant-Browne, and she was championing the realities of having your period as a female, a woman, in elite sport. She received some online criticism because one of her race outfits had a spot of blood. She was competing in the Professional Triathletes Organization European Open in Ibiza—and there was a spot of blood. That was what people chose to comment on, not on what she was doing, not on how amazingly she performed and not on how hard it was, but on the spot of blood on her uniform. Good grief; are we still making a fuss about this kind of thing?

I remember when I was a kid—it is a long time ago—that my friends and I were mortified that there might be a spot of blood on our uniform. Why did we worry so much? I grew up in the 1980s. We watched Bruce Willis covered in blood and we watched Arnold Schwarzenegger covered in blood, and yet one drop of blood on our school uniforms would be social collapse for all of us. It makes me really sad that women and girls might still feel that way. We need to make sure that they do not, and we need to call out that nonsense for what it is.

So I love to see it when media demonstrates that leaking during a race is not a big deal. It is really, really important that we have media destigmatising and that we do not put all the pressure on girls and vulnerable women themselves to do this work. It is not entirely up to them.

One of the great things that has come out of the scrutiny stage of the inquiry on this bill is the importance of providing period products for people in ways that uphold the principles of dignity and that allow people to make their own choices and to manage themselves with dignity.

I am also really pleased to see that these rights are being extended to students at school. I think that is really, really important. That is a very, very difficult time for kids to manage their periods and they are feeling very vulnerable. My daughter is only in primary school. We are not up to this yet, but a lot of my friends' kids are in high school, and we are all going through this phase.

I have heard a few uncomfortable reports about when girls need to go to the bathroom and they are sometimes not given permission. It is really important that we make sure we normalise this and we allow children and girls and women and everybody to have access to manage their own bodies in the way that they need to. I am really hoping that this conversation might open that up and make sure that women and girls are allowed to go to the bathroom when they need to.

I would like to thank Ms Orr for bringing this bill forward. The Greens are very happy to support this.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (4.52): I am happy to rise today to support this bill. I want to begin by thanking ACT Labor member Suzanne Orr MLA for her continued commitment to addressing period poverty and stigma regarding menstruation and other reproductive health issues. An immense amount of work has gone into the development of this bill by Ms Orr and her office, and I commend them for their work.

Period poverty has a detrimental impact on access to education and work for those who experience it. By making products free and accessible, we are one step closer to equality. We have seen from the implementation of similar schemes in other jurisdictions, as well as a pilot at Canberra High School, that the provision of free period products helps remove barriers in education and job participation. Access to period products across the ACT will help to reduce the stigma and shame that many people who menstruate feel.

I would like to share an example of how this legislation can make a difference in our community. In 2020, a group of Canberra High School students pitched an idea at my student congress to provide free period products at their school. The students ran the Making Periods Normal trial in 2021 and 2022, providing period products alongside information about periods. The students then prepared an evaluation report, which they presented to me.

I would like to acknowledge the students who are in the chamber today and congratulate them on the work that they did. I am enormously proud of these young people. I would also like to acknowledge the Youth Advisory Council members and their work during Youth Week in developing hygiene packs for people who need them.

The trial demonstrated the potential for universal access to period products to increase student attendance and reduce the stigma associated with menstruation. Before the pilot, about a third of students who menstruate had missed out on at least one day of

school in the preceding 12 months because they were unable to access period products. In their evaluation, the students found that the pilot reduced that number of students to three per cent.

Prior to the pilot, a quarter of students were comfortable talking about their periods, and this doubled at the end of the trial. We should not be afraid to openly discuss reproductive health and menstruation. If we refuse to have these conversations and treat menstruation as something to be ashamed of, we create an environment where people will be afraid to seek advice or support or address related health issues. A large proportion of the community are still embarrassed to talk about periods, let alone the needs of people who have their period, despite it being a perfectly normal bodily function. This bill will reduce the stigma of menstruation, start healthy dialogue in our community and make the ACT a more inclusive place for everyone.

We know that addressing period poverty must be done with dignity at the forefront. I welcome and support Ms Orr's amendments, which introduce principles of dignity to this bill. Paramount to dignity is privacy and recognition that there are factors that can result in or exacerbate period poverty. Further to Ms Orr's amendments, I will move minor amendments to the bill that will give effect to the removal of clause 17 of the bill in order to avoid duplication of existing processes.

This government has a proud history of advancing gender equality and making the territory a fairer place. This bill will bring about initiatives that will support thousands of people in the ACT. I enthusiastically offer my support for the bill.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.56), in reply: I will respond briefly to the in-principle debate, noting that we are going to move on to the detail stage. I note, in reference to Dr Paterson's comments about not having too many men present, I feel obliged to put on the record that Mr Davis told me he wanted to stay, but, because the other debate went on for so long, he had to leave, so we will give him a free pass on that one. Also, in response to scrutiny remarks on the original bill, I seek leave to table the revised explanatory statement for the bill.

Leave granted.

MS ORR: I table:

A revised explanatory statement to the Bill.

We will work through the detail stage, but I have some closing remarks that I will make when we get to the question of the title.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Clauses 1 to 5, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Proposed new clause 5A.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.58): I move amendment No 1 circulated in my name [*see schedule 2 at page 1795*], which inserts the new clause 5A; and I table a supplementary explanatory statement.

This is a new clause. It requires that, in exercising a function under the bill's principles, recognising the many reasons period poverty is experienced is taken into account. This clause further recognises that not every person who menstruates identifies as a woman. It is important to make this acknowledgement, as the needs of people who menstruate extend beyond binary gender norms and practices. To meet the objectives of the bill, measures will need to respond to all people who menstruate. The clause also requires that a person accessing the products under the bill is entitled to privacy. This amendment has been made following feedback during the committee inquiry process.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Proposed new clause 5A agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 14, by leave, taken together.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.59), by leave: I move amendments Nos 2 to 9 circulated in my name, together [*see schedule 2 at page 1795*]. These are all minor, technical and consequential changes.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 14, as amended, agreed to.

Proposed new division 2.3.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.00): I move amendment No 10 circulated in my name [*see schedule 2 at page 1795*], which inserts a new division 2.3.

This is a really important amendment to the bill. This is a new clause and defines the meaning of a hospital for the purposes of this division, and also that we will have specific arrangements for our hospitals under the bill, with period products and facilities made accessible in our hospital system.

This is a really important addition and something that we heard a lot of feedback about through the consultation—that hospitals are places where we need to access products. People were having a lot of difficulty in knowing that they could access the products. Noting that there is availability at our hospitals now for people who need them, by including this in the bill we will make the arrangements far more consistent and give people confidence that they will be able to access them. If you are in a medical crisis, the last thing you think to do is grab your pads as you head off to the hospital. This is a really important one. Due to the unique nature of the hospital, we have defined it under the bill, just to make sure that it does count as a designated place.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for

Health) (5.02): I rise to speak briefly on this amendment in particular. I did not speak in the in-principal stage. I want to take the opportunity to congratulate members of the ACT Labor Party and the wider community, particularly Pradeep Sornaraj, who raised this issue with Ms Orr and worked with her to raise awareness, not just of the bill itself but of the wider issue of period poverty and the need to reduce the stigma currently associated with menstruation.

I also join with Minister Berry in thanking and congratulating the students and young people who have led this conversation in their schools and communities. The world is changing from when Ms Clay, Ms Berry and I were all teenagers, when it was indeed a very different place and the products available to people who are menstruating were very different. In particular, I thank Ms Orr for bringing this important issue before the Assembly.

As the bill was being drafted, it was initially our assumption that requirements for guaranteeing access would not be needed in our hospitals because, surely in a hospital or a health facility, a range of period products would be available—right? You would expect that to be the case. But, as it happened, I received correspondence from someone who had experienced quite the contrary at Canberra Hospital, of all places. In consultation with Ms Orr, she indicated that she was also receiving feedback from the community that it was not always the case that people were able to access period products when they were in a hospital or a health facility.

We pretty quickly sought to address the issue in an administrative way within our public hospitals, as Ms Orr has indicated, but we thought it was really important to make this amendment to the bill to ensure that this would not happen again and that not only would our public hospital facilities be covered by our administrative arrangements but people who were accessing health facilities would know that, if they required period products while they were there, they would be available to them.

I want to put on record my thanks to Ms Orr and her office for working with my office throughout the drafting of this amendment. I commend it to the Assembly.

Amendment agreed to.

Proposed new division 2.3 agreed to.

Clause 15 agreed to.

Clause 16.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.05): I move amendment No 11 circulated in my name [*see schedule 2 at page 1795*]. This is a minor and technical consequential change to reflect the additional clause 5A.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (5.06): I will be opposing this clause. As per the amendment circulated in my name, the government has taken the position to remove this clause from the bill. While the government supports the inclusion of an explicit requirement for public employees and territory funded workers having access to adequate workplace facilities, we consider that there are already sufficient avenues and mechanisms for public employees to raise concerns regarding any lack of access with their directorate or agency.

Rather than duplicate or create new channels for raising such concerns, the government is moving to remove clause 17. This leads to the need for a consequential amendment to remove clause 20, subclause 2. By ensuring that clause 16 and clause 19 remain in the bill, we have made sure that those in territory funded work that is covered by the Secure Local Jobs Code will be covered by the provisions in the bill. My colleague Minister Gentleman will approach the Secure Local Jobs Code Advisory Council once this bill becomes law and will work with them on the best way to ensure that this can be enforced through the code.

The amendments that I move are slightly different to those that were provided to the Legislative Assembly Scrutiny Committee, but they are simply reduced in scope from the original amendments.

Clause 17 negatived.

Clauses 18 and 19, by leave, taken together.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.08), by leave: I move amendments Nos 13 and 14 circulated in my name, together [*see schedule 2 at page 1795*]. These are small tidy-ups to the information provided under the bill and are based on feedback that we received during the consultation and committee inquiry process, just to make sure that the information is fit for purpose and is meeting the needs of as many people as we can.

Amendments agreed to.

Clauses 18 and 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 20.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (5.09), by leave: I move amendment No 2 circulated in my name [*see schedule 3 at page 1800*]. As noted in my previous comments about clause 17, this is the amendment to remove clause 20(2) of the bill. This is a consequential amendment, due to the removal of clause 17 from the bill, and is minor and technical in nature. I present a supplementary explanatory statement to the government amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 20, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 21 and 22, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Dictionary.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.11), by leave: I move amendments Nos 16 to 18 circulated in my name, together [*see schedule 2 at page 1795*]. These are consequential changes that add the definition of “hospital premises” and “principles of dignity” to the dictionary of the bill.

Amendments agreed to.

Dictionary, as amended, agreed to.

Title.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.12): I rise, in closing, to make some final remarks on what has been quite a long journey. This chamber has heard a great deal from me about period products and facilities in this access bill over the past two years. I must say, today I am thrilled to finally be making some closing remarks before this bill is hopefully passed by this place and codified into ACT law. Bills like this do not happen in isolation and there are several people that I wish to acknowledge.

Thank you so much to Pradeep Sornaraj for first approaching me with the idea to do something to assist folks from our community to achieve better access to period products and educative resources. It is a little bit telling that it was actually a male who first brought this topic to my attention, as his local member. My response to him was, “But you are a man. Why are you talking about this?” It is fair to say that we have both gone on a journey and realised that it is everyone’s responsibility to support women. Thank you very much, Pradeep. I look forward to continuing to work with you in every way we can to make everyone’s lives a little bit better and more inclusive.

I also wish to thank Rochelle Courtenay and the team at Share the Dignity, whose campaigning has paved the way to addressing period poverty in Australia. Their research, their feedback, their support and their guidance throughout this process has been critical to the bill’s development. I would like to particularly acknowledge Rochelle, who has driven this issue for so long. Anyone who has had the opportunity of speaking to Rochelle will know how genuinely passionate she is about making sure that no-one who ever needs a pad or tampon goes without. I am in awe of her stamina and drive to continue to push for greater responses to period poverty and stigma-smashing in Australia. I look forward to doing whatever I can do to help.

I would also like to thank the Australian Education Union, ACT branch, for their invaluable feedback on how we get this right in our schools. I would like to acknowledge the work of activists from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining

and Energy Union and the Electrical Trades Union, who drew my attention to the need to improve access to not only period products but also suitable facilities, particularly in industries traditionally dominated by men. I feel this is an issue that we are only getting started on, and I look forward to seeing what more we can do.

I would like to thank all the campaigners across our community, many of whom are joining us here today in the gallery. These campaigners have been taking action on this issue in many different ways. To every single individual and organisation who has met with me, submitted feedback or taken their own action to address this issue, I commend you and I thank you for your contribution.

The taboo and stigma around menstruation often keep this topic hidden from broader discourse, but the disadvantage people face from not being able to access period products and hygiene facilities has a significant and real impact on far too many. It is the campaigning and advocacy of everyone in our community willing to speak out on this matter that has got us to where we are today and is setting us up for what we still have to do.

When I first told my colleagues about the bill and sought policy approval from the Labor caucus to develop what is now the Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill, I remember being told that I was brave to be talking about this issue. It should not take bravery to have a quick chat about needing a tampon, but my colleagues raised a very real and valid point, which is that there are a lot of people out there who still consider women's reproductive health to be something that we do not need to talk about or, by association, respond to via public policy.

Based on my work on this topic, I think you can fairly say that I do not agree with this view, but I have met a couple of people along the way who do most definitely have that view. The piece of feedback that has stuck with me the most is as follows:

I received your flyer today on menstruation and the proposal to provide women of the ACT with free tampons or pads to assist in overcoming stigma.

There is NO relationship between those two statements.

If you think that providing free feminine products will lessen any stigma, you are clearly not thinking properly.

As a GP I deal with various menstrual issues each day. I am not aware of a vast amount of what you call 'stigma'. I think that you have under-estimated the maturity of the modern woman.

If there are some who feel a stigma, I would guess it would largely be young girls who have not been properly educated by their mothers or teachers. The monthly shedding on a uterine lining is a natural phenomenon that has been present since humankind began. Addressing this ignorance would make sense.

Secondly, providing 'free' products does absolutely nothing to avert 'stigma'. It would just leave a woman feeling the same but with a gift from the Government. This is shallow consultation at best, and condescension at worst. The poor old tax payer is stung yet again for no gain.

I also see the proposal as one that is distinctly based on gender. This is called Sexism and largely frowned upon in the modern world.

To balance the equation you would need to give men something for ‘free’ too— maybe erectile dysfunction medicines?

The idea is infantile and should be scrapped.

Needless to say, I did not do as was suggested and scrap this bill. Nor did I agree with the premise that only young girls who have not been educated properly by their mothers or teachers are the only people who could experience menstruation stigma. In fact, I know they are not because of the large number of stories people have shared with me throughout this process. Nor do I agree with the idea that it is sexist to develop a policy that responds to the needs of women.

This is exactly the type of comment that creates stigma. It is designed to discourage any acknowledgement of the issue and therefore to invalidate it. Creating conversation around menstruation that recognises needs and challenges and validates these is exactly how we break down this stigma. I am proud that, through this bill, I have contributed to this task.

I cautiously anticipate that, in addition to reducing rates of period poverty and stigma in the ACT, the Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill will concurrently function as a fit-for-purpose model for other governments to reference, should they and their constituents also seek to address period poverty in their communities. I was absolutely delighted to learn that Victoria will provide free period products in public locations. I encourage them to put the policy into law and for other states and territories to follow suit. In fact, it is my hope that the provision of such a statutory model will also accelerate the rate at which change is currently being implemented and demonstrate that it is perfectly possible for sitting governments to take action against period poverty at any time.

My final ambition for the passage of the Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill is that it provides a foundation from which an even more comprehensive framework for the improvement and protection of menstrual and gender equity can be developed by this government for the ACT, because anybody needing a pad or a tampon should never have to go without.

Title agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Adjournment

Motion (by **Ms Cheyne**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Small business—food trucks

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (5.20): There is something undeniably magical about the appearance of a food truck. They are fun, they are quirky and they are not always there. Finding one is an act of serendipity. Visiting one feels like a real treat. I enjoy interacting with the often engaging entrepreneurs who operate them. I have therefore been happy to see food trucks beginning to spring up in my electorate of Ginninderra.

Last Friday I visited Gorilla Dogs at the Florey shops for the first time. On the recommendation of owner Robert Steinmach, I tried the Cross River Gorilla Dog special. The smoky beef sausage was vividly dressed with lettuce, sweet red cabbage, sauerkraut, caramelised onion and corn relish, all stuffed into a crusty bread roll. It was an adventure to eat, that is for sure.

Additional options include the Mountain Gorilla Dog, the Western Gorilla Dog and the Western Lowlands Gorilla Dog. In each case diners can choose their preferred sausage. Whilst I had smoky beef, selections also included wood-smoked cheesy kransky, beef cevapi, pork, bratwurst and a vegan sausage.

Robert confessed that the bratwurst is his personal favourite, influenced by a childhood in Germany, prior to his family's migration to Australia. One of my staff members had earlier tried the brat and said it was superb. Robert's childhood sounds as exciting as his hotdogs, including the fact that his mother was smuggled out of communist Czechoslovakia in a suitcase.

Currently, Robert sets up the Gorilla Dogs food truck at Florey shops each Friday, roughly between the hours of 10.30 am and 3 pm. He let me know that he will not be there this Friday, but he will be back and ready to serve hungry customers from Friday 16 June.

I also want to give a happy shout-out to the Hungry Brown Cow food truck. Owner Will Cowie began by selling home-made cookies at the Old Bus Depot Markets in 2018. On his first day there he sold out, proving that they were as good as family and friends had been telling him. Success with his creative cookie creations led Will to open the Hungry Brown Cow burger bar at the Holt shops two years ago. Now the food truck has made it possible for him to bring his signature burgers and treats to the residents of Flynn and nearby suburbs.

I live only a short distance from Flynn community centre, where Will currently sets up his food truck each Thursday and Friday evening from 5.30 till 7.30, in the car park behind the community centre. I recently paid a visit and picked up food for my family. My son thought the Kevin Bacon Burger was one of the best things he had ever tasted: beef patty, bacon, cheese, pickle slices, onion, lettuce and the Hungry Brown Cow's house-made burger sauce.

Will's creativity with food is reflected in the names of the burgers. The Kevin Bacon is joined by the Take it Sleazy, the Marty McFly, the Pollo Escobar, the Friar Tuck and the Laverne and Shirley. The food truck menu includes many customer favourites from the Holt shops location, but the two menus are not the same, so burger fans might want to try both locations.

On many prior occasions I have stood in this chamber to pay tribute to Canberra's entrepreneurs, who take a dream, assume the risk and bring that dream to life. I thank Robert Steinmach, Will Cowie and all other small business owners, who are the economic backbone of this city and who bring something magical to our suburbs.

Multicultural events—Africa Day

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) (5.24): I rise briefly to acknowledge that not too long ago we celebrated and commemorated the 60th anniversary of Africa Day. It was thrilling to be able to celebrate this very important occasion through the efforts of the African Australian Council of the ACT, led by president Dr Yvette Djomani, who of course is known to many of us.

Sixty years ago the founding of the African Union showed the determined efforts of unity among African people. We know that Africa as a continent is diverse, but there are so many values that its countries have in common. This unity, this coming together, resulted in extraordinary economic change throughout Africa, thanks to these efforts.

It was so lovely to gather together at St Monica's in Evatt to commemorate that spirit, which has also become an invaluable part of Canberra's heritage. Fifty-five African countries came together as a union, and those values that they share are ones that we pursue as Canberrans. We have seen such tremendous achievement made by the African community, contributing to the prosperity and the diversity of Canberra. I congratulate the African Australian Council of the ACT for bringing this wonderful event together.

It was great to join with many ambassadors or their representatives from different African nations. Several ministerial and parliamentary colleagues were there, together with many community leaders, as well as simply members of the community. I think that absolutely shines a light on how this association brings people together for celebration, for fun, but also for future generations. The best part was how many children there were present.

We had a fashion parade, showing many different traditional costumes, as well as hearing what different fruits were called in different languages. There are so many different names for an orange, as we learned, across the African nations. Hearing that from the young children, and seeing the efforts of their parents, carers and teachers to continue the tradition of language is so very important. Congratulations to everyone involved. It was a fantastic day. May there be 60 more years, if not more, of the African Union.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.28 pm.

Schedules of amendments

Schedule 1

Planning and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Amendments moved by the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction

1

Clause 3, proposed new dot point

Page 2, line 15—

insert

- *Professional Engineers Act 2023.*

2

Proposed new part 5

Page 7, line 17—

insert

Part 5 Professional Engineers Act 2023

16 Commencement Section 2, note 3

omit

17 New section 2 (2) and (3)

insert

- (2) If this Act has not commenced within 18 months beginning on this Act's notification day, it automatically commences on the first day after that period.
- (3) The Legislation Act, section 79 (Automatic commencement of postponed law) does not apply to this Act.

Schedule 2

Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022

Amendments moved by Ms Orr

1

Proposed new clause 5A

Page 3, line 10—

insert

5A Principles of dignity

In exercising a function under this Act, the following principles (the *principles of dignity*) must be taken into account:

- (a) a person may experience period poverty as a result of either or both of the following, which, if experienced in combination, may worsen period poverty:

- (i) economic disadvantage;
- (ii) different aspects of the person's identity, for example, their sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health, nationality, religion or ability;
- (b) not every person who menstruates identifies as a woman;
- (c) a person accessing period products should—
 - (i) be given a reasonable amount of privacy; and
 - (ii) have their personal information protected in a way that complies with the *Information Privacy Act 2014*; and
 - (iii) as far as reasonably practicable, be given the same access to period products as anyone else seeking access to the products, regardless of their identity; and
 - (iv) be able to access period products in a way that avoids humiliation and enables age appropriate participation in decision-making.

2

Clause 7 (1)**Page 4, line 5—***omit*

available to

substitute

available for use by

3

Clause 8 (1)**Page 4, line 19—***omit*

to people

substitute

for use by people

4

Clause 9 (3) and examples**Page 5, line 7—***omit clause 9 (3) and examples, substitute*

- (3) Access arrangements for a place must—
 - (a) be consistent with the principles of dignity; and
 - (b) provide for—
 - (i) how a person accesses a period product at the place in a way that respects the person's dignity; and
 - (ii) a reasonable range of period products to be available at the place.

5

Clause 12 (1)**Page 7, line 5—***omit*

for students

substitute
for use by students

6

Clause 13 (2) and examples

Page 7, line 15—

omit clause 13 (2) and examples, substitute

- (2) Access arrangements for government school premises must—
- (a) be consistent with the principles of dignity; and
 - (b) provide for—
 - (i) how a student accesses a period product on the premises in a way that respects the student’s dignity; and
 - (ii) a reasonable range of period products to be available on the school premises.

7

Clause 13 (3)

Page 7, line 26—

omit
an access arrangement
substitute
access arrangements

8

Clause 14 (3) and examples

Page 8, line 8—

omit clause 14 (3) and examples, substitute

- (3) Access arrangements for an education provider’s premises must—
- (a) be consistent with the principles of dignity; and
 - (b) provide for—
 - (i) how a student accesses a period product on the premises in a way that respects the student’s dignity; and
 - (ii) a reasonable range of period products to be available on the premises.

9

Clause 14 (4)

Page 8, line 18—

omit
the access arrangements
substitute
access arrangements

10

Proposed new division 2.3

Page 8, line 19—

insert

Division 2.3 Access for patients and visitors

14A Meaning of *hospital*—div 2.3

- (1) In this division:

hospital—

- (a) means a public hospital or a public day hospital; and
- (b) includes a health facility prescribed by regulation.

- (2) In this section:

approved mental health facility—see the *Mental Health Act 2015*, dictionary.

day hospital means a facility where a person is admitted for surgical or medical treatment and discharged on the same day.

health facility—see the *Health Act 1993*, section 6.

public hospital includes an approved mental health facility that provides mental health services for inpatients only.

14B Access to period products on hospital premises

- (1) The director-general responsible for administering the *Health Act 1993* must ensure period products are made available on hospital premises, free of charge, for use by patients and visitors at the hospital who are experiencing period poverty.
- (2) In making period products available on hospital premises, the director-general must comply with access arrangements for the premises.

14C Access arrangements—hospitals

- (1) The director-general responsible for administering the *Health Act 1993* must make arrangements, in writing, for access by patients and visitors at hospitals to period products on hospital premises.
- (2) Access arrangements for hospital premises must—
 - (a) be consistent with the principles of dignity; and
 - (b) provide for—
 - (i) how a patient or visitor accesses a period product on the premises in a way that respects the patient’s or visitor’s dignity; and
 - (ii) a reasonable range of period products to be available on the premises.
- (3) The director-general responsible for administering the *Health Act 1993* must give public notice of access arrangements for a hospital.

11

Clause 16 (2)

Page 9, line 12—

omit clause 16 (2), substitute

- (2) The person must have access at their workplace to toilets, handwashing facilities and sanitary waste facilities in a way that—
 - (a) is consistent with—
 - (i) the object of this Act; and
 - (ii) the principles of dignity; and

- (iii) any guidelines under section 19 (Access guidelines); and
- (b) respects the dignity of the person accessing the facilities.

12**Proposed new clause 17A**

Page 10, line 7—

insert

17A Response to s 17 report

- (1) If a person receives a report under section 17 (1) from, or on behalf of, a public employee, the person must, within a reasonable period of time after receiving the report—
 - (a) prepare a written response to the report; and
 - (b) include in the response a statement about what steps have been or will be taken to give access to toilets, handwashing facilities and sanitary waste facilities in the way mentioned in section 16 (2); and
 - (c) arrange for the public employee to have access to toilets, handwashing facilities and sanitary waste facilities in the way mentioned in section 16 (2).
- (2) The person must give a copy of the response to the person who made the report.

13**Clause 18**

Page 11, line 2—

omit clause 18, substitute

18 Information about menstruation

- (1) The director-general must ensure that information about menstruation is available for use in the community, including by—
 - (a) publishing the information on an ACT government website; and
 - (b) making hard copies of the information available at various locations, without charge, during ordinary business hours.

Examples—information about menstruation

- 1 information about menstrual hygiene
- 2 information about where a person can access healthcare or advice about menstruation
- 3 information about whether a person is entitled to leave for reasons related to menstruation
- 4 information about menstruation for people who do not menstruate
- (2) The director-general must take reasonable steps to ensure that the information in subsection (1)—
 - (a) is published in languages, other than English, that are in use by people at risk of experiencing period poverty in the ACT; and
 - (b) includes age appropriate information for a range of different age groups.

14**Proposed new clause 19 (1A)**

Page 11, line 17—

insert

- (1A) The access guidelines must be consistent with the principles of dignity.

15

Clause 20 (2)

Page 12, line 6—

omit clause 20 (2), substitute

- (2) The statement must include information about the following:
- (a) each report made to the director-general under section 17 (Reporting lack of access by public employees);
 - (b) the director-general's response under section 17A to each report.

16

Dictionary, definition of *access arrangements*, proposed new paragraph (d)

Page 13, line 20—

insert

- (d) for hospital premises—the arrangements made for the premises under section 14C.

17

Dictionary, proposed new definition of *hospital*

Page 14, line 14—

insert

hospital, for division 2.3 (Access for patients and visitors)—see section 14A (1).

18

Dictionary, proposed new definition of *principles of dignity*

Page 14, line 22—

insert

principles of dignity—see section 5A.

Schedule 3

Period Products and Facilities (Access) Bill 2022

Amendments moved by the Minister for Women

1

Clause 17

Page 9, line 18—

[oppose the clause]

2

Clause 20 (2)

Page 12, line 6—

omit