



DEBATES

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

25 May 1989

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MR SPEAKER (Mr Prowse) took the chair at 10.30 am and read the prayer.

HOUSING POLICY REVIEW
Ministerial statement and papers

MRS GRASSBY (Minister for Housing and Urban Services), by leave: In the address to the first sitting of the Assembly, the Chief Minister promised to release terms of reference for an ACT housing policy review within two weeks. Important social, economic and other changes have occurred in Canberra and elsewhere in the past 10 years and have major implications for housing policies. There is a major restructuring of the economy, and high interest rates. As well, there have been important social changes, and a tendency for people to form households earlier in life. Indeed, the rate of household formations is greater than the rate of population growth. Also, Canberra's population is getting older.

At the same time home ownership is becoming more difficult, especially for the lower income people, and this is increasing the demand for public housing services. There is also growing public demand for social justice and equity in programs. The special needs of groups such as youth, the aged, Aboriginal people and people from non-English speaking backgrounds, disabled people and women should be recognised.

All these changes pose basic questions about the effectiveness of current housing policies. The ACT Government cannot control some of these broad issues, but we can do a lot to ensure our policies and programs are sensitive to this changing environment. This will enable us as a community to adapt and benefit from the opportunities offered by the changes.

The ACT Government has decided that a wide-ranging review of ACT housing policies is needed as a key step. In keeping with the Government's commitments, the review will be conducted in an open manner to allow the community to participate fully. The review will provide advice to the Government on strategies, policies and mechanisms covering private sector and public housing, industry and the Government's role. In doing so, the review will take account of the ACT Government's commitments to social justice.

Another important concern is responsible fiscal management. Above all, the review will be about real results. It will

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recognise other initiatives already commenced and co-ordinate them, but it must not delay them. It should not rely solely on formal inquiry processes, but also broaden the process through seminars and informal discussions.

The review will consider the Federal Government's own review of housing policy and any changes to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and other programs such as the first home owners scheme. There is a range of work under way in the Administration which will have an impact on housing policy. The terms of reference are in the broadest terms to cover all relevant issues.

Without restricting the scope, there are some issues I expect will arise. For example, on home ownership I expect the review will examine the impact of financial deregulation, new housing financial instruments, such as shared equity, rental purchase, reverse equity mortgages and capital indexed loans. The Commissioner for Housing loan scheme is an important scheme for low and moderate income people, and I would expect advice on its improved operation and better targeting. Measures to ensure that land supply is adequate and timely will be another important issue.

In the private rental market, income support measures for low to moderate income tenants are relevant, and I shall expect to see recommendations to ensure assistance is well targeted, along with measures to ensure an adequate supply of such accommodation. The review will consider the place of private rental housing trusts in the Canberra rental market. Tenancy law reform is another important issue for the review.

An effective public housing sector is a key part of the Government's programs. I would expect the review to identify measures to improve the programs and services of the ACT Housing Trust and advise on measures to achieve more effective targeting of services. Moreover, it would recommend measures to promote increased involvement by tenants and some responsibility in management.

The Government cannot do all of this on its own, and attention will be given to measures for greater cooperation between the public, private and community sectors through joint ventures, cooperatives and community tenancy schemes. The review should also consider the importance of effective links between housing programs and other support programs.

In framing the terms of reference for this review we have consulted a wide range of interest groups and these talks will continue during the review. This will give the Government and the public a much better picture of the overall ACT housing situation and provide a program for needed reforms. I present the following papers:

Housing Policy Review -
Ministerial statement, 25 May 1989
Terms of reference.

SCHIZOPHRENIA WEEK
Ministerial Statement

MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health), by leave: The Chief Minister and I have just attended the launch of the ACT Association for Mental Health's publication "Out of Sight, Out of Mind". This publication is the result of a cooperative venture by the Schizophrenia Association, the "Canberra Times" and the Canberra City Rotary Club and is an expression of their concern about the issue of mental illness in our society.

The publication and the launch itself are significant because they provide an opportunity to address some of the fears about mental illness and put right some badly distorted pictures of what schizophrenia is about. Schizophrenia is much more common than many people realise. Prevention of the illness still eludes us.

Schizophrenia is common to all societies. It affects people regardless of their position in society. The illness tends to show up at an early age - in particular amongst adolescents and young people who are going through the stressful transition to adulthood and moving from the school environment to the pressures of joining the work force. The safe transition to adulthood usually leaves the possibility of developing schizophrenia behind us all, but a few middle-aged and elderly people can still develop the disease.

It is estimated that 150,000 Australians will suffer from schizophrenia at some time in their lives. This means that 150,000 Australians will need strong support, understanding, care and consideration of individual families, friends, work colleagues and the resources our society can provide.

The perception among us that a sufferer of schizophrenia has a "split" personality is incorrect. We are talking about a whole person - one who is subject to chemical imbalances which lead to periods of disordered thinking and unusual behaviour. It is a condition where the whole person is sometimes removed from "reality". There is a rare condition which has to do with multiple personality but this is not schizophrenia.

The illness of schizophrenia can most often be associated with genetic, biochemical and environmental factors. This does not mean that a person is born with the illness - no one is born with schizophrenia - but at birth some people are predisposed towards the illness.

There is no conclusive evidence about the way that biochemical factors are involved in the illness, but it seems that certain substances in the brain are involved.

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The environmental factors can best be described as the effects of stressful life events and undue pressures.

Stressful life events can include what most of us consider to be traumatic circumstances, but even less threatening changes can trigger the illness in young people predisposed to the condition. Undue pressure can often come from those directly involved with the sufferer or potential sufferer. If the individuals do not fit in with expectations or standards of those involved with them it can lead to criticism, which they are not as well equipped to handle.

I have spent time in addressing the facts about schizophrenia because I believe that education and awareness of these issues will help our community to provide support for sufferers and their families and friends, and understanding, so that the direct causes and effects of this illness are not exacerbated by ignorance and fear.

The ACT Community and Health Service has worked in cooperation with the ACT Mental Health Association, the ACT Council of Social Services and other concerned organisations, support groups and individuals to develop services and support structures to help address the particular needs of the schizophrenia sufferers and their families in the ACT.

Many of the problems raised in "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" have not been resolved. They are complex and difficult to successfully overcome. However, the significant amount of work which has been done and which will continue to be done puts us in a good position to progressively address shortcomings in services that still exist.

I have already announced the Government's intention to review the Mental Health Ordinance. This review will involve extensive consultation and will give everyone in our community with an interest the chance to contribute to the decisions this Assembly will have to make in the near future. Consultations will begin in July and should be completed by September.

The existing Mental Health Ordinance provides for the establishment of a Mental Health Advisory Council to advise the Community and Health Service on mental health issues. This body has not been able to be as effective as it would have liked and after consultation with the council, interested community groups and health service providers it was agreed that its structure required change. A new council more widely representative of interested community groups and service providers is to be formed, and nominations have already been invited for appointment to the new body. It is anticipated that it will come into operation by early August.

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The Law Reform Commission is due to release a report on guardianship in August as a prelude to legislation that will supplement the Mental Health Ordinance. We will draw on its findings and suggestions and relate them to our circumstances.

The accommodation considerations for mentally ill persons and the effects on individuals and family relationships have been under constant review. Some alternatives to institutional care are in place and others are being developed.

The Mental Health Service, in association with the North Canberra Baptist Church, is planning for a hostel for older clients with psychiatric disorders. The service provides focus teams who work out of health centres to provide individual and family therapy for people with mental illnesses. The service provides direct funding support to the Mental Health Association, Lifeline, the Richmond Fellowship group house program and the Schizophrenia Association.

Schizophrenia is the particular mental illness highlighted today. As with many other mental health conditions, how to prevent members of our community from becoming subjected to this disability is still not known. This Government supports and will encourage all efforts and programs that will help reduce the incidence or recurrence of mental health disabilities in our community.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to announce that today I will be instructing my department to take such action as is necessary to implement a 24-hour crisis centre to deal with matters such as schizophrenia.

POSTPONEMENT OF DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Motion (by **Mr Whalan**), by leave, agreed to:

That the discussion on the matter of public importance be postponed until after the conclusion of questions without notice.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CASINO

MR MOORE (10.46): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to amend motion No. 1, private members' business, standing in my name on the notice paper.

MR SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

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MR MOORE: I therefore move:

- (1) That a select committee be appointed to report generally on the proposal to establish a casino in Canberra and that, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the committee shall report on -
 - (a) the extent to which such a casino may be expected to contribute to Territory revenue having regard to revenue received by State and Territory governments from casinos established in the respective States and the Northern Territory;
 - (b) the practicability and desirability of locating any casino in Canberra at a site in Canberra other than on Section 19, Civic, and the revenue implications of so doing;
 - (c) an assessment of the environmental impact of such a development and an assessment of the findings of the Caldwell report; and
 - (d) such other implications from the operation of casinos in Australia as may be relevant to the desirability of a casino in Canberra.
- (2) That the committee shall report within 60 days of the day of its appointment;
- (3) That the committee shall consist of 5 Members;
- (4) That a majority of members constitute a quorum of the committee;
- (5) That the committee be provided with the necessary staff, facilities and resources; and
- (6) That the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Mr Speaker, this motion is not being presented as an anti-casino motion. Indeed, I personally have never spoken in public on a casino one way or the other, nor is it my intention to either speak for or against a casino now. The motion you have before you is about public participation in decision making. It is about open consultative government, the type of rhetoric that we have heard right through the election campaign and up till recent times. The motion that is before you does indeed provide the framework for Labor to put its promises into reality.

I have taken this action because of statements by the Deputy Chief Minister, the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, indicating that the incumbent government is going to push ahead with the section 19 casino development as a matter of the utmost urgency. This hardly sounds like the move of a government which is interested in knowing all the relevant facts and in hearing the opinions of the public.

The casino has long been one of the significant issues of contention in Canberra and we have been bombarded by

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arguments for and against the casino almost daily by the media. Both sides of the argument are so heavily polarised and both sides seem equally adamant as to the importance of having or the importance of not having this casino. More specifically, the arguments seem even more divided and more intense when we talk about the casino on section 19 in the city.

What is clear, Mr Speaker, is that this issue is a divisive issue and one that should not be resolved by the railroading of one Minister in our Assembly, as was attempted by Ministers of the same Labor Party in the parliament which sits across the lake.

Allow me to emphasise once again, Mr Speaker, that this motion is about resolving conflict in the way that Labor promised throughout its election. It is about the consultation process that this Government has promised to deliver but of which at this early stage we have seen very little evidence.

I would hope, Mr Speaker, that this proposed committee will provide each member of this Assembly with the background, knowledge and ramifications of the casino, so that when members vote they can do so knowing that they act in the best interests of the community. At that point because of the divisive nature of this particular issue, and to avoid a vote along restrictive party lines, the Residents Rally will be moving that the vote on a casino on section 19 will be carried out in this Assembly as a matter of conscience by a secret ballot.

Why a select committee? Mr Speaker, the members of the Government have promised open, honest government. It is not enough for the Government to be honest in admitting culpability in the aftermath. It is critical that a government seeks the wishes of the people and understands the ramifications of its actions as best it can. To suggest that a telephone poll, or its equivalent, would suffice to gauge public opinion is not accurate enough either. If members were to have relied on the polls in the lead-up to the election we would certainly have a very different Assembly to the one that sits here today.

It is clear that a method is needed to assess all the issues involved, issues which include employment, revenue likely to be received, the practicability and desirability of sites other than the section 19 site, a further look at the findings of the rushed Caldwell report on the social implications of a casino; the environmental impact, which has never been carried out for the section 19 development; the problem with attracting criminal elements to Canberra, although, with the murder of Colin Winchester, perhaps I should say, more criminal elements to Canberra; and any other implications that may be derived from the operation of other casinos throughout Australia.

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Perhaps I could now take just a few minutes, Mr Speaker, to examine some of those areas. Allow me to state once again that I am not attempting to argue one way or another for or against a casino, but I am putting forward some of the points of contention that emphasise the need for a select committee to study this issue.

It may well be that a casino will be the saviour of Canberra. As federal funds dry up it may well be the case that the casino will raise revenue on its own and will further enhance the Territory's coffers to an incredibly increased tourist trade. So we are promised. On the other hand, it would seem wise to look at other casinos currently in operation. There is no doubt that the Wrest Point Casino in Hobart was a great money-spinner for that State while it was the only Australian casino in operation. However, the more recent casinos may not be making as much money as they all add to the competition. I am sure all of us have heard of the persistent rumours that the casino in Adelaide has had to be supported, at least indirectly, by the Government of that State, in spite of its prime city location adjacent to the Festival Theatre complex. And it seems to be the case that even Wrest Point is now having trouble making ends meet.

I am pointing to these not as facts but as rumours. I am asking that we ensure that we are well informed to our own satisfaction that a casino on section 19 is the right thing for Canberra. Just yesterday in this chamber we heard the Deputy Chief Minister talk about 3,000 jobs in the construction phase of the development and huge numbers of equivalent full time jobs once the hotel and casino are in operation. Do we want the wool pulled over our eyes? Are we going to be sure that we know what is meant by that full time equivalent, or are we going to allow this to be rammed through while we - should I say ewe! - sit back sheepishly and watch? Allow me to read from an anti-casino attitude to the figures put forward by the Government, referring firstly to section 19:

The Government has forecast section 19 will bring 1,400 permanent new jobs, of which 510 will be in the casino and 500 in the hotel.

Casino: An analysis, based on the experience of a former casino administrator, assumes (perhaps generously) that a 40-table casino would operate 12 hours a day, thus requiring, at best, 90 croupiers. Other staff (cashiers, bar staff etc) would total about 30 putting the total number of casino employees at around 120.

Hotel: The Canberra Hyatt with 250 rooms and five hectares of grounds employs 250 people; the Capital Parkroyal with 300 rooms will employ 220 people. Therefore, a staff-to-room ratio of somewhat less than 1:1 seems quite likely for a five-star hotel on section 19. It follows that 250 staff is a reasonable forecast.

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Total hotel/casino staff of 370 seems a much more realistic figure...

I am pointing to this as an argument, saying that what we have is not clear; what we are told may not be the case. The point I am making is that we need a committee to sort facts from fiction.

There are grave doubts that section 19 is the most suitable site in Canberra for a casino. From a casino point of view many have argued for the importance of a downtown site. I wonder how many of the arguments are coming from the owners and managers of downtown hotels and their well paid lobbyists. We need a committee of this Assembly to search out the truth.

What is the attitude of Canberrans to an ad hoc development of the Vernon Circle to London Circuit section of Canberra anyway? Burley Griffin and some of our early NCDC planners had great visions for Canberra. Those visions, and our new growing vision for our city, should surely include an overall concept of what we need for the centre of Canberra. A number of prominent developers within Canberra and from interstate have expressed such ideas to the Rally.

The Caldwell report on the social implications of the casino was enough to indicate to an unbiased Minister Punch that all would be well from a social point of view in Canberra. I hope that this Assembly will be gracious enough to hear Dr Kinloch present the opposite view to Dr Geoffrey Caldwell later in this debate - not, of course, to have Dr Kinloch speak against the casino, but to illustrate that the issues are wide and complex and ought to be properly heard by our own select committee in the public arena.

There has been no environmental impact study for the section 19 development, and the last thing we need is another situation like that which happened in Civic with the section 38 development where the environmental impact study was carried out as part of the Civic Centre policy plan long after that development had been started. It may well be that the plan, with its libraries, theatres and beautiful towering office block improves the environment and protects some of the city from the wind tunnels that have been created in places like Akuna Street. On the other hand, the opposite might be true. Let us not sit back and let this go ahead without at least doing our best to determine what is the best for Canberra.

With reference to the implications from other casinos, in speaking only yesterday morning to an Adelaide business manager in the tourist trade, whose particular business because of its nature has improved thanks to the Adelaide Casino, I was told that given the choice it would be better to have no casino. This was coming from someone who only a year earlier had been a devoted "casinoist". I have coined that word.

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When I asked why, the answer was brief: "The criminal element". No doubt there are arguments that the legislation has already been drawn up to deal with this successfully. No doubt there will be arguments about how we can further improve that legislation. There will be no money laundering going on in Canberra. There will be no more prostitution than we already have. There will be no other illegal activities associated with casinos.

I have no doubt the arguments will be presented. In fact, Mr Speaker and members of this Assembly, this is precisely why we need this committee. Over the last few days I have heard a series of responses to the Chief Minister in speeches, which Mr Humphries has dubbed maiden speeches - I hope that we can establish a non-sexist tradition by referring to them as inaugural speeches - in which person after person has talked about their own goodwill for Canberra and its people and their responsibility to those who elected us. Let us face our responsibility clearly here and establish this committee to do our best to find the facts so that we can do justice to those whom we represent.

MR KAINE (Leader of the Opposition) (10.57): The Liberals support such an inquiry. We did not agree with the original proposal that it should take six months to complete. We are of the view that either the facts are there or they are not, and if they are they can be adduced quickly and allow a decision to be made. We agree in principle that such an inquiry ought to take place.

There is clearly some concern in the community about various aspects of a casino in Canberra. I make it clear that the Liberal Party policy is in favour of a casino. It does not say anything about site, but it is in favour of a casino. It is appropriate that there be some community consultation on the question, as the mover of this motion has suggested, and that the facts of the case should be brought forward and put on the table. There has been a lot of speculation - and a lot of ill-informed speculation, I believe - about what the effects of a casino will be.

Having said that we support it, there are just one or two comments that I would like to make. I believe that too much emphasis has been placed, for example, on whether the casino itself is going to be a profit-making operation. Personally I doubt it. It may be that the figures can be brought forward that will prove that it will be. I think that we have to look at the casino not so much in terms of whether it will of itself be a profit-making concern but the addition that it makes, the increment that it will represent, in terms of things that tourists to Canberra can do.

I would suspect that even if the casino itself turns out not to be a profit maker, even if it operates at the break-even point - and that is a matter for the investors in

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casinos to make up their minds about - by being an additional thing that tourists can do in Canberra, it will add to the total picture of Canberra as a place to come to. I am not saying that it is going to attract hordes of tourists to Canberra. I do not believe that it will, but for those tourists who do come it is one added thing that they can do in the evenings, if they want to do other things during the daytime.

There is also the other question of the section 19 development itself, irrespective of the casino, and that is whether or not that development is a good development and the whole context of the development of City Hill and matters like that. I think that that is a matter for inquiry but, of course, it is not encompassed in this particular inquiry, which will address only questions of the casino on sites other than section 19. I think we need to make clear that this inquiry is directed at the possible consequences of a casino on sites other than section 19. So let us be clear about that.

Although the mover of the motion has raised the question of the section 19 development in the context of City Hill and the city centre it is not, in fact, a part of the proposal that he has put forward. We need to be clear on what it is that the inquiry is about. As I understand it, it is about the impact on this community in various ways of a casino on a site other than section 19 and we need to be clear about that. As long as that is clearly understood and people do not have unreal expectations of what this committee might come up with, then I believe it is a good inquiry and one that we support.

MR COLLAERY (11.00): Briefly, as Leader of the Residents Rally, may I say that I support all of the comments made by my colleague Mr Kaine. I think this is an historic moment.

MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health) (11.01): I have some difficulty with the motion moved by Mr Moore, mostly because of my experience in negotiations with the Residents Rally in the lead-up to the formation of this Government. Throughout those negotiations the Rally, by the way that it handled itself, made it clear to the Australian Labor Party group that the Rally was out to stop the casino, and that is what I think this motion is about.

This is another stunt to delay and prevent development in the Territory. I think it is about time that the Residents Rally came out in the open on this issue and made it clear what they are on about. They are about the prevention of the casino development going ahead. That is clear, and that is clear from the knowledge that I have from the experience that we jointly developed with each other in the negotiating room when we tried to form a government, at which time the casino issue became a focal point.

We know about the suggestions that the casino be sited on some border somewhere where it would not work.

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Mrs Grassby: Next to the sex shop in Fyshwick.

MR BERRY: Yes, next to the sex shop in Fyshwick. Clearly this is just another one of the stunts aimed at pulling the development up and making sure that there is no development, no jobs, and there is a big gap in the jobs that are provided to ACT workers.

Mr Moore: Speak to the motion.

MR BERRY: In speaking to the motion, as I will continue to do, I need to make it clear that the motion forms part of the overall stunt. The inquiry will cause delay, undoubtedly, and that delay will result in a gap in the provision of jobs for ACT workers. The Rally does not seem to have any conscience about that.

I might also raise another matter on the issue of consultation. I have a list of groups consulted on this issue. I think there are four pages of them. I will go through some of them: The Australian Federal Police; Building Owners and Managers Association; Canberra Southern Cross Club; Community Services Division, ACT Administration; another contact with the Australian Federal Police; Attorney-General's Department; Casino Control Division, Queensland; Committee for a Casino-Free Canberra; Tasmanian Police; Tasmanian Gaming Commission; Inbound Tourism Organisation of Australia; Casino Control Division, Queensland; Commissioner McAulay from the Australian Federal Police; Wrest Point Casino; New South Wales Police; Canberra Accommodation Industry Association; ACT Gaming and Liquor Authority. The list just goes on, four pages of it. That is the extent of the consultation. So this stuff that you are trying to market about there being a lack of consultation is bunkum. There has been a stack of it.

I think what also needs to be said is that the majority of pro-government forces in this place have supported the development of a casino during the election process. I expect that the people of Canberra's support for those pro-government forces and for a pro-casino policy ought to be reflected in the decisions of this Assembly. I urge members to oppose this motion.

Mr Jensen: In accordance with standing order 213, I request that the document from which Minister Berry was quoting be tabled.

MR BERRY: I present the following paper:

Annexure F - Individuals and Organisations Consulted.

DR KINLOCH (11.08): On that last matter, it is a delight to report that our library upstairs already has the Caldwell report which is available there for members. In saying that, may I say one joy of being on the first floor

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is the immediate presence of that library. I would at this point like to say how very, very helpful the members of the library staff are. Whether we are dealing with the matter of a gambling casino or whatever, I do thank the ACT Administration for those arrangements.

Could I, as a preliminary, accept the shorthand word "casino", but in view of some controversy on this matter might I note that when Walter Burley Griffin used the word "casino" he used it in its 19th century sense - that is, a place of light entertainment, of gathering, of music. Indeed, the term "gambling casino" came about so as to make a contrast with the term "casino" - "casino", of course, being an Italian word meaning "little house" in one pronunciation of it, and it has a rather unfortunate connotation which I will not go into here. But the connotation of the word in 19th century America, in Chicago and the east coast of the United States, was a place of music and light entertainment. You will find that, for instance, at Newport in Rhode Island today. So I will now use the word "casino" in that sense, but it has nothing to do with Walter Burley Griffin's plan.

It is a misconception that I am opposed therefore to casinos. I would like to see a Walter Burley Griffin type of casino - who knows - next to the War Memorial or wherever he would have placed it. You will be surprised to hear that I am not opposed to gambling casinos either. I am not going to bare my soul and heart in this Assembly, but I can assure you that I have been to many such establishments around the world, and indeed have been a member of a club which was a gambling casino club. I do not now favour them, but I am not opposing them where they are appropriate, where they have their place, where they may be considered appropriate.

I welcome Mr Moore's motion because this motion would give us again a chance to look at this matter. I urge the Assembly that we have been without a gambling casino, or a casino, for the entire history of this Territory and to feel that it suddenly has to be rushed into being is not proper. It certainly is not proper for a Government and an Assembly that wants to have open government, consultative government. That is what we are about, and I do welcome Mr Kaine's support on this matter.

I do not wish to take up the time of the Assembly unnecessarily with a detailed analysis of the Caldwell report, but I do think it is necessary to say something about the Caldwell report in order to make the case for an inquiry by this Assembly. The Caldwell inquiry was set up by the ACT Administration, and may I pay some tribute to it on that, to the then Minister and also to Paul Whalan and Keith Lyon. I recall that once I saw the members of that Caldwell committee I applauded its membership. Its chairman is an excellent person in that field. Mark Dickerson is one of the world experts on compulsive gambling. Jan McMillen of Queensland is now President of

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the National Association for Gambling Studies, of which I was a founding member. I applauded the appointment of those three people.

However, it is one thing to appoint three people. It is another to give them enough time and resources to do the job properly. They had only a short time. The advertisements in the papers were very quick and were not fully placed around the world. The material in the inquiry was often faulty, and they themselves acknowledged this. Indeed, I gave a long academic paper - I stress it was an academic paper - as part of the National Association for Gambling Studies in a critique of the Caldwell report. In that critique, may I immediately make the point, I accepted two of their four recommendations without question, and I am happy to place a copy of my report also in the library for members to see.

I absolutely endorse the first two conclusions of the Caldwell report related to problems of gambling in the ACT, an inquiry that went beyond the question of gambling casinos. The report recommended the setting up of research into this matter on a long-range basis and of a special organisation to take care of the problems of compulsive gamblers or people in that category. I absolutely endorse that. But as Mark Dickerson himself recognised at the time when I gave this critique, other parts of the report were quickly done and inadequately staffed. They had to be very hasty in their research methods, as he acknowledged, and I wish to remind you of that.

In particular, it has to be said that one section of the Caldwell report, chapter 7, pages 123 to 133, is totally unacceptable as a piece of research about the image of the national capital. Equally deficient is the material about the perception of the impact of the proposed casino on that image. The report relies almost exclusively on an unprofessionally phrased public opinion poll, and Mark Dickerson would now acknowledge that. It ignores evidence in the field of city planning and urban research. Indeed, there was no one on the team who was competent in that area. Furthermore, there was no economist on that team who was competent to look at the question of section 19. I now urge in particular the continuation of an inquiry because the economic parts of the Caldwell report may now not only be criticised for their nature then - and I would question them then - but also they are now out of date. The Jebb material in that report is now inappropriate for what is now being discussed for section 19. It is particularly inappropriate because there are other plans for the whole City Hill area that go far beyond the very limited plans put together by the project group looking at section 19 - things that are far more worthy to be looked at and need very careful perception by this Assembly for the future of our city.

So I questioned that inquiry then almost a year ago; I question it now even more. I do urge on the Assembly that

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we now go to a much fuller inquiry. In particular, I urge a much fuller inquiry into the economic data but, above all, I would ask that a very proper inquiry be undertaken on the question of the image of the national capital, and that was totally deficient in that report. I would like to support Mr Moore. I do not wish at this time to go into any detail about our range of arguments. That is our briefing kit on the casino; I do not propose to go right through it. I hope that that material can be given to the committee of inquiry that I hope this Assembly will now set up.

MR STEVENSON (11.15): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to the motion by Mr Moore. I have received a number of letters and other expressions of interest regarding a casino in Canberra. These have included the potential for family and personal hardship brought about by gambling. It has also been indicated that a casino could well be used to launder money from criminal activities. I think it obvious that people in Canberra are certainly divided on this issue and many people want to have a say. We have the opportunity to give them a say and I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR WHALAN (Minister for Industry, Employment and Education) (11.16): Mr Speaker, this motion is opposed by the Government. We believe that it is part of a tactic not just to delay the concept of the redevelopment of the section 19 City Square area, but to defeat the development of that area. We believe that there is a clear mandate in relation to that development proposal. On many occasions during the election campaign we indicated our clear and unequivocal support for the development of that project. We believe that we have the support of the community in relation to that project.

On the other hand, the Residents Rally, in its position throughout the election campaign and as demonstrated in the debate today, is clearly anti-jobs, anti-lifestyle, and anti-development. Rally members have revealed themselves as the red-neck wowsers that they are in their support for this tactic in seeking to defeat the proposition.

What clearly is happening is that, by the end of this year, there will be close to 1,000 jobs lost in the building and construction industry as a result of the completion of projects currently under way. It is absolutely essential that there be a major project under way at the beginning of next year to take up the employment slack in that industry. The only major project on the horizon that can meet the urgency of this situation is the redevelopment of Civic Square.

We believe that our commitment is so strong and the need is so great that we intend to proceed with this project. If this resolution is carried, we hope that the inquiry will be conducted in a proper manner so as not to achieve the objectives, the hidden agenda, of the Residents Rally, which is to defeat this particular project.

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In the run-up to this matter we have seen a long lead time that included as its centre point the conduct of a social impact study by a team of experts gathered from around Australia. That process involved extensive public consultation, and indeed Dr Kinloch and his anti-casino group participated in that process of consultation.

That consultation included a number of meetings with government officials, members of parliament and government Ministers. Dr Kinloch participated in many of those meetings. My colleague Mr Berry referred in detail to the numbers of organisations and individuals that we consulted, but just to reiterate - this has been tabled and is now on record; it is incorporated in the social impact study - there were 44 organisations and 124 individuals consulted and there were public consultations. It was possible for the whole community to witness that - and there were 90 written and six oral submissions.

The impact study team was Dr Caldwell, who has been applauded by Dr Kinloch; Ms Susan Young, a director of MSJ Keys Young Planners, a consultant in social planning and environmental impact; Dr Mark Dickerson, a lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the ANU, who is an expert on gambling; and Miss Jan McMillen, a senior teaching fellow in the Division of Humanities, Griffith University, who has been a close observer and analyst of Australian and overseas casinos over an extended period.

The credibility of the social impact study was even attested to by Mr Moore's colleague and long term casino critic, Dr Kinloch, when he said in a "Canberra Times" article on 21 May 1988 that Dr Caldwell and his team were the obvious and the ablest people to study the likely social effects of a gambling casino.

He had no doubt that the inquiry was setting about its task in a careful manner. In areas on which the social impact study team did not concentrate - and a couple of areas have been highlighted - the Government has felt the need for further study, and experts have been commissioned to examine the issues and provide advice. Two of those areas related to the economic viability, including the ACT revenue projections and the assessment of environmental impacts of an ACT casino. Those studies have been undertaken and are now completed.

The Jebb report which was referred to has been updated. There has been a further report from Jebb and Associates, and anybody who, to use the expression used by Mr Collaery recently, questioned the effectiveness of Jebb and Associates working in consultation with Price Waterhouse would do so at his peril.

I would make the following comments in relation to Mr Moore's proposed terms of reference. Term of reference (1)(a) is that the committee report on "the extent to which

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such a casino may be expected to contribute to Territory revenue". The social impact study report examines the likely economic effects of the proposed section 19 development. I suggest that members read chapter 6 of the report dealing with the economic effects. In addition, Jebb and Associates have been commissioned to provide the further updated material that I mentioned earlier.

Secondly, the motion refers to "the practicability and desirability of locating any casino in Canberra at a site in Canberra other than on section 19". My colleague Mr Berry referred to the fact - and this will tell you how fair dinkum these anti-job people are - that Hector said, "You can have your casino if you want it, but you can have it next to the sex shop at Fyshwick". Hector, by his own admission, claimed a detailed knowledge, having been a regular reviewer of films out of the sex shop there - - -

A member: Come on, Paul, you are pushing your luck a bit.

MR WHALAN: He did acknowledge having reviewed at least one film, so he at least knew the location of the place. The other facetious proposal was that the casino should be located out in the bush over near Queanbeyan. The question of locating the casino at a site other than section 19 has been examined and a preliminary examination of alternative sites has indicated very few alternative locations, all of which have significant planning and environmental disadvantages. If another site is to be identified, it is considered that there will be a negative impact on the premium received and revenue earned as the development will be away from the central Civic area. If the premium obtained is lower for a site away from section 19, the community facilities that can be funded may have to be reduced, with subsequent negative impacts on construction and employment opportunities - jobs.

The removal of a casino as part of the section 19 redevelopment will detract from the aim of giving the Civic Centre a heart, with the life and vitality for all the community in most hours of the day, every day of the year.

Paragraph (c) of the motion refers to "an assessment of the environmental impact of such a development and an assessment of the findings of the Caldwell report". The ACT Government is very conscious of its responsibilities relating to environmental considerations and has appointed an expert consultant to provide advice on possible environmental impacts and the action required under relevant environmental legislation.

The Civic Centre policy plan of January 1989 addressed environmental and heritage issues and provided opportunities for extensive public consultation. That is another document which is available in the library and which should be examined by all members of the Assembly in relation to this matter.

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MR STEFANIAK (11.27): I wish to mention a number of points that the Government has raised. Firstly, in relation to the second Jebb report, I do not know how the Deputy Chief Minister could expect members of the public to get that report when we could not get a copy during the days of the ministerial advisory committee. Secondly, I would remind the Deputy Chief Minister that there are five members proposed for this committee, one from each party. Thus, I imagine there will be full representation from this Assembly. There is the machinery for that.

The Deputy Chief Minister mentioned jobs. What about the Museum of Australia? Perhaps when he was working for the Minister for Territories he could have mentioned that, and that could have gone ahead as a project to provide jobs. We are talking about a 60-day period; we are talking about consultation on this most important issue, and I think a lot of the points raised by the Deputy Chief Minister are quite fallacious in that regard.

MR JENSEN (11.28): Mr Speaker, I would like to start with the brief comment that the Chief Minister was absent during the early debate on this matter.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Jensen, I might draw attention to the fact that you have already spoken on this motion.

MR JENSEN: I do not believe so, Mr Speaker. I believe I took a point of order.

MR SPEAKER: My apologies. Go ahead, Mr Jensen.

MR JENSEN: We trust, Mr Speaker, that she was not at the shredder while she was away. There was no reason to panic. We hope that the ALP will see the light and adopt our motion in a form of bipartisan support in this chamber. Above all, Mr Speaker, we recognise that the Labor Party across the other side recognises numbers, whatever the faceless ACT Administration committee were telling Ms Follett at the time she was out of the chamber.

Before I go on, Mr Speaker, I would like to read the Rally policy on a casino to make sure that it is clearly on the record. I am prepared, Mr Berry, to table this particular document, if the Government so wishes.

Mr Whalan: No one would be interested, Norm.

MR JENSEN: I will let them know, Deputy Chief Minister, just so that they are aware. The ACT Casino Control Act 1988, should not be implemented against the wishes of the ACT community. Secondly, there should not be a casino adjacent to City Hill or the Parliamentary Triangle. Thirdly, the question of a casino for the ACT should be decided by representative government having regard to all proper criteria - social, economic, law and order, environmental and planning. Mr Speaker, I think it is important that I emphasise that third point. Finally, in

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the event that the issue remains divisive in the Assembly it would be resolved by a referendum.

I do not want to speak at great length on this motion. My colleagues Mr Moore and Dr Kinloch have already covered large areas. I trust that those of us who have expressed our concerns about this issue will vote to ensure that this Assembly is given an opportunity to look at all the issues relating to all aspects of a casino.

I refer, Mr Speaker, to comments by Mr Berry in relation to employment. The Rally is not, as has been claimed, against providing good, solid employment for the people of Canberra.

Mr Whalan: Nonsense!

MR JENSEN: We are very concerned to ensure that long-term employment is our aim. Members on the Government benches, Mr Speaker, can howl as long as they like, but it is true that the Rally is firmly committed to the development of good policy. That is one of the reasons in relation to employment why we strongly support a clear consideration of all the aspects of the development of a project for the whole of the area within London Circuit, contrary to the assertions that the Deputy Chief Minister has been making in relation to jobs. What is more important is immediate jobs that he is referring to or a proposal that provides for the long-term development of the city in a way appropriate to our national capital - a national capital that we hold in trust on behalf of the rest of the people of this nation. It is our responsibility to ensure that this national capital is something of pride and something that we can be very pleased about when the rest of Australia comes to visit this beautiful city of ours.

I have no doubt that the majority of thinking trade unionists in Canberra would prefer long-term employment opportunities rather than the short-term gain that the Deputy Chief Minister is talking about today. As my colleague Mr Stefaniak said, if the Deputy Chief Minister was concerned about employment opportunity in this area, it is interesting to note that he was a chief adviser in relation to ACT matters for the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, who was responsible for attempting to build a national museum in this city. It is unfortunate that that important facility was not able to be commenced in our very important bicentennial year.

Mr Speaker, I do not feel that I need to say anything more. I commend the motion to the members of the Assembly and I am sure we will see that it will be carried with a resounding majority.

MR DUBY (11.34): Mr Speaker, speaking as representative of the No Self Government Party, I would like to state at the outset that our group is neither firmly for nor against the casino. We regard it as a matter of conscience, and we

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support entirely the attitude taken by Mr Moore in saying that when the matter does come up before the Assembly it should be voted on, not on a party basis but on an individual basis. I welcome that.

We will be supporting the motion put by Mr Moore. We originally had problems with the six-month proposal because we felt that it was just beyond the pale. It is a matter of vital importance to the community that the whole concept of the casino be finalised in a reasonable amount of time. As protagonists on both sides of the argument have said, a lot of jobs and a lot of development work for the city will be relying on what this Assembly decides.

I will support it in the concept of the Government's commitment to open government. Not only do decisions have to be made, but the public have to see that consultation occurs and that full inquiries go ahead. Accordingly, I shall not lengthen the debate, but simply say I shall be supporting the motion.

MS FOLLETT (11.35): I also would like to speak briefly on this matter. I oppose the motion. There are a number of reasons why I do, but the main reason is that the motion which appears to be quite rational, quite reasonable, quite able to be debated in a good fashion by this Assembly, does not really represent the Rally's view.

I think that, as Mr Whalan has pointed out earlier, the Rally must be regarded as an anti-casino group, as an anti-development group, and that fact was evident throughout the negotiations that we had with the Residents Rally in the lead-up to the formation of a government. It is undoubtedly the case that the Rally's official policy as read out by Mr Jensen is not its real policy. Rally members, either they or their party machine, have a hidden agenda which is, in effect, that there will be no casino development in the ACT.

I have in mind the kinds of discussions that have already been alluded to where in debate on where a casino might be located the suggestions that Mr Whalan has referred to were in fact made. There was a suggestion from the Rally that the casino might appropriately be located next to the sex shop in Fyshwick, or alternatively on the border near Queanbeyan. So it is good enough for Queanbeyan but it is not good enough for Canberra.

In further debate on that matter it became clear that the Rally's view of the concept "adjacent to City Hill" in fact meant visible from City Hill, and that virtually goes for the entire ACT. We debated particular sites, we debated what you could see from City Hill and what you could not, and I have to conclude, and I do so in all honesty, that the Rally is totally opposed to a casino development.

I would like to add to that point that I can really see no justification whatsoever, in a democratic society such as

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we have in Canberra, for a group of residents to be opposed to a gambling establishment. It is a fact that in the ACT, if you are an adult, you can quite legally gamble in any number of locations in any of the licensed clubs that are in the ACT. I cannot see what difference one casino will make to the society in the ACT given the number of gambling outlets that already exist.

Mr Kaine: The number of casinos that already exist.

MS FOLLETT: I have to take your word for that, Mr Kaine. I really cannot see, in my view, the wowsersish objection to a casino and I do not believe it is widely supported in the community. I think that we are all adults, we can all gamble now if we wish, we are free to do so and a casino will not add in any way to that situation.

It has, as already has been said, implications for our tourism industry, enormous implications for employment prospects in the ACT, not just in the construction industry but in an ongoing way. The particular development at section 19, of course, has very important spin-offs for the community in terms of the development of additional community facilities and resources which are needed by ACT people. I do not think the Rally should forget that.

The Rally has also raised a matter which is not really relevant to the casino at all but which it is very fond of raising, and that is the issue of the Museum of Australia. It really does not take any great brains to see that the Museum of Australia is a Federal Government program which will be paid for by taxpayers' money. The casino is not. The casino is a private development which will bring in money. These are two very different propositions and even political beginners like the Rally should be able to see the difference. The Museum of Australia is, of course, something which the Labor Party in the ACT has strenuously supported for many years. We believe that it is a very important development for tourism, a very important acknowledgement of the national nature of Canberra, an appropriate new institution to be built in the ACT, and it will have spin-offs. But it is not an ACT project. It is a Federal Government project that will cost taxpayers money. We will continue to support that vigorously.

If there is anything at all that we can do as an ACT Government to promote and facilitate the development of the Museum of Australia, you can understand that we will most certainly be taking that sort of action. But the museum must not be considered an alternative to the casino. It is naive and misleading to treat it in that way. They are both projects worth proceeding with; they are both projects that will add to the ACT's status, to the employment prospects and to our future tourism industry.

MR MOORE (11.44): I am disappointed with the Government's approach in this debate. When I moved the motion, I stated that I have never publicly spoken on the casino one

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way or the other. The only statements I have ever made with reference to the casino are in reading the Rally policy on the casino. What I seek to do here is to make sure that this Assembly is well informed. I appreciate the fact that Mr Stevenson, Mr Duby, Mr Kaine and Mr Stefaniak recognised that, as do members of the Rally, and debated the matter accordingly.

The points that were brought up by the Government had to do with the pros and cons of a casino. That is not what this motion is about. This motion is about finding out about it and making sure that we know. The suggestion that we already know everything about it is a total misreading of the Caldwell report because its terms of reference were such that it was restricted. We want to ensure that we do not have such restricted terms of reference and that we know what is going on.

Let me just speak on a couple of points, one on behalf of Dr Kinloch, who was actually asked by the ABC to go out for the opening of the sex shop, as much I imagine it was against his nature to do so. He reported back on ABC television and radio about that. On an earlier occasion, as a part of a regular program on ABC, Dr Kinloch actually reviewed three such films. He saw them together with a member of the Rape Crisis Centre and a lecturer in women's studies. All three people who went were disgusted by those films and it just may well be that that is the Minister's definition of a "wowsers", a term which has come up today.

Allow me to say that I suppose it is true that wowsers never consider themselves wowsers. It would be difficult for me to claim that I have never gambled, that I have never been in a casino. It would be difficult for me to claim that I have never- - -

A member: Enough!

MR MOORE: Thank you. The Government has launched into a campaign of suggesting that the Rally is anti-jobs and anti-development, and there are some people who perhaps are beginning to believe those things. The Rally is not anti-jobs; it is not anti-development. We are not wowsers. We are not all those other things that the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister between them referred to.

I got a little lost on the Chief Minister's approach to gambling and the difference in this city with gambling and without it. Rather than pursue that matter, because we could, I shall not do so as it has nothing to do with the question. The question really is about whether we should look at the implications for a casino in Canberra. That is what this motion is about.

Let us do it quickly and let us do it on a bipartisan system. Then the decision will be made and the situation will be clear. The workers, the developers and everybody will have certainty that the decision will be made then and there will be no turning back on it.

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Question resolved in the affirmative.

SCHIZOPHRENIA WEEK

MR MOORE (11.44): I move:

That this Assembly formally notes Schizophrenia Week in the Australian Capital Territory.

First of all, I acknowledge the Minister's comments this morning and appreciate some of the points that were made. Schizophrenia is the most disabling of all mental illnesses. It usually strikes at the beginning of adulthood, causing immense disruption in the life of the sufferer and the sufferer's family. It affects one person in 100 and has been estimated to cost Australia \$1.5 billion per year. The ACT has a considerable number of people struggling to cope with this illness. Ten per cent are unable to do so and commit suicide. There was a tragic incidence of this last week.

Of course, one-third of schizophrenics recover after one episode and a further third, if properly treated, can live a manageable life. It makes sense in economic and humanitarian terms to provide the most effective help possible.

In recognising Schizophrenia Awareness Week, it would be appropriate also to recognise the unstinting work done in Canberra by dedicated professionals and community members. The ACT Council of Social Service report "Light at the End of the Tunnel" and the book "Out of Sight, Out of Mind", launched by the Chief Minister this morning, are evidence of the strong community interest in the mental health of the ACT. Unfortunately, I was not able to be at the launch because I did not get a message of an offer from Mr Berry to take me there. It was just too cold to ride my bicycle across and make it back in time.

Both these publications have addressed serious gaps in the services available to people suffering from psychiatric disorders. Some of these gaps are: the absence of an extended hours service available for home visits and crisis work; the need for a mental health advocate to ensure services are properly delivered and to improve integration of hospital, community and non-government services; problems with hospital procedures for the admission and discharge of psychiatric patients; a review of the Mental Health Ordinance as a matter of urgency, which has already been announced by the Minister. A number of cases have come to my notice of hardship and even death resulting from the extreme narrowness of the provisions of this ordinance. I commend the Minister for announcing that this morning.

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In order to fulfil the commitment expressed by most members of this Assembly to this important health issue, I will discuss it with the Minister and propose an inquiry into these issues.

MR WOOD (11.46): We support this motion. I know we shall all do so because it is important and indicates the need to attend to critical conditions suffered by some in our community.

If I can go back a little, Canberrans from the early days have been quite active in looking after their own health and the health of their colleagues in Canberra. When Canberra was first established or being established, this was a necessity because the facilities were simply not available in the capital to provide proper health care. A number of significant self-help groups were established, and it is interesting to note that some of the very well-known groups in Canberra today can date their history back to the 1920s. Of course, as the city grew and the population enlarged, the complexities surrounding health care also grew, but so did the number of groups working in this area. In particular, in the last ten years since I came to Canberra I have noticed that the number of specialised health care groups has greatly increased.

There are, as we know, a considerable number of groups and a very large number of people working towards promoting the health of their fellow citizens. The Schizophrenia Association is just one of those. As a member in the last two years of the former Community Development Fund Advisory Committee, I have been well aware of the number of groups urgently needing funds. Sometimes they have been able to claim them; at other times, regrettably, they have been unsuccessful. But that demonstrated the fairly long partnership between government and community groups in providing welfare to those in the community that needed it.

I was very pleased to hear the Minister's announcement today that he is taking action to see that a 24-hour crisis handling facility is to be made available. Most of us who are fairly active in the community have at some stage experienced the need to assist someone with schizophrenia or other mental health problems. We have found that facilities are not always available to handle such cases. Mr Moore mentioned some statistics on mental health. I note that nearly a third of all mental health cases going into our hospitals suffer from schizophrenia. A year or two ago there were something like 300 cases of hospitalisation concerning schizophrenia. That alone is a very large problem in the area of mental health.

It is important to have time to concentrate our attention on these matters. Many groups have a week or a day in which attention can be so drawn, and I think this might set some sort of precedent in this chamber that we acknowledge that particular day or week. It is fitting that we should do so today and set that precedent.

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MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health) (11.15): I spoke at length on this matter this morning, and I support the motion which has been proposed by Mr Moore. I congratulate him on putting it before the Assembly because I think it is very important that the Assembly in its early days endorse the activities of those who arranged the release this morning of that very important booklet. I think we need also to recognise that the problem is not only confined to the ACT, but is a national problem. As I said this morning, there are 150,000 Australians who will suffer schizophrenia at some time in their lives. It is a national problem, and we need to be able to consult with our colleagues throughout the nation in recognition of the care, consideration and support that people who suffer with this disease will require.

In relation to the mental health issue in the ACT, I think the most important issue, which will follow my statement this morning, is the 24-hour crisis centre. But it is also important that the review of the Mental Health Ordinance is established and under way and, as I have said before, that will take place. All of the other issues I raised this morning go well with the motion which has been proposed by Mr Moore and once again I congratulate him on submitting it to the Assembly.

MR HUMPHRIES: (11.53) The Opposition warmly endorses this motion, and in particular commends the Government's decision to establish a 24-hour crisis centre. Having spoken to advocates of reform in the mental health area, I know that there are considerable needs in this area which I believe will be met, at least in part, by the establishment of a crisis centre such as this. I want to comment about the impact, not just on victims of mental health problems but also on those around them, the carers and families of people affected.

Schizophrenia is a somewhat dark disease, a disease not often spoken about frankly by those that suffer from it. That is a pity because I understand that it affects one in 100 people in Australia. In many respects it is easier for carers and family and friends of people to deal with such injuries as loss of limbs or cancer than it is to deal with a disease which affects the personality of the sufferer. That is what makes it such an exceptional and difficult problem. It requires an exceptional degree of dedication on the part of those around sufferers to cope. I hope that the establishment of the crisis centre referred to by the Government this morning will take some steps in the direction of helping those people to cope with the problem.

The point of Schizophrenia Awareness Week, of course, is to establish better education to raise people's awareness of this problem, and that is why it is such an important time. I think it demonstrates very clearly that the effects of the disease at least can be controlled or minimised if

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those around sufferers treat the symptoms properly. There have been articles on this subject in the "Canberra Times" in recent weeks, the most recent of which appeared last Saturday or Sunday. That particular article contained an account of one mother's attempt to cope with a schizophrenic son, and was a quite moving account. That particular case ended in suicide. I understand that 10 per cent or more of sufferers of schizophrenia commit suicide, a very alarming statistic. The more that we can provide for the community to understand the nature of those problems, the more we will be able to cut back on the extent of that very dreadful statistic.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION, HERITAGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

MR KAINE (Leader of the Opposition) (11.56), by leave: I move:

That:

- (1) A standing committee on Conservation, Heritage and the Environment be appointed to inquire into and report on -
 - (a) matters referred to it by the Assembly; and
 - (b) other matters considered by the committee to be matters of concern to the community.
- (2) The committee consist of 3 members.
- (3) A majority of members constitute a quorum of the committee.
- (4) The committee be provided with necessary staff, facilities and resources.

In my response yesterday to the Chief Minister's original statement of objectives I noted that in today's world there is an increasing public sentiment that suggests that the environment, with associated matters, is indeed becoming probably the most important political issue on the agenda. It is one that we in this Assembly ignore at our peril, and I believe that we must focus the maximum amount of attention, energy and resources on dealing with these problems.

The Government, in putting forward its proposals for committees, brought forward only three committees, and none of them specifically referred to the questions of environment, conservation and heritage. It could be argued that one of the particular committees could deal with these matters, but I would have to say to the Government that, if it understood their importance, it should specifically mention that one or other of those committees was intended to deal with them. In some cases with those committees there was a long list of matters which the committees would address, and yet in no case were these matters dealt with.

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I believe that we have to proceed now, Mr Speaker, to appoint a committee to deal specifically with these matters because of the importance that all of the major parties here present placed on these matters during their election campaigns and in their policies that they now hope to implement in this Assembly, and secondly because of the increasing public perception that these are matters of major importance. I think we would be remiss if we did not make it clear, by establishing a committee specifically to deal with them, that we regard these matters as being at the top of the agenda and not at the bottom of the agenda.

Members will note that in this case I have mentioned a committee of only three members. I believe that, as we appoint more and more members to committees, the resources of the members will become stretched in keeping up with committee activities. I think that a membership of three, if it represents the major parties of the Assembly, is probably adequate for this purpose. However, I am prepared to have an amendment, if members think fit, to increase the numbers on the committee. My mind is not fixed on the number of members. This proposal is merely an attempt to minimise the impact of committees on individual members.

I recognise that it represents a further staffing problem for the Government. Every committee that we establish will have to have resources made available to it. But I believe that these matters are of such significance and of such major importance that we must deal with them, even if that means some additional resource commitment on the part of the Government to staff and support this committee. I seek the Assembly's endorsement of the establishment of this important and major committee.

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister) (12.04): I wish to oppose the motion put forward by Mr Kaine, and I acknowledge that he has already put most of my arguments. We must acknowledge that we have a very small body in this Assembly and that we have already created three standing committees, plus the Business Committee for this Assembly; that we have already created this morning a select committee to look at the casino; and that it is my expectation that we will create this afternoon a select committee to look at occupational health and safety legislation. That is a total of six committees already standing, for which we have 17 members, four of whom are Ministers and one of whom is Mr Speaker. It leaves us with 13 members to service six committees. I put it to the Assembly that that is a pretty heavy workload and that it might be better to look at a rather more streamlined approach to committees.

It is also, as Mr Kaine has pointed out, quite an imposition upon the Assembly's resources, in terms of staffing, research and so on, for this number of committees to be serviced. I think that is something that Assembly members should be aware of. We have given the commitment to operate in a lean and efficient manner, and a proliferation of committees is not consistent with that approach. Therefore, I am obliged to oppose the motion.

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I also wish to say that it is quite clear to me that issues of conservation, heritage and environment come within the purview of the committee already established on planning, development and infrastructure. It is crucial that issues of heritage and environment be treated as an integrated matter with planning. If you are to separate the issues out, marginalise the issue of heritage, then we will continue to have the sort of inadequate servicing of heritage matters that has been the hallmark of planning in the ACT. It is essential that those matters be integrated. I would suggest that the most effective way of integrating the policies and the most efficient way of servicing our committee structure is to leave to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee the questions of conservation, heritage and environment.

MR COLLAERY (12.05): I rise to support my colleague Mr Kaine. The Rally endorses this motion, of course. We want to take up the Chief Minister's comments in this Assembly because in the light of day, when read in Hansard, they will be seen to be what they are. What we have today is the concept of open government, which was promised by the ALP, being prised off and taken out of the ALP. That is sad and it is unfortunate.

The Chief Minister mentioned that a casino review committee had already been established, but that is a short-life committee. The Chief Minister also said that these issues of environment, conservation and heritage would be taken up in one of the planning committee functions that she alluded to.

Of course, the very problems that have occurred in this town result from the subordination of heritage, conservation and environment to the planning function in the pyramidal structure of the ACT Administration. One of the major problems has been the subordination of the Heritage Committee and the like. Good though those people have been on those committees, it must be said that it has been subordinate. We addressed the Assembly yesterday and pointed out that we were disappointed with the lack of breadth of concern in the planning function in the ACT. Here was the chance for the Chief Minister to put into effect what she said only a few days ago. It is very regrettable from the Rally's point of view that, in what we hoped was a collegiate atmosphere on these issues at least where there is widespread community involvement, we do not have the Chief Minister's support. The rush of blood to the head that occurred in the last ten days amongst our minority government should now settle. I think that the virtue of today's events will be to bring the Labor Party to the realisation that - - -

Ms Follett: I rise on a point of order. I do not believe that these remarks are relevant to the motion that we are debating.

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MR SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

MR COLLAERY: The fact is that on planning and developmental issues the Liberal Party has substantial connections, through its own consultative party mechanisms and its own relationship to industry. The Rally has become a legitimate conduit of opinion from the community on these community-related issues. The Liberal Party and the Rally come together most comfortably on this issue today. Let that be a warning to the Labor Party, which had the opportunity and gave it away in the spirit of power that seems to be one of the most tempting, overriding temptations in the ALP structure.

I think I did an injustice to my colleague Mr Duby. I withdraw any suggestion that the NSG Party did not and may not support this move. One hopes that members of the No Self Government group, from the community base which they have, reflecting the well-stated views against self-government, will realise that this motion of my colleague Mr Kaine presents an opportunity to see the community in its consultative mode. It also gives an opportunity to streamline the functions in the ACT Administration, where there is still a great deal of duplication in such matters. This committee can also include in its agenda questions relating to duplication in leasehold, planning and heritage committee areas in the ACT Administration. The committee will be able to review, inquire and report on matters incidental to that concern. Mr Speaker, I commend the Liberal Party's motion to this Assembly. It follows very clearly the Rally's policies in the area, and it is a matter that we should have established on a bipartisan basis the other day. It is regrettable. We trust that the message here today is taken away to the ALP party rooms, and that issues relating to the good functioning of this Assembly and of government are resolved in future with regard being paid to the values and the input that the Rally and the Liberal Party can make to this Assembly.

MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health) (12.07): The one thing that Mr Collaery can trust in is the fact that there will be open government as far as the ALP is concerned.

A member: We are pleased to hear it.

MR BERRY: I am glad you are pleased to hear that. We have to ensure that political inexperience does not get in the way of the proper consideration of matters which are going to affect the people of the ACT. I know that the machine is a new one, but nevertheless it has to come to grips with the requirements of what is a relatively small government in anybody's estimation.

The addition of extra committees will put a strain not only on Government members but on the resources that the Rally and its machine can apply to the decisions of government. I do not think those things were properly considered by

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Mr Collaery in his address to this place, but I think the Rally might reconsider its position in the context of the remarks that I have just made.

I guess right now that Mr Kaine might be a little nervous about being supported on this matter by the Rally because of some of the naive remarks that we have just heard from Mr Collaery on the issue. In any event, we have to ensure in this place that there is lean and hungry government, to ensure that we are able to deal with the issues within the resources considered appropriate, but the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Policy Committee surely has a close relationship with the Conservation, Heritage and Environment Committee which is proposed.

I suggest to you that if you want it to be subordinate to it you should split those functions away from the areas which you in the Rally would know, even with your inexperienced party machine, depend on each other. You cannot split off heritage, environment and conservation matters from the development and planning issues. They cannot be split away. If you split them away, you end up with a subordination of those matters. The economic factors would tend in the normal course of events to present a risk of such a subordination occurring.

It seems at this stage that we need to ensure that good sense prevails in relation to this committee. From the Labor Government's point of view we need to ensure that these committees work well. Need I remind you that this is only a 17-member place, and I think it will be very hard to service all these committees.

A member: We will have a committee each.

MR BERRY: Yes, we will end up with a committee each. That is pretty democratic. In closing, Mr Speaker, I ask members to apply some common sense to this issue and to not overstretch the valuable resources of this Assembly. Let us make sure that we are able to service those very important issues within a very tight committee structure. Let us not expand it beyond the resource base.

MR DUBY (12.11): I would like to endorse the comments already made by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Kaine. I think that in this day and age there is a public perception in the community the environment, heritage and conservation are important, vital issues and should be looked at differently and independently from matters relating to planning.

The community is acutely aware of the importance of environment and would be disappointed with this Assembly if a standing committee of this nature was not established. However, I would like to move the following amendment to the motion:

Paragraph (2), omit "3", substitute "4".

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MR KAINE: I am prepared to accept that amendment, Mr Speaker, if that is acceptable to the Assembly.

Amendment agreed to.

MR DUBY: I shall not delay proceedings. I disagree with the Chief Minister in this matter, in that matters relating to conservation, heritage and the environment should be dealt with by separate committees. I endorse the motion.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

REFERENCE TO SOCIAL POLICY STANDING COMMITTEE

MR KAINE (Leader of the Opposition) (12.13): I seek leave to move a motion in connection with the interests of the ageing of our community.

Leave granted.

MR KAINE: I originally intended to move a motion that we establish a select committee to look into the specific aspects of the ageing, and I am sure that Dr Kinloch would agree with me that there are a couple of us in this house who have an increasing interest in this matter. But given the Chief Minister's arguments in connection with the establishment of an additional standing committee, I accept the difficulty of finding members of the Assembly to man additional committees and the resources to service them. Instead I move:

That:

- (1) the following matters be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy for inquiry and report -
 - (a) the needs of the ageing in the ACT community over the next five years in terms of home care, units and hostels, nursing homes, hospital and hospice accommodation, and any other accommodation needs, with particular attention to the needs of frail and disabled, dementia patients, those of ethnic origins and those requiring respite facilities;
 - (b) other matters relating to the ageing, e.g. access to shopping and other community facilities, and concessions; and
 - (c) a coordinated five-year plan to satisfy those needs.
- (2) The committee report on this reference by 31 August 89.

I think it is commonly known that the ageing population in Canberra is increasing rapidly and because of that there are many problems that the ageing people in our community

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encounter. If you talk to any group associated in any way with the matters of the ageing, it does not matter whether you talk about whether people want to stay in their own home, about people who need to be put into hostel-type accommodation, about people who need hospital care in geriatric wards, any aspect that you care to mention in connection with the ageing, there is an obvious shortage already of the kind of community facilities that are required.

If there is a shortage now and we do nothing about it, given that our ageing population is increasing rapidly, and much more rapidly than anywhere else in Australia, then in five years' time we will have a real problem on our hands. The community will suffer enormously because appropriate provision has not been made for this ageing sector of the community. These people, I submit, have paid their dues to society, they have worked during their lifetimes, they have made contributions through their tax, through their obligations to the community in general, and in their increasing years they are entitled to the consideration of this community.

I submit, Mr Speaker, that the only way to find out what we must do is to inquire as to the nature of the problem, its magnitude, and to attempt to set down a program by which this Assembly over the next five years can address this increasing problem. Having developed a strategy and a plan, we can make sure that financial provision is made in successive years' budgets to provide the kinds of facilities that these people need, that they are entitled to and that they deserve. So, instead of establishing a select committee, I submit that the Social Policy Committee can well undertake this work as its first reference.

DR KINLOCH (12.17): I do thank my young friend, Trevor Kaine, for his motion, which the Residents Rally strongly supports. We support it for the obvious reason as to the merits involved in it. I would like to raise another area here. Of course, the ageing in our community need our every support in all kinds of ways, not only physical and material, but also psychological and in terms of the whole setting of society.

I would like also to argue this point, especially in relation to jobs and the future of this city. We know that education has become an industry. So it should be with facilities for the aged. It is not only a matter of facilities for the aged; it is a whole area of economic development. I urge that the kind of thing that has been done in Wakefield Gardens, for example - and again I urge members of the Assembly to go and see that development - that kind of development, that kind of housing, that kind of economic activity related to the needs of the ageing is something that will be beneficial not only to the society for its aged members but for all other people as well.

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MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health) (12.18): As Minister responsible for that area of concern which relates to the motion moved by Mr Kaine, I give an assurance to this Assembly that the resources of my department will be made available to the committee when considering this matter.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 12.19 pm to 2.30 pm.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SCHOOLS VISITS BY PARLIAMENTARIANS

MR STEFANIAK: The Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Industry, Employment and Education put out a press release yesterday stating that politicians are welcome in schools. The press release related to members of the Federal Parliament. Does that also relate to members of this Assembly? If so, is that correct because I understand there was a directive sent out to schools last Monday - it certainly arrived last Monday - which put on hold any visits by any parliamentarian or indeed member of this Assembly to schools in the ACT?

MR WHALAN: My statement yesterday arose from a newspaper report in yesterday's "Canberra Times". The report in the "Canberra Times" was an extraordinary misreport of the circular which was sent out by the Chief Education Officer to all schools concerning this matter. I must emphasise that was dated 8 May and obviously was sent out before this Assembly met for the first time and formed the Government which is currently here. The circular alerted principals to the fact that there would shortly be a new Government in place and that that might require the establishment of new principles in relation to organising visits to schools by politicians.

The statement that I made yesterday, as a result of that and approaches that I received from Mrs Kelly and from Senator Margaret Reid, made it very clear that it is the Government's intention that schools should be visited regularly by all politicians - our local politicians, federal and territorial. That is in the interests of politicians themselves in acquainting themselves with the problems, features and difficulties that any of the schools might be experiencing and also is part of the process of increasing children's awareness about matters of a political nature. Schools are important and it is

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important that there be regular interface with the political community in the schools.

There is no impediment placed on such visits. However, I would like to sit down with the leaders of all the parties in an informal arrangement to work out the possible procedures and protocols that might be observed in organising such visits. But there is no intention whatsoever to inhibit access to the schools by our politicians, whether they be federal or territorial.

MR STEFANIAK: I ask a supplementary question. Because of that circular of 8 May, an arrangement I had with the sports master of Melrose High to visit his school and talk to his class was suspended indefinitely. I just wonder if the Minister could indicate when he would come to some arrangement whereby we would have some guidelines in relation to local members of this Assembly visiting schools?

MR WHALAN: I suggest we talk about it after the adjournment today.

Dr Kinloch: May I be allowed to say how much we welcome that reply, and Rally members look forward to visiting all educational institutions.

ASSEMBLY MEDIA FACILITIES

DR KINLOCH: I wonder whether I should address this question to you, Mr Speaker, or to the Chief Minister. Could the Chief Minister or Mr Speaker tell us what plans are under way for better housing and looking after members of the media, our dear friends in the media, both print and electronic journalism in this building, and specifically will facilities be available for the public broadcasting of the proceedings of the Assembly?

MR SPEAKER: I will respond to that question. As you are aware, time is short with the sittings that we have. I am looking into the matter of accommodation, and approaches have been made to move the press possibly to the fourth floor, which would give them some security of conversation in that area. But I shall deal with these matters as quickly as I possibly can.

DR KINLOCH: I ask a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. I thank you very much for that answer. These are the kinds of matters that are just beginning to arise. This is not a complaint; it is just that these things are new to us. Many people have asked for copies of Hansard, and we do thank our Hansard friends for all they are doing. When will an issue of Hansard be made available to members?

MR SPEAKER: Again, this is a staffing requirement. We are hard pressed to push out the draft at the moment, but as soon as staffing is available that will happen.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

MRS NOLAN: I have a question to the Deputy Chief Minister. Under the Office of Industry and Development a special transport infrastructure committee has been set up. Could you tell me the terms of reference of that committee, its composition and whether all sections of industry are represented on that committee?

MR WHALAN: I will have to take that question on notice for the next day of sitting.

SHOPPING HOURS

MR COLLAERY: I ask a question of the Chief Minister in her role as Attorney-General. Is the Chief Minister aware that in a recent issue of the Civic Advance Bank quarterly bulletin dealing with trends in economic developments a suggestion was made that shopping hours be extended in the ACT, or at least in the Civic area, to serve the double purpose of encouraging tourism in the city area and countering the image of Canberra as boring? Would the Chief Minister please comment on that recommendation?

MS FOLLETT: I suspect that the question of extending shopping hours is one that should be more appropriately addressed to the Deputy Chief Minister in his role as Minister for Industry. It is an issue on which it might be wise to get a considered reply for Mr Collaery. Therefore, I will take it on notice.

TOURISM

MR WOOD: I direct a question to the Chief Minister, and I refer her to a letter in today's "Canberra Times" which asks about the economic justification for allocating public funds for tourism. Can she tell the chamber the basis of the Government's tourism policy?

MS FOLLETT: I am aware of the letter that appeared in today's "Canberra Times" and I think it is a good opportunity to set the question of tourism's role in the economy in its proper context. Tourism is Australia's fastest growing industry and contributes some \$25 billion to our economy, which represents about 6 per cent of gross domestic product. It has been estimated that tourism employs about 400,000 people and that every year some 20,000 more people gain employment in the tourism industry. It is clearly a very major aspect of the Australian economy.

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The ACT economy does not rely wholly on tourism, nor should it, but it is an important part of our present and future economy and our economic growth. It is currently estimated to be contributing about \$370m to the ACT economy annually and employs about 8,000 people. So, it is a most important aspect of the ACT's economy as well as of Australia's economy. It is a labour intensive industry so it generates good employment opportunities. It is an industry in which we can create jobs, particularly for young people just coming into the labour force. The ACT has had a particular problem with our youth unemployment level which is slightly in excess of the national level, if my memory serves me. Therefore, an industry which is labour intensive and which can pick up those young people and give them a career is one which is very valuable to the ACT economy.

The important thing in the ACT at the moment is that we actually market tourism better, which is the key. We are in a very competitive area here. You will all know that there are competing tourism attractions throughout Australia and throughout this part of the world and that the ACT has to compete in a real way with those other attractions. We are looking at a marketing program for tourism in the ACT. I believe that it is time that we took the initiative in this matter, but that does not mean that any funds that were allocated would be used in an indiscriminate way.

I have asked the Deputy Chief Minister, Paul Whalan, to have a comprehensive marketing strategy prepared which will analyse the potential market and the kinds of activities that are required to promote the ACT in those markets. We certainly will not be relying solely on taxpayers' funds for that marketing strategy, and we will be holding discussions with the tourism industry more generally with a view to developing some cooperative mechanisms with them on the question of marketing the ACT.

Over the past couple of years there has been quite a major investment in tourism infrastructure in the Territory. The new convention centre that is due to open shortly will have the potential to deliver millions of dollars to the ACT economy. The convention centre must be regarded as a tourism venture. It is absolutely vital that the Government supports the private sector's promotion of tourism, the private sector's initiatives in the tourism area, and that we support its confidence in tourism as an industry that has a really great future in the ACT.

SCHOOLS WORKING PARTY

MR HUMPHRIES: Can the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education confirm that a culture of service working party has been established within the ACT Schools Authority; can the Minister advise the Assembly of the working party's terms of reference, and will the working

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party examine issues such as school autonomy and the quality of teaching in ACT schools?

MR WHALAN: I will have to take the question on notice.

MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE

MR MOORE: I have a question for Mr Berry, the Minister for Health. During Schizophrenia Week a number of initiatives have been taken by the Minister. One of the calls coming from the Schizophrenia Fellowship, the community body which has been carrying a great deal of weight in this matter for years, has been for a mental health advocate. Does the Minister intend to appoint a mental health advocate?

MR BERRY: I think that at this stage there is no clear intention to do that, although a number of initiatives are under way. We have indicated previously our commitment to a review of the Mental Health Ordinance, and of course that is to proceed. In addition, the Government is examining options in consultation with the ACT Council of Social Services for an improved crisis service, and I announced this morning that we would be dealing with that as soon as possible in recognition of Schizophrenia Week.

Another issue which is a problem in the mental health area relates to accommodation. I am advised that the ACT Community and Health Service is encouraging community agencies to cooperatively develop alternatives to institutional care, which is consistent with Labor Party policy on the matter. But in answer directly to your question, at this stage there is not, as far as I am aware, an intention to appoint an advocate.

MR MOORE: I put a supplementary question. Could I have an indication that you will certainly give appropriate consideration to this proposal? We are aware of the work done by the youth advocate, and many argue that a mental health advocate is a good idea. Will you assure the Assembly that you will give due consideration to that?

MR BERRY: I would add in relation to what I have already said on the matter that the crisis service, I am advised, would provide a fast track arrangement for those presenting with mental health issues, and of course the advocacy arrangements may be able to be incorporated in that sort of arrangement. However, I will give an undertaking to look into the matter further and seek some further advice from my department, and I can report back to Mr Moore directly.

BUS SERVICE

MR WOOD: I direct my question to the Minister for Housing and Urban Services, and she will appreciate that at least I am an assiduous reader of the newspapers. I refer her to a column on page 3 of the "Canberra Times" today in which it was pointed out that two young children had been left on a major road in our city, apparently by ACTION buses. I would hope that this was not quite as stated. Does she have any information on this matter?

MRS GRASSBY: Yes, I did read that item this morning and I contacted my department. A representative of the bus service checked out the story with Forrest School, where the children were supposed to go. Apparently they had got on the wrong bus, they realised they were on the wrong bus in peak hour traffic, and panicked. The bus driver stopped at the best place he could, gave them directions to go across another two streets to pick up the right bus. The boys got the direction wrong, and ended up on the side of the road, and some very kind person picked them up and took them to school.

A similar incident occurred the day before when a boy who wanted to go to Giralang ended up in Latham. The bus department was very good and made sure that he got to Latham. I have a letter here from the mother of that child saying how wonderful ACTION buses were to get the boy to where he wanted to go.

This points to the importance of the fact that we are about to launch from my department a bus safety campaign by ACTION. This campaign will be important for all schools. It will include a bus safety ramp, and will emphasise the need for travellers to check the bus number and to hail the correct bus. Otherwise passengers will find they are on the wrong bus and halfway to somewhere they do not want to go. This often happens to children. However, my husband once walked out and got on a plane and sat there strapped in very happily. The air hostess said, "Hello, how are you?" and talked for a while. Then she said, "What are you going to Melbourne for?" - he was in Sydney, by the way - and he said, "No, I'm going to Brisbane". She said, "Well, I hate to tell you but this plane is going to Melbourne". So not only do children make mistakes but obviously adults make them, too. ACTION has taken care of the situation.

ROAD CONDITIONS

MS MAHER: We have had some correspondence from some concerned citizens about the condition of the roads around the ACT. I would like to ask the Minister for Housing and Urban Services: what does the Government intend to do to control overloaded and overweight trucks which are damaging our local roads?

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MRS GRASSBY: This is the only State in Australia that does not have any legislation in this respect. My department intends to introduce legislation to reduce the dimension of trucks, which are far too large, going through Canberra, and the mass limits of heavy vehicles which are damaging our roads. We do intend to bring in legislation in common with every other State in Australia and the Northern Territory.

We in Canberra are very lucky to have very good roads. People have told me that they have never been to a place where they build the highways before they build the houses, and so we are very lucky to have that. But large overweighted trucks are doing damage to the roads and we do not want an enormous bill for road repairs. So we will be bringing legislation into the parliament governing the weight of trucks that can travel through the ACT.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

MR COLLAERY: Will the Minister for Community Services and Health advise the ACT community and all the voluntary organisations that rely on the Community Development Fund as to his intention with respect to the continuance or otherwise of the Community Development Fund?

MS FOLLETT: I think it is more appropriate that I deal with the matter in my capacity as Treasurer. Many community groups which are reliant on the Community Development Fund have for many years expressed concern over the uncertainty of their funding under that arrangement and the fact that they have had to budget from year to year without any real knowledge of whether they would be able to continue to exist. That has certainly been the case with community groups that I have been associated with. It is also a matter that has given some concern because many of those community groups are carrying out essential services which in other parts of Australia would have been carried out by local government or some other government organisation.

In the ACT, we have relied for many aspects of our daily life - such as after-school care, care of aged people and all sorts of welfare arrangements, as well as the more creative side of life, the arts, culture and so on - on organisations funded under the Community Development Fund.

This issue was raised during the recent election. Many parties, my own included, undertook to those community groups to look at the continued operation of the Community Development Fund and, in particular, to try to bring that fund into a more rational mode of operation and to reduce their reliance on annual funding where such groups are carrying out essential services. This matter has to be addressed in the budget context but, if there is a way for

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those community groups to have more certainty in their funding, to have some reliability introduced into their continued operation, then this Government will certainly be undertaking that.

MR COLLAERY: I ask a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. May I ask the Chief Minister to indicate whether her party will stand by its election pledge to see at least triennial funding for community groups?

MS FOLLETT: Indeed, we will be looking at that in the budget context, but that is certainly the intention of the Government.

MINISTER'S OFFICE

MRS NOLAN: I draw the Deputy Chief Minister's attention to an article in the Tuggeranong "Valley View" on 15 May, which stated:

The ACT's new Minister for Economic Development, Paul Whalan, will set up an office in the Tuggeranong Town Centre in July. Mr Whalan is currently in negotiation for the lease of two floors in the new building opposite the Hyperdome.

Given our inadequate office accommodation at 1 Constitution Avenue, I am wondering how Mr Whalan can have two floors for an electorate office.

Mr Kaine: That is a good question, Paul.

MR WHALAN: And you will get an equally good answer. I thank Mrs Nolan for the question. The article was never intended to give the impression there was going to be any electorate office there at all. Part of the Government's policy is to decentralise the work force as much as possible, consistent with the planning principles under which Canberra has been developed. It is certainly the intention of this Government to pursue that particular policy.

In pursuing that policy we will seek to achieve a number of objectives. Among those objectives are service to the community, thus making available to the community on a decentralised basis the services and facilities which are provided by the various government departments, but also to put in place economy measures.

It is a fact that as a result of the development of the town centres there is a lower level of demand for office accommodation in these areas than there is in the central city. As a result there are quite significantly lower rents available in areas such as Tuggeranong. Substantial savings can be achieved through the location of offices in areas such as Tuggeranong.

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Office accommodation at the moment in central Canberra is about \$280 per square metre per annum, compared with the figure in Tuggeranong of about \$220 per square metre per annum. A significant saving is to be achieved by the location of offices in places like Tuggeranong.

The advice that I have received is that not only is the differential at this moment quite significant, but that the differential over the next three to five years period is going to be even greater again. On survey figures there is a shortfall of about 20,000 square metres - - -

MR SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, because we have such a short time for questions without notice, I would ask all Ministers to make their replies brief.

MR WHALAN: There is a shortfall in Civic at the moment of about 20,000 square metres, so demand for office accommodation in central Canberra exceeds supply by about 20,000 square metres. This is having a significant effect on the cost of accommodation in town. It is anticipated that within 12 months from now new accommodation coming on line is likely to reach about \$350 per square metre, so the difference at that point of time would be quite dramatic. Added to that - - -

Mr Jensen: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I seem to recall that the question related to the Minister having an electorate office in that area. Mr Speaker, we have now gone on for some minutes, and we have not got anywhere near the question.

MR SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld. Please answer the question.

MR WHALAN: There is no question to answer in that case, Mr Speaker, because the article did not refer to an electorate office.

MRS NOLAN: My subsequent question is: Do you intend to establish an electorate office in this facility?

MR WHALAN: The answer is no, but I am quite happy to elaborate on that. I do intend to move the ministerial office, which is currently located in a building which will be demolished to make way for the community facilities which are associated with the Civic Square redevelopment. That building will be demolished very early next year or late this year. It is in the context of the savings which will be achieved in that process. I am just sorry that I did not get the opportunity to explain those savings to members, because I am quite sure that members opposite would be reassured that this Government is seeking to exercise economies in every way possible.

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Mr Kaine: Can I have an office there, too, Paul?

MR WHALAN: When you are a Minister.

TOURISM

MR DUBY: Like Mr Wood, I also have an interest in tourism matters. My question is directed to the Deputy Chief Minister in his capacity as Minister responsible for tourism. I have concern about two aspects. The Chief Minister mentioned promotion of ACT tourism outside the ACT and, secondly, the treatment of tourists when they arrive in Canberra. The tourism industry in submissions to me claims that insufficient funds and resources are allocated to tourist promotion? Is the Government proposing to increase expenditure on tourist promotion? Also, I have noticed that visitors to Canberra often appear lost, and sometimes complain that they are not made to feel fully welcome. What plans are there to redress this situation?

MR WHALAN: The second part of the question is quite interesting. At a recent social function a person arrived late, having been run into at the traffic lights along Commonwealth Avenue. When the person arrived, the person I was standing next to said, "I bet it was a bloody tourist" - with respect to the chamber. It reflected a view which is commonly held in the community, that tourists in our city are a nuisance and that we might be far better off without them. I am sure that we have all experienced that attitude from time to time among people that we meet in Canberra. It is a regrettable attitude because it fails to realise the importance of tourism as an employment source within our Territory.

The Tourist Bureau is currently planning to upgrade its tourist awareness program, which will be aimed at highlighting to the community the benefits of tourism as an industry and an employer and the opportunities that are available to the local citizens to make visitors to the ACT feel welcome.

On the question of the promotion of tourism, we share Mr DUBY's concern that there have been, in the past, insufficient funds available for tourist promotion. It has been regrettable that there has been an attitude on the part of the Commonwealth Government that it was not necessary to promote Canberra through tourism, and that it was self-promoting. I think this chamber would accept that that is not correct.

We are totally committed to improving the resources available to the Tourist Bureau and in that context we will honour our election commitment. The level of these funds is a matter for consideration, however, in the budgetary context. We will have to approach that fairly carefully,

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but at this stage we are absolutely committed to our election promise.

In conclusion, in relation to making our visitors welcome, there is a review being undertaken at the moment in relation to signage, for example. One of the most frustrating things to visitors is getting lost. To describe to a person who is coming to visit you in Tuggeranong how to get there from Dickson is almost impossible. So we will seek to improve road signs to facilitate movement of visitors to the city.

Mr Moore: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing order 118(a) says that the answer to a question without notice "shall be concise and confined to the subject matter of the question". Throughout this session, the Deputy Chief Minister has not taken notice of that standing order.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for that observation, Mr Moore. I have already brought that to the Minister's attention. We are all in a learning cycle here, and I am sure things will improve.

ASBESTOS REMOVAL

MRS GRASSBY: During question time on 24 May Mr Humphries asked me about the cost of the asbestos removal program. He drew attention to a report in the Canberra "Chronicle", on 16 May, which quoted the general manager of the Asbestos Branch, Dr Keith McKenry, as saying, "There is no evidence to link exposure to asbestos in the Canberra house and medical illnesses".

Mr Humphries asked if the view as quoted was the view of the Government and, if it was, how did the Government justify the expenditure on asbestos removal. Now I would like to give him the correct answer, if he will accept it.

The total cost of the asbestos program is now expected to be in the order of \$45m. The quotation in question was not checked with Dr McKenry and he was misquoted - I have rung him. At present, there is no evidence to link asbestos in any Canberra home to any known case of an asbestos related illness. This is not to say, however, that asbestos in Canberra homes is not a health risk. The fact is that asbestos in Canberra does present a health risk - this was recognised by the Commonwealth. However, symptoms may not appear for at least 15 years.

We know that at Wittenoom and elsewhere even very low levels of exposure to asbestos can give rise to asbestos related diseases - sometimes in excess of up to 30 years after the event. As Dr McKenry noted, the asbestos in Canberra houses is pure and is in loose form, which is not good to have but it is much better to have than the other kind, I understand from Dr McKenry.

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It is therefore easily disturbed and potentially a hazard. If it is left alone apparently it is all right, he tells me. It is essential in the interests of public health that, if it is to be removed, it should be removed very safely. Mr Humphries and, I understand, Mr Stefaniak are going tomorrow to look at a house from which asbestos is being taken. I can arrange for any other member of the Assembly who would wish to accompany them to go. It is quite an experience. It is very safe, I can promise members.

MS FOLLETT: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Mr Kaine: Mr Speaker, I should like to take a point of order, following that made earlier by Mr Moore in connection with standing order 118(a). I should just like to draw the Speaker's attention to the fact that when we debated the matter of questions within the last few days and we settled on the fact that 30 minutes would be the time allowed, I made it clear then that it was specifically on the proviso that answers would be brief and to the point. I would like to remind the Government that if the answers are not brief and to the point we from the Opposition will move that the limit of 30 minutes be changed, and I put it on notice that we will do so.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Kaine. That is noted.

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN **Discussion of Matter of Public Importance**

MR SPEAKER: I have received a letter from Ms Follett, the Chief Minister, proposing that a matter of public importance be submitted to the Assembly for discussion, namely:

The Government's commitment to ensuring that women are equal partners in social and economic terms in the workplace, the home and the community.

I call the Chief Minister.

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister) (3.07): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am very pleased to be given this opportunity for the Assembly to debate this issue so early in our existence as an assembly, because I believe it is one that is crucial to the good government of the ACT. I am sure members know that women comprise slightly more than half of the population - that is the case in the ACT, as it is in most places - but certainly in no way are women in fact truly equal in social and economic terms in the workplace, the home and the community.

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They certainly earn less than men; even in areas where they do very much the same sort of work as men they earn less. They tend to be concentrated in lower paid jobs. They tend to be more likely to take part time work, and consequently to have a lesser income. Women therefore are more likely to be living in poverty and indeed more likely to be living on social security benefits than are men. They are more likely, for instance, to head single-parent families, and that is a source of poverty, as many people will know.

It is also true to say that women are much less likely to be represented at the top levels, in business, in government, on boards of directors and so on. For instance, I draw attention to the fact that fewer than a quarter of the representatives in this Assembly are women, and indeed some parties do not have women representatives in this Assembly. I think that is a matter for shame.

Mr Speaker, it is some 14 years now since the International Women's Year, 1975, when the issue of the status of women was brought to world attention. It was brought to attention with a great deal of rhetoric, very much a warm inner glow and a feeling throughout the community and the world that this was a real opportunity for the status of women, whether in economic or social terms, to be raised so that they would be truly equal.

In those 14 years it seems to me that in fact very little has changed. I think that is a matter for great regret. There has been continuation of the rhetoric and the warm inner glow but very little in the way of programs has been delivered which would ensure that women become equal. I would like therefore to look today at some of the measures that the Government will be taking to redress the position of women and their current inequality in the ACT.

You will all know that the Labor Party campaigned on a platform of social justice. Basically that means a fair go for everybody in the community - that they have equal access, equity and participation in all aspects of the community and decision making. Of course, women's involvement is absolutely integral to the achievement of a social justice strategy.

On specific issues that the Government will be addressing the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, Paul Whalan, himself an avowed feminist, will be speaking to us on questions of women's education and employment. He has some specific proposals to make. But one of the major issues in employment is the question of occupational health and safety. As members all know, the ACT has had no occupational health and safety legislation whatsoever. This, of course, has had an impact on women, as it has on all workers - but particularly on women.

Members will all remember the virtual epidemic of repetition strain injuries that occurred in the past few

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years. In the department in which I was working at the time, amongst keyboard operators some 60 per cent suffered repetition strain injury. That is an occupational health story which I believe is really reprehensible in this day and age, that 60 per cent of those workers were firstly exposed to that risk, and once they had contracted this debilitating condition the sort of rehabilitation and facilities that were offered to them were very slow in coming.

It was a long time before that was recognised as a real occupational health issue and one that needed to be addressed. So I look first of all to the occupational health and safety legislation to address some of the issues of women's health and safety in the workplace.

Another area which will have an impact on women in the work force is the Government's intention to introduce anti-discrimination legislation. This is another area where the ACT stands alone, in having no access for the citizens of this place to make a complaint about discrimination. That is the kind of record of which I do not think we can be very proud in the ACT and which we must move very quickly to address.

It is a fact that in other States complaints about discrimination in the overwhelming number of cases are from married women in the work force. The majority of complaints about discrimination are from married women and are to do with their employment. So by introducing anti-discrimination legislation, by bringing in some anti-discrimination machinery, we can really address, at least to some extent, the position of women in the work force.

My colleague the Minister for Community Services and Health will be outlining some of the programs that he has taken on board in the area of women's health. I think that is another important area for upgrading the whole position of women in our community.

One issue with which I would like to deal specifically is the question of women's representation on the kinds of boards and committees that tend to proliferate in the ACT, as they do elsewhere. It seems to me that there is absolutely no reason why those boards and committees should be predominantly male. I do not believe anybody would seriously propose that women are in any way less able or less qualified to make an equal contribution to the work of those boards.

So I am happy to inform the Assembly that it is this Government's intention that 50 per cent of such appointments will be to women. I would expect any member of the Assembly proposing a nomination for appointment to a board or committee to bear that in mind because it is a very real target and something that the Government will be doing. We will be appointing women to at least half of the positions on all of those boards and committees over which we have control.

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The Government will also be undertaking a women's budget statement which will be carried out by the women's unit in my department. The women's budget statement will be aimed at addressing in a real way the economic impact of the Government's programs on women and also dealing with specific programs for women. So I think that, unless women's issues are dealt with in the same way as all other issues - that is, in their economic context so that they can have some real outcomes - we will not get very far. So I see the women's budget statement as a very important tool in the further improvement of the status of women in the ACT.

Of course a great many women choose to remain at home. The position of women in the home is also one where there has not been true equality. I draw members' attention to the fact that women are overwhelmingly more likely to suffer domestic violence than any other group.

The term "domestic violence" is one with which I take some issue. If one thinks of terms such as domestic architecture, domestic economies and so on it is a way of saying that this is a fairly small-scale thing, that it is not all that serious, that it is just a domestic arrangement. So I prefer to call domestic violence what it really is, which is criminal assault. If we were to look at it in those terms I think it would be very clear that these kinds of criminal acts cannot be allowed to continue against one class in the community, and that class is women.

It must be treated as a real crime, as a life threatening crime, and very often it results in murder, as we have seen in the ACT on any number of occasions. So the Government has undertaken to continue the funding to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. We will be sticking with that promise; there is no question about that. But further than that, as we promised during our election campaign, we will be looking to establish a new refuge, one which deals exclusively with women victims of domestic violence.

I do not know whether members are aware, but it certainly was the case over the Christmas-New Year period just past that numbers of women from the Domestic Violence Crisis Service had nowhere to go. The numbers of criminal assaults in the home were such that those women were sent to motels to get them out of immediate danger. They were accommodated in motels where there were no counselling services available to them. It was a very poor response to a very serious and life threatening situation.

So we will be looking to fund that refuge, and we will also be looking to the Federal Government to share in the funding of that. It is the Government's contention that women must have a real choice over whether they wish to remain in the home or whether they wish to take part in the paid work force. Part of having a real choice is access to affordable and appropriate child-care.

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This is an issue that is crucial to allowing people to go out to work and to the well-being of children as well, of course. The Government will be undertaking a planning exercise to determine the child-care needs in the ACT into the next century. I believe that it is not adequate to look just at what is required now. When we see the statistics in the paper today that the ACT's population is very close now to 300,000 it goes without saying that many more children will be requiring child-care and we need to plan for that; we need to know what that demand will be.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I would just like to say that it is not the role of the Government to make choices for women, but it is the role of the Government to make sure that women have a real choice. I say again that women represent over half the population but they still have unequal access and control of economic and social benefits in our community.

An expression that has had some currency is the feminisation of poverty, meaning that if people are poor they are much more likely to be women, and that goes without saying. As Mr Whalan will point out, the kinds of economic issues to do with employment and training have a very great deal to do with that feminisation of poverty. Our objective is to make the choice of whether women participate in the paid work force a real option, and to ensure that all women are properly respected and are indeed equal partners in social and economic terms in the workplace, the home and the community. I commend that philosophy to all in this Assembly.

MR KAINE (Leader of the Opposition) (3.19): The Chief Minister has spoken often and, I am sure over the next three years, will speak a great deal about issues that affect that 50 per cent of the population that is male, so I hope that she will allow me to speak for the next few minutes on some matters that affect that other half of the population that happens to be female. There is no doubt that some assistance is required for some elements of that part of the female population. This morning I put forward a proposal that we should examine the problems associated with the ageing. There are all kinds of things that ageing people need - and not all ageing people require the same things.

I think we have to bear in mind that the same thing can be said about that half of the population that is women. Many of them do not need any help at all. Many of them are quite prepared to stand on their own two feet in the community, and have the capability to do so. In fact, those women who need assistance, I would submit, like all other groups, are a relatively minor part of the population, and they do not have common needs; they have a whole range of needs, some of which the Chief Minister has touched upon, and some of which I suggest she has not. So what I am concerned about is not the question of whether we

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place some emphasis on the role and the place of women in our society and the things that we should be doing for them.

I do not intend to read the Liberal Party policy on the issue. It is a statement that runs, I think, to about six or seven pages and it covers all the areas in the work force, the home, health, employment and all of the sorts of things about which the Chief Minister spoke. I do not intend to traverse that. We need to show some perception of the kinds of things that we ought to be doing. The Chief Minister talks about equal opportunity, particularly in the workplace, to allow everybody the opportunity to participate if they want to. I think history shows that legislating for these things is not necessarily effective. I was working in the Office of the Public Service Board in 1974 when affirmative action programs for women in the public service were the rage.

So they have been there for at least 15 years, to my knowledge, yet I will guarantee that I could walk into any office of this building that we are in and I am sure that in general terms we would discover that there is not equal representation in the work force in terms of women being there. We can go to individual areas of the work force which might have 100 per cent women. So we have to ask why. The answer is obvious. It is not a question of legislating; it is a question of changing public attitudes, and we have been trying to do that, to my certain knowledge, for nearly 20 years now at least, yet we do not seem to have achieved the desired result for everybody in this community, whether they are male, female, youth, aged, ethnic, coloured, Church of England or whatever. We have not achieved that perfect society where everybody is respected for what they are and where they get equal opportunity.

So I am merely suggesting that in a new assembly, starting a new life, perhaps we ought to be looking for different options. Perhaps there is something there which others have not discovered and which might be the secret to this. While I support all of the things that the Chief Minister says that we have to look at to make sure that there is equal opportunity, first of all we cannot force people to take advantage of equal opportunity if they do not have a mind to, or if they are uninformed that the opportunities are there, or if for some other reason they just simply do not want to. We cannot force them to participate. That might be a reason why there is still inequality, that some women choose not to participate. I do not know the answer because I have not done any research, but that may be so.

Perhaps what we ought to be doing - and perhaps a much longer term project - is what I suggested this morning with respect to the ageing population. Perhaps we should be breaking down that category of the population called women into its various components and saying there is this kind of woman and that kind of woman, and that all those kinds

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of women have their own needs; identify what those needs are, quantify the problem and see whether we cannot set about a comprehensive program of rectifying the deficiencies.

Certainly some of those categories would float to the top as requiring urgent and immediate attention: women who are subject to criminal assault in the home, and I accept that term; and women who are economically deprived because the family has broken up, the husband has left, and the woman is left with the children and perhaps no income to support them, so she is on the poverty line from square one.

There are categories of women who clearly need attention ahead of other categories of women. But I would like to sound the note that perhaps we can be a little more perceptive in this issue than others have been elsewhere, draw from past experience where things have been done but simply have not worked, examine why they have not worked and then perhaps take a slightly different approach in trying to solve the problem in our small community of less than 300,000 people.

DR KINLOCH (3.25): We very much honour the statements by the Chief Minister and support, too, much that Mr Kaine has said. Personally I regret all the times when we look as though we are talking tokenistically. I really wish we could not do that, and it is very hard to avoid. On behalf of the Residents Rally, may we indeed apologise in a strange way to the community that there are not eight of us here. If there were eight, we would also have Joan Kellett, Marion Le, Catherine Rossiter and I would hope Sue Douglas. I am sorry we do not have those eight here.

Mr Kaine: Why didn't you put them on top of your list instead of at the bottom?

DR KINLOCH: May I speak to that? Perhaps it was a lack of understanding, but we thought we could have a list within the d'Hondt system in which people could vote for individuals up and down the list, and we regarded ourselves as equal. We know now that it is not the way it worked, and I very much respect the system of the Labor Party which had woman, man, woman, man down the list. It seems to me that some of us in the future could go that route. So I would ask our colleagues not to cry "shame" at us. We tried. There were at least three women whose names we wanted at the top of our ticket. I assure you, I am not going to go into this, but some of us were trying very hard to attain that. I want members to know how much we want that to be the case, so we join with the Chief Minister and Mr Kaine in complaints about discrimination.

In an area of concern of my own - that is, tertiary education, for which I am the spokesperson for our party - I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly particularly to problems in the Australian National University, the Canberra College of Advanced Education, the

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technical and further education colleges and the ACT Education Authority. Mr Moore knows much more about the ACT Education Authority than I, but I immediately note that in the top three jobs in the hierarchy all are men. That tends to go down the line, and comparatively few principals of senior colleges or secondary schools are women. I know there are efforts in the education department to do something about that, but has it gone far enough?

I ask the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, the Chief Minister and all of us here to address that issue. I think it is a very important concern. Similarly, the Australian National University - I recognise that is not our bailiwick in a sense - also has internal anti-discrimination orders and regulations that it tries to follow, and I used to be very much involved with that. But it had many difficulties, and attempts to achieve some of those things were not necessarily successful. I want to urge it to take even greater steps in the future. But we can do something about the CCAE and the TAFE colleges. In relation to those colleges it seems to me that the contacts are almost always with men. I hope that in future that will cease to be the case.

I certainly agree about the question of criminal assault. If I may be just allowed this hiccup, I hope that members here will see the film "Accused". If they do they will see the ways in which men are often incredibly violent and how the system allows them to be so, and we must attack that. I do not rise on this point in relation to something that might be called wowseryism - not at all. Mr Moore noted this morning that I had had occasion, on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, to visit the new sex shop or sex cinema, or whatever it was, when it opened, and to comment on it, which indeed I did. Might I note that the womens unit at the Australian National University was particularly interested in these problems of pornography. From the point of view of the protection of women, the question of pornography is not just a question of censorship or no censorship - that is a very difficult issue, I recognise - it is also an issue of the degrading and demeaning of women.

The pornography industry is very much dominated by men; its publicists are men. If one has any dealings with that industry one knows that that is the case, in the attempts to get one to change one's mind on that subject. Here I make no particular charges - I do not think there is any point in that - but I hope the ALP will recognise that it is not appropriate for the national capital of Australia also to be the pornographic capital of Australia, which is an area that particularly demeans women.

MRS GRASSBY (Minister for Housing and Urban Services) (3.30): I rise in trepidation after Dr Kinloch's speech, which had much perspicacity. I am not sure whether I can speak as well as he can in this house. I say to Dr Kinloch that if we had had our whole eleven here, we would have had an even amount of women and men.

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A member: That would have been difficult.

MRS GRASSBY: I was about to refer to our ministry being very heterosexual, but I got very worried about that, because I thought it may be taken as a slur on the Residents Rally. I would be the last to want to put a slur on the Residents Rally, as we all know what the opposite to heterosexual is.

A member: You mean they are non-sexual.

MRS GRASSBY: Could I refer to our ministry as being very heterogeneous. The Office of City Management has appointed an officer as a women's adviser to examine all proposals and women's problems and viewpoints. My Housing Department is also taking account of what women want in the new housing review. We are speaking to many women in the community on this matter. We believe that it is very important to speak not only to older mothers but to younger mothers.

My Department of Transport has also examined how shopping hours affect women who travel on buses with small children. We are looking at the difficulties encountered by women with small children - some women have two or three young children - taking fold-up prams on buses. We are looking at ways and means of making such journeys easy for women with small children.

We have shopfronts planned for different housing areas. We have just opened one in Woden, and intend to open one at Tuggeranong. I have asked ACTION to examine bus times to meet the needs of mothers and older people. We are also talking to the community from that point of view.

My portfolio is committed to equal employment. I find out there are two woman in the Fire Department in Sydney and one in Melbourne so I have asked my Fire Department to have at least one lady. I am told that the Fire Department is very much a macho group of men. We do not mind if such a lady is 60 and ugly, in case their wives are worried, but it is felt that at least there should be a token lady and we may then be able to build on that.

Incidentally, Mr Speaker, in view of members' difficulties when trying to get down in the lifts to this chamber when the bells are ringing, I am wondering if you could organise a greasy pole. Maybe you could speak to Mr Berry about that. Apparently he knows all about greasy poles.

We will ensure that women are well represented on various advisory boards of my committees. The Chief Minister has made it very clear that she wants an equal amount of women appointed to boards as there are men. In the portfolios that I handle involving the beautifying of Canberra, I am sure people will have noticed the number of women working as gardeners. We are encouraging that because it needs a

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woman's touch. I say in conclusion that I am encouraged by the fact that women are very much thought of in my portfolio, but we intend to do a lot more.

MR COLLAERY (3.35): What we are about is addressing an historical imbalance, and no persons through gender should have their life paths changed simply because of how they were born. I speak as someone who was brought up for a good part of my life by a widow in a widowed environment after the war, so I feel very sensitive about this subject. We should all realise that in the community there are at all times, in peace and in war, women living alone and they are vulnerable, and they are more vulnerable when at the same time they are caring for others. The phenomenon in our society at the moment points to the increasing, not decreasing, vulnerability of women, in my view.

I also speak from some years of practice in the law, and particularly from a close involvement in a suburb of Canberra with a women's refuge. I do put a note of warning of course on what the Chief Minister suggested - perhaps she did not intend to make that suggestion. From a professional point of view, she may wish to seek further advice as to whether refuges should be opened exclusively for women who are the victims of violence. There is often an unnecessary focus on a refuge, often around Christmas time, booze time, when there is an influx of women who have suffered violence. It does tend to create an atmosphere of foreboding and fear, particularly amongst the children who follow their parents into refuges. I would ask the Chief Minister to consult her professional advisers closely on that.

I am absolutely outraged as a practitioner in this city not to be able to find - and this has often been my experience - crisis accommodation for a woman who has to leave her home. I am also outraged by the fact that in many cases the party with money can expel from the home the party without money. The legal profession has much to answer for, I say with regret. The fact is that some women go to refuges to preserve their life and welfare, and often women go to refuges to care for their children who are threatened. Often in these dramatic situations I have found that the legal profession by use of restriction orders aid the male elements in the population. In my view, there is a great emphasis in the law on male patronage. It is offensive and it persists in swelling the numbers of people in refuges when those women should stay in their homes with their children in an atmosphere which they know and their men should be expelled, and locked up if necessary. We need at an early date to look at the possibility of the Housing Trust allocating homes quickly in this area to care for crisis situations. I suggest that we need to speak to the Minister for Housing and Urban Services about coordinating some of those issues at an early date.

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Funding is another issue. There is a willingness in the Federal Government at the moment in that area, and I do not suggest that we need to be combative in our search for justice there. The Chief Minister should note that we have no equal opportunity protection here of even a basic kind, and I criticise the union movement too in that area. It often tends to be male dominated and with some exceptions, such as Jeannette McHugh and others, trade unions are exclusive male gatherings. Ironically, some of the unionists that I meet around the place are also becoming entrepreneurs and taking on other airs. I see changes needed there fast, because, I suggest, we are going in the other direction in the union movement.

We need to get active assistance from the basic labour movement in the workplace for anti-discrimination activities, which will only come from consciousness and education and sensitivity, and will come not I suggest from legislation, because we have found that it does not. I have had case after case in my practice of women who have been put off because they are showing a little more girth constantly. Such an attitude is unlawful in most States of this country, but not in the ACT.

There is also the example of the Schools Authority. I think we need fundamental changes to curricular course content and teacher training now in the ACT. I say that as someone who is married to a teacher, with three adult daughters. The topic before the Assembly today must be, in my view, a very personal one for all members.

MR WHALAN (Minister for Industry, Employment and Education) (3.40): Mr Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to address for the first time all the senior executive service officers who serve within my department. I met the whole group in a meeting room over in Electricity House and in my opening sentence to that group I remarked on the extraordinary and inappropriate gender imbalance that exists in that particular area of the service. Of that group of over 20 senior officers, there was only one female, and that person was not a permanent employee, but rather a person on secondment from the Victorian public service.

I have a commitment, and I have the support of the Chief Minister, that over a period of time we would seek to have those imbalances redressed. While the things I say now will deal with some of the programs that we have as part of our overall responsibility in relation to employment and education, we do in our very own department have to address these sorts of issues. We hope that over a period of time, without disruption, we will provide opportunities too.

On 18 November last year, State and Commonwealth Ministers of labour launched the Australian women's employment strategy, which identifies a set of national goals designed to improve the employment status of women in Australia. This strategy was endorsed by the ACT Minister for

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Territories, and as the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, I am now committed to promoting an ACT women's employment strategy which addresses those national goals and is sensitive to local circumstances.

The status of women in the ACT is, in some respects, better than in some other States and Territories. Nevertheless, this difference is one of degree: women in the ACT in general face similar problems and barriers as women nationally. This is exacerbated by the narrowness of the ACT's economic base. Our public sector base, where women have fared relatively well - and I emphasise only relatively well - in comparison with the private sector, is at best stable. The growing retail, hospitality and tourism industry, which employs large numbers of women in casual and part-time work, offers few career pathways. Let us examine a woman's position in the ACT on average. Women's average weekly earnings are lower than men's; women receive fewer employment benefits and are less likely to contribute to superannuation schemes; women have less formally accredited training and fewer opportunities for career progression; women's participation rate in post-secondary education is lower than men's and is disproportionately concentrated in TAFE; and women are the major recipients of transfer payments.

In the past, government policy related to women's issues has tended to focus on health and welfare concerns. As Minister for Employment, I will stress the need to promote women's economic independence through improved access to employment and training opportunities.

This will require special initiatives because traditionally labour market programs have focused on youth and people on the unemployment benefits or enrolled with the CES. This cuts out mature age women who are often not enrolled with the CES and have a different set of needs or face barriers which combine to trap many in poverty. This situation is exacerbated for sole mothers. Of the 6,700 ACT households below the poverty line in 1986, half were headed by sole parents. Of these 85 per cent were sole mothers.

Barriers to re-entry to the work force faced by these women include: low earning potential, which combined with the accompanying loss of fringe benefits and housing rental rebates acts as a financial disincentive to work; lack of confidence; deficiencies in past education and training aggravated by difficulties in obtaining part-time training; sole family responsibilities, including child-care access and costs; poverty and its accompanying problems of stress, depression and health; poverty traps which occur because of the combined effects of income tested transfer payments and other elements of the tax and welfare systems; isolation, transport difficulties and other factors specific to the ACT such as fuel costs, lack of family support, and the higher cost of commodities; and finally, lack of information about appropriate options.

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Hence it is apparent that specific income measures are required to alleviate the problems of women in poverty. As Minister with responsibility for the ACT women's employment strategy, I anticipate announcing in the near future the following initiatives:

The formation of a task force to advise on the development and implementation of an ACT women's employment strategy. Representation on the committee will reflect my Government's commitment to tripartite and community consultative mechanisms.

Initiatives to promote women in small business.

The targeting of apprenticeship positions within the ACT Administration - within our own backyard.

A project to research needs of women in the Tuggeranong region who wish to re-enter the paid labour market.

A pilot program to promote awareness of the needs of women among employers and unions. This is important because I want to ensure that the significant changes occurring in the workplace under award restructuring give due emphasis to those areas of the labour market where women currently predominate.

An outreach program designed to increase the training and employment opportunities of women who are currently not in the labour market or have little attachment to it.

Our Government views the ACT women's employment strategy as part of its commitment to promoting social justice and as an essential element in its plans for economic growth and development in the ACT. The improvement of women's employment status in the ACT is critical to our social justice and employment policies, but it is too important to be left to Ministers. In that regard, I welcome the initiative of the Trades and Labour Council with its research report on women in apprenticeships. I hope that this will be matched with firm and practical steps by private sector employers. For my part I will be ensuring that ACT education institutions play a positive role, and have already taken action to upgrade my department's own performance in this area.

MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health) (3.48): I would like first of all, Mr Speaker, to address a couple of issues which were touched on by other members in this debate. Mr Kaine raised the issue of aged women. It is well known that the numbers of aged single women far and away exceed the numbers of men in that category. From our point of view it is important to address the issue of women in the aged sector.

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Mr Kaine also mentioned - or criticised - legislation on affirmative action. I must say it has got some sort of a relationship to occupational health and safety. Workers were unable to secure a safe workplace, except where they had strong industrial muscle, in the absence of legislation. It is now proved that the only way to secure that is by way of legislation. The same thing has happened where affirmative action has been left to the bosses. They have not delivered. In my view a firmer hand in terms of discretion for male bosses is required.

Another comment that Mr Kaine made related to women choosing not to participate. I think that is an inadequate assessment of the real situation. If it is the case that a larger group are choosing not to participate, I do not really think that it is because they are opting out of the system, but because women are in a considerably weaker position. Therefore, they are unable to participate as well as men. That position has to be rectified.

Dr Kinloch talked about affirmative action. I must say that the Rally's choice of policies would have been better balanced if Labor's women's policy had been picked up and had been made to look as amazingly similar as do some of the Rally's other policies.

Mr Collaery criticised the union movement on the issue of women. The union movement is the representative of workers, and of course, men have been the dominant factor in the labour force. In some ways, it is a fact of life that males have dominated the union movement throughout industrial history in Australia. But I would have to say, through my experience in the union movement, that the unions are far and away ahead in addressing the issue of female participation in the union movement than are any of the major employer groups. That can be seen by mentioning a couple of examples in the ACT where the Labour Council has encouraged the participation of women in its executive, and the major union in the ACT is now headed by a woman. I refer to the ACT branch of the ACOA.

A member: Winsome Hall.

MR BERRY: Yes, Winsome Hall. I think the union movement is far and away ahead on this matter. Turning to my portfolio area, the ACT Labor Government is strongly committed to improving the health and well-being of all women in the ACT, giving a major focus to those most at risk or most disadvantaged. We aim to encourage the health system to be more responsive to the needs of women, and to promote greater participation by women in decision making about health and community services in the ACT. The women's health movement has been at the forefront in recognising that health is determined by a broad range of social, environmental, economic and biological factors.

Differences in health status and health outcome are directly linked, not only to gender but to such things as

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AIDS, socio-economic status, physical surroundings and lifestyle. Improving health status and outcomes requires a coordinated approach across all of the portfolios, and Labor will do that.

The ACT Community and Health Service is currently drawing up a women's health policy which will identify the priority health needs of women, the guiding principles for action and the strategies necessary to meet these needs. Community meetings were held during 1988 as a part of a consultation process to talk with women in the community about their needs, how these should be prioritised and how they might be addressed.

The ACT Community and Health Service has already made significant progress in the women's health area. The service has had a women's health adviser since 1987, and recently with the amalgamation of community services her role was broadened to include all of the human service areas. The Women's Health Service provides primary health care and a range of services to improve and promote the health of women. Recently a full time co-ordinator was appointed so that the health promotion activities of the service can be expanded. I should add that the appointment of the full time coordinator was a factor in Labor's election promises.

The community health centres in the ACT have always been well used by women. I plan to enhance these services by establishing a number of well women clinics in conjunction with the Women's Health Service. The Women's Information and Referral Centre has proved to be an important resource for women in the community and will continue to be supported. A pilot cervical cancer screening program is about to commence. In its first year the program will focus on women over 40, migrant women and Aboriginal women. The next year the focus will be on young women in the 15 to 24 group.

For many women violence is an aspect of their everyday lives. This Government will continue the present funding of the domestic violence crisis service, and in partnership with the Federal Government will provide \$450,000 for the establishment of another women's refuge for survivors of domestic violence. Significant improvement in the health of women requires a cooperative and coordinated approach by government, public and private health services, professional and union organisations and the community.

The ACT Labor Government is committed to doing its part. At a meeting in March this year, all Australian health Ministers endorsed in principle the development of the national women's health policy, and the ACT, with other States and Territories, is now exploring how the policy might best be implemented. Women provide a special perspective for the development of human services. They are the major users of health and welfare services, the majority of human service providers and carers for others,

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at home and in the community. Mr Speaker, their experiences and learning can help us identify better ways of providing our services for all in the community.

MS MAHER (3.57): I commend the Government's action putting the issue of women's affairs on the agenda at this early stage of the Assembly, and I support many of the comments made by the members who have already spoken. Women must be given the opportunity to have economic security and independence, freedom from discrimination, and equality of opportunity in all spheres and activities. There is room for a big improvement in women's access to, and participation in, the making of decisions on employment, health, training and education. There is also a need to reduce the segregation in these areas, plus other areas of occupation and industry.

With regard to child-care facilities, I commend the Chief Minister in reporting that the Government will be looking into planning for child-care facilities up to the year 2000. I think at the moment child-care facilities are grossly inadequate. The concept of work-based child-care facilities should be looked into. Many women choose to stay at home rather than go out to work, and some reports have said that the number of skills they need in their daily responsibilities is more than other people need in professional jobs. It is a very stressful occupation, it is very isolated, and it needs to be looked into and supported.

With regard to Mr Kaine saying that some people do not take the opportunity to participate in professional work and the community, I feel that maybe if there were more education and training in these areas for women they would participate more. I also welcome the Government's comments that they have already begun consulting with women with regard to housing and transport, and feel that this consultation needs to be extended right across women's issues. Speaking personally, I am very interested in women's issues and look forward to being actively involved in the promotion of women's issues.

MR MOORE (4.00): Let me start by referring to Ms Maher's comment about women in the home. I am one of the very rare males that have spent 18 months at home with a baby, and I am very much aware of the situation for women that Ms Maher talks about in terms of isolation and stress. I do know that when I went back to working full time and my wife took her turn at home with the children - she now has three children to cope with, not just the one that I had to deal with - I realised where the real work was carried out.

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ADJOURNMENT

MR SPEAKER: It being 4 pm, I propose the question:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Whalan: I require that the question be put forthwith without debate.

Question resolved in the negative.

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

Debate resumed.

MR MOORE: I go back to speaking of being at home and realising some of the issues that affect women. I remember on many occasions being part of the local Nursing Mothers' Association group and providing morning tea as was my turn and discussing the benefits or disbenefits of breastfeeding. I learned a great deal at that time, I have no need to tell you.

A member: You were not equipped.

MR MOORE: Yes, the equipment I certainly lacked. In fact, on many occasions I actually had to take over my wife's class while she fed the baby, who at that stage was still 100 per cent breastfed. It is fortunate that we are both teachers.

That leads me on to education. One area of education that has been under threat in many ways is the preschools. It is there at the preschools that attitudes are fostered and propensity for a different style of work is made. There is a great deal of evidence to show, for example, that when children play with blocks girls tend to build their blocks out in a spread, and boys tend to build their blocks in a pyramid style fashion. That may seem to mean very little, but research has shown that the way these small children play is particularly important. Such play forms the basis for mathematical concepts.

We are all aware that the current situation right through school is that girls tend not to be good at maths and that boys tend not to be so good at verbal skills. Teachers are very much aware of that and are working hard on it, but we need to ensure that the preschools and schools have the support so that children, particularly coming from homes where such things are not recognised, are given the opportunity in the preschools to ensure that those sorts of concepts are given the basis at that sort of age.

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I hope that the Minister for Education will have the opportunity to have a look at some of the work that has been done on this within the Schools Authority over the last few years. One hopes that there will be emphasis on girls having the opportunity to study mathematics and physics and chemistry at whatever level, so that when they leave school and go into the work force they have job choices available to them. Invariably those with a mathematical-science background have a choice of 80 per cent of the high paying jobs, whereas if you come from a verbal background you have a choice of about 80 per cent of jobs that are low paying.

Putting an emphasis on employment at this stage may well not be enough. We may well have to look very carefully at our schools. It is not good enough to say that we can just force girls to do mathematics. Often they do not want to do so because they do not have the basic concepts and understanding they may well gain from a preschool system. When people are looking at budgets for preschools, let us keep in mind the sort of money that is being spent on trying to give women an equal opportunity, an equal chance, and to give them equity. It is critical to ensure that such opportunities are provided in their education. Education is absolutely critical in this particular area.

The Minister for Community Services and Health has covered very well the sort of areas where women are involved in health. But may I, in conclusion, draw the Chief Minister's attention in her responsibilities for consumer affairs to a comment that was made to me on a number of occasions, particularly through the campaign. It is a comment that many people would be unhappy to make, but it is that women's sanitary wear is particularly expensive, there is sales tax on it and it is an unjust situation. I urge the Chief Minister to use her influence to lobby the Federal Government to remove that inequitable sales tax.

MRS NOLAN (4.05): I did not intend to speak in this debate this afternoon, but I would like to take this opportunity to endorse a few of the words that Mr Kaine has said. Also, I took exception to a comment made by Mrs Grassby. I am sorry that she is not now in the chamber, but I object strongly to hearing the words "token woman". I am quite happy to see a woman in the Fire Department, or whatever department Mrs Grassby referred to, if the woman in that position has equal ability.

The Liberal Party endorses the principle of equal opportunity, but it must be based on merit and fair competition and not on token womanism, if you like. We are committed to equality and opportunity for all individuals, not just women, and oppose unfair and discriminatory practices. I recognise that women at home or active in the workplace or in the community should have equal opportunity to pursue their chosen lifestyle.

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There is need for improvement of equal opportunity in the areas of employment, health and welfare, child-care and education. There are particular areas of the community where special provisions need to be taken into consideration. Mr Kaine covered that subject earlier when he referred to the aged. Women make contributions, as do men, to the economy through their employment or their own self-employment. As a very large proportion of women are already self-employed in the ACT, I would suggest to Mr Whalan that those initiatives he was going to put in place would be far better suited to women, as well as to men, who look to self-employment. I suggest that it is discriminatory to take women aside.

I also recognise that women seek employment for many reasons, not all through economic necessity. Some women rate financial independence or pursuit of career opportunities as very good reasons for doing so, and rightly so.

MR SPEAKER: Order! The time for discussion has now expired.

Suspension of Standing Orders

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

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Assembly from continuing discussion on the matter of public importance until 4.30 pm unless the discussion is concluded before that time.

Debate resumed.

MRS NOLAN: I thank the Assembly. Women must be promoted on the basis of merit. Women who have a family should not be penalised, and deserve the same job security as do working fathers. I think that is a very important consideration. We recognise that women are the ones who are penalised, but there are many situations where men, too, are penalised because they are working fathers. I think that is very important.

There are a couple of other areas that I would just like to mention as speakers have raised them earlier in this debate. One relates to representation to boards, which the Chief Minister mentioned. Certainly I would like to see as many women as possible on those boards, but again I would be very upset to see a board comprising 50 per cent women just because it had to have that number of women. Consideration has to be given to who those people are, how they can best do the job, and by all means we should make sure that there are women there.

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The Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Whalan, referred to Tuggeranong. As the Assembly is probably aware, I live out in the Tuggeranong Valley and I am certainly very concerned about the needs of that area, but I am also just as concerned for the women in Charnwood or in any other parts of Belconnen. I think it is probably very unfair just to discriminate in the area of Tuggeranong rather than take into consideration the outer areas of Canberra.

Mr Moore mentioned children playing with blocks. I have a boy and a girl and, believe you me, it depends on who is the older of the two children. Research might have been done, but children sometimes do prove research wrong. In my case it is certainly the reverse with my two children.

I think just in summing up, as I mentioned at the beginning, we are talking here about merit and fair competition. We are not just talking about token women for the sake of having token women.

MR JENSEN (4.11): In view of the time, I will try to keep my remarks as brief as possible. I know that at least Mr Stefaniak wishes to speak to this matter. In my discussions in the lead-up to this debate, there was some considerable concern amongst women about their economic independence and welfare and the poverty traps that many of them find themselves in. This is particularly the case in the area of Tuggeranong, and I take my colleague Mrs Nolan's point in relation to the fact that Tuggeranong is not the only area where there are developing suburbs. But I suggest that in Tuggeranong there are many young families moving in search of that great Australian dream: a suburban home with a backyard for their family.

One of the most tragic facts related to some of the major planning disasters in recent years in this city was that the previous Labor administration of this Territory allowed an explosion of office space in the city while throwing away the most important factor related to the rationale behind the dispersed town centre concept.

I am referring again to the need to create jobs, both full and part time, for the women trapped in their suburban homes in the Tuggeranong community, and I appreciate also in other areas of North Canberra. I applaud the comments made by Mr Whalan in his long answer to our colleague Mrs Nolan in relation to the movement of jobs to Tuggeranong, but what I am leading up to is that it is important that in the matter of major planning decisions for many years sectors of the community have not had a voice.

I would now like to change direction in this particular debate very briefly and refer to some of the deficiencies in coming to grips with the problem. I refer to the gathering of information on the matter of women in the national capital. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics works on a sample of 1 per cent - hardly a useful statistical figure, I would suggest - when looking at this particular area.

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Also, today I discovered that the Department of Social Security in the ACT has been counted as part of the New South Wales figures. I presume that with self-government this will be changing, so the administrators in this particular area will be able to have sufficient information on which to base their decision making on this very important subject. It is important that this information be not only accurate but timely to ensure that those making that decision can do so adequately.

Before I close, Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to one area of inequality in women's employment of which I have some knowledge. When I met my wife she was training to be a nurse in Adelaide. It was a time when if the nurse married before she had completed her training she had to resign. Fortunately, that state of affairs has now changed. However, might I suggest that, despite the fact that some males have joined that fine profession, nurses in our society are still some way behind others in the work force by way of remuneration and conditions.

I know that the Australian Nursing Federation has fought this issue long and hard, but there is still some way to go. I trust that Minister Berry, a committed unionist, will ensure that this often neglected group of dedicated professionals are given a great degree of equality.

MR STEFANIAK (4.14): I will be fairly brief and wish to make just a few points. I agree with really most that has been said here today. I especially agree with the comments made by my colleague Mrs Nolan. A number of things still have to be done in relation to women in the Territory. I can think of one thing, which I think the Chief Minister mentioned, and that is the question of RSI. There has been a recent case before the Federal Court which makes it very difficult for an RSI sufferer, especially in the typing areas, to receive compensation under the common law. It is a matter which this Assembly will need to consider because there are quite a number of RSI sufferers in the Canberra workplace. It is a fairly recent phenomenon. The effects of RSI and what causes it have come to light only in the last couple of years. Practices, indeed, have been changed in many workplaces, but that is certainly a topic for this Assembly to consider. It is a real and very worrying problem.

A lot has been said by the Chief Minister about anti-discrimination. I was pleased to hear my colleague Mrs Nolan say the emphasis must be on merit. It is displeasing to note that over the last 20 or so years, as my leader Mr Kaine indicated, there have been significant changes in attitudes. We have seen changes which have led to Britain's first Prime Minister, to several other female Prime Ministers throughout the world, and indeed to the rather historic election of the first Chief Minister of the ACT who is, of course, a woman and a most capable one at that. Indeed, these days a capable woman will always come

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out on top. I was very pleased when I went up to my room about an hour ago to see that signs had been put up on the doors. Although Mrs Nolan and I share a room, I noted that her sign was above mine, so there is further equality there too.

I do stress, however, that we should not indulge in tokenism and that this process should be based on merit. That is very important. There are some areas, as people have mentioned, where there are a large number of women employed; other jobs where there are a large number of men employed. I can recall an EEO representative coming to my department when I was a prosecutor, and commenting on the fact that we only had one female prosecutor. It was something to do with the nature of the job, and shortly after that the young lady in question left. However, it was also true to say that the one female prosecutor before her was highly regarded by the courts, and indeed was probably the best operator we had in the office. Some jobs seem to attract people of one sex rather than the other, but that is just a fact of life and I think it is artificial to try to legislate against that.

We must make sure that there is promotion only on merit, and that we do not go overboard to the situation where there has to be a certain number of persons of one sex in a particular job whether they like it or not.

A few friends of mine who are teachers, both males and females, complain that in attempts at fairness in that field there seems now to be almost a bias towards the need to put women in certain positions, which makes it very difficult for men to get into some of those positions. I think that is going a little bit too far. Therefore, I stress that merit should be the only real criterion.

MR KAINÉ (Leader of the Opposition) (4.18): I have spoken on this subject, but I would like to make a comment in accordance with standing order 47. A couple of members have implied that in my remarks I was making some kind of value judgment. In fact, I thought I was traversing the subject quite objectively and not making value judgments about the subject matter. I refer specifically to a comment by Mr Berry that I had criticised the affirmative action program in the public service. I did not do that and had no intention of doing so. I simply noted that the affirmative action program had been in place for many years and had not, as far as I could see, achieved the objectives that were intended for it. It was a quite objective statement and, I believe, a fact.

Ms Maher also made a comment that I had implied that women, whether in employment or in the home or wherever, were happy with their lot and did not feel disadvantaged. Ms Maher said that perhaps - and she referred to me specifically - if they had more information they might change their mind. They well might, and I was not making any judgment about that either, but I think it is still

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true that whether they were more informed or not, there are still a lot of women, both in employment in the work force and in the home, who do not feel themselves in any way to be disadvantaged. I thought that again was merely an objective statement of fact rather than making some value judgment about whether they might do something else if they were better informed.

Discussion concluded.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CASINO

MR SPEAKER: I have received a letter from Mr Collaery nominating the following members to the Select Committee on the Establishment of a Casino, namely: Mr Duby, Mr Humphries, Mr Jensen, Mr Stevenson and Mr Wood.

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

That the following Members be appointed members of the Select Committee on the Establishment of a Casino, viz.: Mr Duby, Mr Humphries, Mr Jensen, Mr Stevenson and Mr Wood.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL 1989

MR WHALAN: Mr Speaker, I present the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 1989. I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

It is very significant that this is the first piece of legislation to be introduced into the chamber, and this is quite an historic moment. I think it is particularly significant that the item of legislation was the subject of some controversy during the election campaign. It is a subject to which our party is heavily committed; that is, occupational health and safety.

The ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia without comprehensive occupational health and safety legislation and it is fitting and appropriate that the ACT's first Labor Government should have the responsibility of introducing this legislation to protect the health and safety of the people in workplaces. The Labor Party is committed to ensuring that workers are provided with a working environment that provides minimum risk to their health and safety.

Through its accord with the ACTU, the Federal Labor Government has a commitment to developing adequate occupational health and safety arrangements for all areas under its responsibility, including Commonwealth employment and employees in the Territories. This consultation approach is strongly supported by our Government.

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The fact that, despite the best efforts of Ministers and public servants and persistent lobbying from the members for Canberra and Fraser, as well as the Labor Senator for the ACT, the Federal Labor Government failed to introduce legislation for the ACT is a clear demonstration of the need for ACT self-government. While responsibility resided with the Federal Government, it was always likely that the interests of the ACT would be subordinated to national interests.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. My point is not that the Hawke Labor Government has not moved to address the issue of occupational health and safety. However, its achievements have been to develop, with the States and Territories and peak union and employer bodies, a national strategy and to establish the Occupational Health and Safety Commission, which operates as Worksafe Australia.

However, the fact is that, despite a commitment to the development of an ordinance to cover occupational health and safety for the ACT private sector, the Federal Government was unable to achieve this in the past six years to when the first ACT Government was elected. Under Minister Scholes, a consultant had been engaged to draft an ordinance for the private sector, and a working group was established with representation from employers, trade unions and government.

Responsibility was transferred to Worksafe Australia when that organisation was established in 1985. Its energies were directed into coordinating the development of legislation covering both the ACT private sector and its own employees. The end result was that an ACT ordinance was effectively stalled for two years. In November 1987 responsibility for developing and administering an ordinance was passed to the ACT Administration. There was a requirement for the ordinance to be broadly consistent with legislation covering Commonwealth employees, and this did not assist the speedy development of an ordinance.

It was the view of Minister Brown that the legislation should reflect the fact that the ACT operates as an island within New South Wales. The working group established by the ACT Administration also visited Victoria and South Australia to examine their legislation. Because the New South Wales legislation did not cover workplace arrangements for employers of fewer than 20 employees, New South Wales was considered deficient in that regard.

The report of this working party was released for comment in May 1988. Some 600 copies of the report were issued over the next two months. At the end of the consultation period the comments of employers, unions and other interested parties were reviewed in a process which anticipated the tripartite council provided for in the legislation.

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The first draft of an ordinance was released for comment in November 1988, and further discussions took place within the interim tripartite council. The comments of that group and other interested parties were taken into account in the drafting of the legislation which I now introduce.

I should make the point that there is nothing new or revolutionary in this legislation. The format of legislation is well established and follows a form derived from reforms in the UK in the early 1970s based on a report from a committee headed by Lord Robens. The key conclusion of the Robens report was that the greatest contributory factor to the appalling occupational health and safety record was workplace apathy.

For this reason the thrust of the legislation is to move away from rigid, inspectorial legislation towards encouraging workplace arrangements, with both workers and employers taking responsibility for their own safety arrangements.

Since Government will work in close cooperation with the industry partners, the legislation provides for the arrangements to be oversighted by a tripartite council which makes recommendations to the Minister on any matters necessary to improve the functioning of the legislation. The tripartite council will include representatives appointed by the Minister from employer nominees and from the trade union movement. It will report direct to me as Minister.

The legislation will apply to private sector employers, occupiers and employees and also to manufacturers, installers, suppliers and repairers of items used in ACT workplaces. Employers and others in workplaces already have a duty at common law to protect workers and others from hazards associated with their workplaces and system of work. This legislation translates this common law duty into a statutory duty and also requires employers to introduce new workplace health and safety arrangements to assist in making workplaces safe and healthy. The specific duties imposed on employers under the new legislation include insuring that the workplace and its equipment are safe and without risks to health, and that the system of work used is safe and without risks to health.

These duties of care are already imposed on employers under the common law. They are qualified duties of care in the sense that an employer must take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and to avoid exposing other people to health and safety risks arising from their industry. Employers are only liable for accidents which reasonable care could have prevented or foreseen.

The legislation also requires employers to implement special arrangements for their own work forces, namely, developing and issuing a workplace health and safety

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policy; forming designated work groups with occupational health and safety representatives and deputies where there are more than 10 employees; establishing workplace employer-employee cooperative arrangements to ensure the employee's health, safety and welfare at work.

These requirements will be new to many employers in the ACT, but will be familiar to employers operating in other States, particularly Victoria and South Australia, where similar arrangements apply.

The requirement to establish designated work groups - I shall refer to these by their initials DWGs - has attracted some criticism during the consultation process. In the interests of ensuring the widest possible support for this legislation, this Government has limited the requirement, at least initially, to those employers who employ more than 10 employees.

I shall make some further comments about DWGs. A DWG is a group of employees who the employer, or in some cases the registrar, declares under the legislation to be an identifiable group of workers. In general they will be a group of employees who can be, or are already, naturally grouped together by reference to some common unifying feature. This common feature may have to do with the particular work they perform, their location or distinctions made by the organisational structure of their employer - for example, factory as distinct from front office staff.

The legislation gives affected employers the task of dividing their work force into DWGs and provides some factors which employers can take into account when making this decision. There will be a requirement under the legislation for employers to consult with their employees before deciding. If the employees are members of a trade union, the union, too, should be consulted. Given that the authority to form DWGs is vested in the employers, there will be provision for employees to have the registrar review the decision where they feel that this has not been done properly.

Let me repeat that employers having 10 or fewer employees will not be required to perform DWGs or have workplace occupational health and safety representatives at this time. It is the Government's intention to review this requirement after a period with a view to extending this requirement.

The task of dividing a work force into DWGs should not present any significant problems for most employers. In most work situations employees tend to be grouped by some unifying factor and the employer's task will amount to formalising these existing divisions and ensuring that no employee is left unallocated. On large construction sites employers and subcontractors can form a single DWG to cover all workers.

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Once the DWGs have been formed the employer is required to notify the employees of their formation and to which each employee has been allocated. Each DWG then selects an occupational health and safety representative and deputy occupational health and safety representative by normal meeting procedure. Every member of the DWG is eligible to vote and stand for office but representatives must be members of the DWG which elects them. Provision will exist for the registrar to repeat the election on request of an employer, or 25 per cent of the employees in the DWG, where either has a problem with the selection.

Occupational health and safety representatives represent the workers of their DWG in day to day hazard issues which may arise. If they are to make a meaningful input into ensuring safe work systems, and given their powers under the legislation, it is clearly desirable that they receive an appropriate level of training.

The representative has no special legal duty to detect hazards or to act in respect of them. Employers should not therefore rely on a representative to make the workplace or system of work safe and healthy. This is a responsibility that rests with the employer.

Where representatives find a hazard in the workplace then they may negotiate with the employer for the elimination of the hazard. If those negotiations do not resolve the problem then the representative can issue a provisional improvement notice to the employer requiring that the hazard be remedied. In some limited situations where there is an immediate danger and where management is not present they may order that the work in the affected area stop.

Where an occupational health and safety representative issues a provisional improvement notice to an employer, the employer is required to carry out action to remove or remedy the hazard in accordance with the PIN - that is the provisional improvement notice - and within the time frame specified. Where the employer disagrees with the PIN or disputes its terms, then the employer may request that an occupational health and safety inspector from the registrar's office attend and review the PIN. The inspector then reviews the PIN and confirms, varies or revokes it. Either party may then ask the registrar to review the inspector's decision and/or appeal to an appeal body.

It is envisaged that occupational health and safety representatives will generally provide support to management in its occupational health and safety role by encouraging fellow workers to view positively measures introduced for their own health and safety. Deputies will stand in for the representatives when they are absent.

I have said already that employers with 10 or fewer employees are exempted at this stage from the obligation to

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form DWGs. However, all employers are encouraged to involve their employees in workplace arrangements that raise safety awareness and ensure potentially hazardous situations are recognised and speedily addressed.

The purpose of these requirements is not to make life harder for Canberra business. There is a need to break down adversarial and confrontationist attitudes. The legislation provides a framework by which employers can develop cooperative arrangements with their employees, and employees have a channel of communication to bring perceived hazards to the attention of the employer for action. Employees in workplaces without an occupational health and safety representative can ask an inspector to examine a perceived workplace hazard if they wish. The inspector will then take any necessary action to require the hazard to be remedied.

Reference is made in the legislation to occupational health and safety committees. These will be consultative bodies for employers and will not wield power to implement their recommendations. Employers will have discretion to implement or not implement their recommendations. Given the variety of employers in the ACT, details on the formation of committees will be worked out by the tripartite council. For the same reason, the legislation makes no provision for training. As Minister I shall determine training requirements on advice from the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Council.

The ACT Occupational Health and Safety Council will be a tripartite body to be established under the new legislation to provide advice to the Minister. In particular, it will review the operation of the scheme and advise on changes. It will also make recommendations to the Minister on matters such as training and on codes of practice for handling specific hazards. As Minister I shall be looking to the council to provide me with advice on training or codes before I make my decisions. The council will also provide a forum to consider occupational health and safety issues and to provide input to the processes of the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission.

Membership of the council will be by ministerial appointment. There will be nine members. Three members will represent the Government and three will represent employees. For these I shall seek nominations from the Trades and Labour Council. Three people will represent employers. Since there is no single employer organisation I shall have discussions with CARD, the Confederation of ACT Industry and other employer organisations.

Given its importance to the ACT economy and the level of hazards, I think it will be important that the building and construction industry be represented on the council.

Where I accept the advice of the council regarding a code of practice, it may be adopted by being enacted into

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legislation or by being gazetted. Gazetting of a code under the new legislation will mean that employers are obliged either to follow its provisions or to adopt something of equal or better efficacy than the code set.

There has been ill-informed criticism of this legislation that it somehow gives an undue role to trade unions. The ACT Labor Government makes no apology for insisting that there is an appropriate role for trade unions to play in improving the ACT's occupational health and safety performance. Trade unions provide a vital communication channel and resource regarding the identification and arrangement of workplace hazards.

In fact, there has been a significant change in the trade union movement's approach to occupational health and safety. Formerly, trade unions have limited their activities to criticising employers for their inadequacies and defending their members at risk by adversarial proceedings. In some cases they were driven to industrial action to protect their members.

From the time of the accord, the trade union movement has shown its willingness to join with employers and government to ensure an effective strategy with an emphasis on prevention of occupational accident and disease. I am certain that the trade union movement in the ACT will act with similar responsibility.

The legislation, however, requires only that employers consult with those unions which have existing membership among their work forces. The right of employers to manage their own affairs is not infringed by this legislation.

I must say that I find employer criticism of the Labor Government's commitment to effective occupational health and safety legislation inexplicable. The same employer groups have continually lobbied to have workers compensation premiums in the ACT reduced. More effective preventive measures will obviously be a significant step in winding back the costs which are limiting the competitiveness of ACT businesses.

Despite the protracted consultation process that this legislation has gone through, there remains some concern that still further opportunity should be given for co-ordination of this legislation.

I believe that this is a comprehensive and fair piece of legislation, which takes account of the range of views and concerns expressed by the parties. However, to ensure the widest possible support to this most significant piece of legislation, I propose to this Assembly that it be referred to a select committee for consideration and report. I now present the explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Stefaniak**) adjourned.

25 May 1989

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL 1989 - SELECT COMMITTEE

Motion (by **Mr Whalan**), by leave, agreed to:

That:

- (1) A select committee be appointed to inquire into and report, in the context of wide public consultation, on the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 1989.
- (2) The committee report by 27 June 1989.
- (3) The committee shall consist of Mr Moore, Mr Stefaniak and Mr Wood.
- (4) A majority of members constitutes a quorum of the committee.
- (5) The committee be provided with necessary staff, facilities and resources.
- (6) The foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Suspension of Standing Orders

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

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education from moving a motion now referring the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 1989 to a select committee.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY BILL 1989

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

That the Occupational Health and Safety Bill 1989 be now referred to a select committee.

Assembly adjourned at 4.39 pm