



DEBATES

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

22 August 1989

Tuesday, 22 August 1989

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MR SPEAKER (Mr Prowse) took the chair at 2.30 pm and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Schools Administration

MR MOORE: My question is directed to the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education. Last week the Department of Education released an information paper on extended school self-management, outlining the intention of the department to devolve responsibility for financial, administrative and personnel matters upon the schools.

Would the Minister explain how he envisages this added workload and responsibility is to be effected, since no reference was made to additional funding allocations to schools to cover the costs of implementing and running the program, nor yet has there been suggested any staffing increases at the school level or salary increases for those school based staff already in place and expected to take on the extra responsibilities.

MR WHALAN: Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Clearly, this is part of the Government's commitment to devolve and decentralise responsibility for administration of the school system, and it highlights the enhanced role of school boards in the management of schools, the formalisation of the process of the regional school boards and the opportunities that they have of a statutory nature to be actively involved in the school management process.

This, of course, is not new, and it has been part of the development of the collaborative arrangements between all the elements of the schools community. It is a process which has been going on for quite some time. Over a long period it has been gradually evolving and developing. Our system is a dynamic one which experiences change, most of which comes about gradually. I would like to see a situation emerging in the future in which there are greater opportunities for schools, both at the individual level and in adjoining regions, to participate in decision making, whereby they can share the resources that they have to suit the particular needs of a local community.

MR MOORE: I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Accepting the principle of devolving for administrative efficiency and so forth, is there any truth to the rumour that eight additional staffing positions are to be created at the administrative level of the department to facilitate the implementation of the program?

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MR WHALAN: The member, Mr Speaker, has quite consistently raised in this Assembly issues which he attributes to rumour and it has been a fairly consistent pattern of the Residents Rally party to base assertions on rumour. I think that it would be far more appropriate to raise matters of fact rather than questions of rumour.

Mr Moore: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The question was not answered.

MR SPEAKER: Deputy Chief Minister, would you like to follow that up, or have you decided that is the answer you would like to give?

Mr Kaine: Just expand on your answer a bit, Paul.

MR WHALAN: I have answered the question. I appreciate the invitation from the Leader of the Opposition to expand on my answer, but I think it is not fair to other members of the Assembly if all the time is taken up answering questions, based on rumour from Mr Moore.

Pialligo

MS MAHER: My question is directed to the Minister for Housing and Urban Services. Is she aware that residents of Pialligo have recently been slugged with a rate increase of almost 19 per cent? Is she also aware that those residents are not provided with services compatible with the rest of Canberra? For example, their roads are inadequate and full of potholes; they have no footpaths, and they have no ACTION bus service. Given these facts, what action is she going to take? Will she be cancelling the savage rate increases or are there plans to provide these essential services, and, if so, when?

MRS GRASSBY: I thank Ms Maher. Values for rating purposes are set by independent valuers, based on their perception of the value of the land. My department will investigate the problem of the roads, but it is not economically possible, and it never has been, to provide ACTION bus services to small enclave areas in Canberra, because there is very little use for them. But, as for the problem of roads, we will be definitely looking into that. I will have my department look into that.

Food Preparation

MR HUMPHRIES: My question is directed to the Minister for Community Services and Health. I refer him to the allocation of \$234,000 in the budget initial statement for the extension of "analytical and surveillance services associated with food preparation". Is it intended that this

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money should fund additional staff in the Minister's department? If so, how many?

MR BERRY: In relation to the staff, I do not have that information in front of me now, but I will certainly look into it and bring the matter back to the Assembly and report to Mr Humphries. In relation to the food services legislation which is covered by that budget announcement, the ACT has agreed, along with other States, to introduce uniform national food standards.

The changes will bring ACT legislation to the forefront and ensure that food standards in the ACT are properly prescribed and enforced. So it is a matter of dealing with the legislation and the enforcement of it. But, in relation to the staffing, I can look into it and report back in due course.

MR HUMPHRIES: I wish to ask a supplementary question. I am puzzled, Mr Speaker, as to why the Minister cannot tell me whether any additional staff will be created from this allocation because he told Pru Goward on 3 August:

We have put a quarter of a million dollars into it -

meaning the food preparation legislation -

and there will be a number of extra staff provided from that budget allocation.

Can the Minister say whether that is true, that additional staff will be provided from this budget allocation?

MR BERRY: I thank Mr Humphries for the supplementary question. If he had been paying close attention to my answer, he would have heard me say that I did not have the information in front of me and that I will make sure that I have accurate information when I report back to him in due course.

ACT Environment

MR WOOD: I direct a question to the Minister for Housing and Urban Services, a question which is of concern to us all, about the protection of the environment. Can she tell the Assembly what priority she gives to the protection of the ACT environment?

Mr Kaine: Are you going to spend all day answering that one, or just a couple of minutes?

MRS GRASSBY: What would you like? Would you like me to spend all day, or will I just give you a short answer?

Mr Kaine: Give us the shorter, edited version.

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MRS GRASSBY: The shorter version? I thank Mr Wood. As the house already knows, we have introduced a few Bills to the house to protect the environment, such as the Pesticides Bill, and the Nature Conservation (Amendment) Bill to give special protection to endangered species. Some of the things that I will be bringing in will be the reduction in the use of ozone depleting substances, water and air pollution and hazardous chemical waste control. I think my department is really on top of this, and I think it is doing a very good job.

Child-care Facilities

MR KAINE: I address a question to the Chief Minister in connection with two aspects of her portfolio - planning and the Treasury. It has to do with the provision of a child-care facility in the parliamentary zone at a cost of \$480,000, as shown in our budget. At the same time, there is provision in the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce budget for \$300,000 for a child minding facility at Black Mountain. Are the arguments for the ACT to pay for the child minding centre in the parliamentary zone not the same as those that would apply to a child minding centre at Black Mountain presumably for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation? If that is true, are we now likely to find the \$300,000 for that facility transferred to the ACT budget as well?

MS FOLLETT: I thank Mr Kaine for the question. I am afraid I do not have information on that matter available to me today, Mr Speaker, but I am happy to take the question on notice and provide a full answer at the first possible opportunity.

MR KAINE: I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr Speaker, on the simple question of justification. The justification for our paying for this facility in the Parliamentary Triangle is that it will be used by ACT citizens and residents. Is it not a fact that such a facility at Black Mountain CSIRO would also be used by ACT citizens and residents? Would the Chief Minister agree, therefore, that the justification for our paying or not paying for the two facilities is the same?

MS FOLLETT: Mr Speaker, I will take that question on notice.

Budget Consultancy

MR COLLAERY: My question is directed to the Chief Minister. Is it a fact that consultants were employed to assist with the preparation of the ACT budget or associated work? If so, what consultants were employed; were the services

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secured by tender; who are they, or who is it, if it is a company; is there a continuing expense; and what arrangements were made to ensure total confidentiality with respect to the preparation of the budget?

MS FOLLETT: I thank Mr Collaery for the question. Yes, Mr Speaker, the Government was indeed of the view that it needed to put a great deal of effort into explaining to the people of the ACT its budget and the unique budget process in which we have engaged, and it was therefore appropriate to hire an expert in this field. The register of consultants which is maintained by the ACT Administration was examined, and a number of consultants were considered.

The advice given to the Government was that Mr Bennett's company had the most appropriate expertise for this specific task and that it was available to commence work immediately. The costs involved were consistent with those charged by comparable consultants, and the contract engaged in was limited to \$10,000. It is expected that the costs involved will be considerably less than that amount.

MR COLLAERY: I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Is the consultancy continuing? Does the Government propose to use a consultant to prepare its final budget, or the consultant's final budget?

MS FOLLETT: Mr Speaker, the consultancy is not continuing; it has been completed. No, we will not be engaging a further consultancy.

Bus Service to Canberra Grammar School

MRS NOLAN: My question is directed to the Minister responsible for Industry, Employment and Education. Why are the Canberra Grammar School students - and there are at least 135 - from the Tuggeranong Valley being discriminated against with no school bus service being provided from the valley to the Canberra Grammar School?

MR WHALAN: Mr Speaker, the Government attempts to be even-handed in its involvement in the provision of bus services to children attending schools out of their residential areas. To that end, within the limited resources of the ACTION bus service and within the subsidy for bus travel which is provided by the Department of Education, there is a constant effort to ensure that that provision is applied as equitably as possible across the total community.

MRS NOLAN: I wish to ask a supplementary question. Is it the only college on the south side of Canberra that does not have such a bus service from the Tuggeranong Valley?

MR WHALAN: I must say quite honestly, Mr Speaker, that I do not know, but I will find out and let Mrs Nolan know.

Eastern Parkway

MR JENSEN: My question is directed to the Chief Minister. Is she aware that an attempt by the Tuggeranong Community Council to obtain a briefing from the Interim Territory Planning Authority on the Eastern Parkway, prior to a council representative appearing before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the ACT, failed following involvement by the Deputy Chief Minister's office? If she is not aware of those circumstances, will she give an assurance that recognised community groups like the Tuggeranong Community Council are provided with timely briefings on planning and development matters when requested?

MS FOLLETT: I thank Mr Jensen for the question. The answer is no, I was not aware of it. There has been no communication whatsoever to me on that matter. It is my view that, had the community service involved brought that matter to my attention, I would certainly have tried to get it the information that it sought, but no such approach has been made to me. Certainly it is entitled to a briefing on that matter, as is any other community group with an interest in it. I am unaware of it. I think it is surprising, if it is a matter of such concern to the group, that it has not been brought to the Government's attention, but if there is anything that I can do to rectify that matter I most certainly will.

MR JENSEN: I wish to ask a supplementary question. Will the Chief Minister undertake to ascertain the circumstances as to why the briefing was not made available?

MS FOLLETT: As I have said, I am not aware that the briefing was either sought or not made available, but certainly I am prepared to inquire into that and to advise the Assembly of any outcome that I might achieve.

Weights and Measures Legislation for Trucks

MR STEFANIAK: My question is addressed to the Minister for Housing and Urban Services. I understand the Government intends to introduce legislation concerning weights and measures for trucks in the ACT. If so, when is it intended to be introduced? Has the effect of any proposed regulation of weights and measures on owner-drivers of trucks been taken into account? Has the cost to the building and construction industry been the subject of a study?

MRS GRASSBY: At the moment we are still discussing it with building and transport industry groups and the unions, before this legislation is introduced, to see what they would like. One thing has been a problem. We have had discussions with the unions and with the truck owner-

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drivers. When we have the legislation drawn up, as usual I will consult every member of the opposition. But it has not been drawn up. I hope to bring it into the next sitting of the parliament.

Nursing Training

DR KINLOCH: My question is directed to the Minister for Community Services and Health. Could he give us details of the plans either to cut back on or to change the nature of nursing training in the ACT? If that training is to be cut back, why? Does this mean specifically that there is now full and adequate staffing of hostels and nursing homes for the aged in the ACT?

MR BERRY: In relation to the provision of nursing training, Dr Kinloch would know, Mr Speaker - and I must say I thank him for the question - that in the budget announcement the Government has indicated its intention to spend over \$4m on the provision of a nurse training facility at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. So in that sense, Mr Speaker, I would say that the provision of nursing training will be enhanced, and I would say on the same basis that there is no cutback in nursing training. In relation to the provision of nurses for aged persons institutions, if Dr Kinloch has any evidence of that, I would be perfectly happy to have a look at it and consult him on the matter.

Heritage Task Force

MR MOORE: My question is directed to the Chief Minister. As she is aware, the Residents Rally has been particularly supportive of her initiative in establishing the heritage task force. It has also supported the terms of reference for the task force. In the interests of ensuring that an appropriate community consultation process is not castrated, will the Chief Minister now give an undertaking that the schedule 1 list released by the task force yesterday will be subject to a period of comment - I would suggest four weeks - before the sites are released for demolition or alteration.

MS FOLLETT: Mr Speaker, I am certainly not in favour of castration of the work of the heritage task force or anybody else. One matter that might be of interest to the Assembly is that there has not exactly been an overwhelming response to the work of the heritage task force to date. I think it is fair to say that the community response to an invitation to comment on heritage aspects has been underwhelming. But, I think, now that a stage of work has been completed by the heritage task force, for which I am very grateful, it may well be appropriate to enter into a further stage of consultation, and I would certainly be happy to do that.

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Consultative Committee on Education

MR KAINE: I direct a question to the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education. I understand that he has established a broad based committee to advise him on the administration of the ACT government schools system. Could he tell us who the members of that broad based committee are; how many times it has met; and on what matters it has advised the Minister up to this point.

MR WHALAN: The members of the consultative committee, Mr Speaker, include a chairperson, representatives of parents, nominated by the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations and also by the Canberra Preschool Society, members nominated by the ACT Teachers Federation and the Public Sector Union. In addition to those, there are two student representatives nominated by the ACT Secondary Students Council.

The advisory committee was only recently established. It has met on one occasion, and will meet for the second time next week. The issue which it considered at its first meeting was a very detailed examination, over several hours, of the background to the Government's budget statement, in which Treasury officials provided detailed explanations relating to the bases upon which the Government presented its statement. It included a very lengthy discussion on the role of the Commonwealth Grants Commission and its impact on budgeting in the ACT. Then followed a detailed examination of the way in which the Government's budget statement related to ACT education.

MR KAINE: I wish to ask a supplementary question. Mr Speaker, I thought my question was quite specific. I did not want to know what organisations were represented; I asked who the members of the committee were. I wonder whether the Minister could tell us who those people are.

MR WHALAN: The chairman, Mr Speaker, is Mr Alan Burnett from the Australian National University. The Teachers Federation representatives include - - -

A member: Rosemary Richards.

MR WHALAN: No, it is not Rosemary Richards. Audrey Duke is one of them. I am sorry that I do not have the comprehensive list here with me, Mr Speaker. If there is any particular purpose to this line of questioning, I will make the full list available after question time.

Mr Kaine: I think the question is plain enough, Mr Speaker. I think the Minister knows why I asked it, too.

MR WHALAN: It will probably be of more benefit to the Assembly if I make the full list available. It is quite a lengthy list of people who are on the committee, and we can be more accurate in that.

Arthritis Foundation

MR HUMPHRIES: Mr Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister for Community Services and Health. Has he received letters from members and supporters of the Arthritis Foundation of Australia - ACT Inc. asking him for assistance in order to keep the foundation open? Has the Minister yet replied to any of these letters and, if not, why not? What action does the Minister intend to take on the matter, or is he going to sit this one out?

MR BERRY: I thank Mr Humphries for the question. If I take the last point first, Mr Speaker, Mr Humphries can be assured that I will, as I do on all occasions, resist the temptation to sit issues out, and I will be dealing with this one appropriately in the course of my duties. I have received a number of representations from members of the ACT Branch of the Arthritis Foundation regarding the funding provided for their organisation.

In 1988-89 the foundation received a grant of \$10,520 from the ACT community health grants program, in line with the interim funding arrangements of which everybody is aware because of the introduction of self-government in the ACT. The funding was announced for services under the ACT grants program, and the foundation has been guaranteed continued funding at its current level until 31 December 1989. I expect that this will allow the foundation to maintain its current level of service to arthritis sufferers in the ACT.

The Government is currently considering a range of options for the future administration of these grants programs. Those options are aimed at making funding for essential services more secure and, of course, more responsive to community needs.

I anticipate that announcements regarding the arrangements for the 1989-90 grants process will be made shortly. Funding for the arthritis program from 1 January 1990 will be assessed in the light of the new funding arrangements and the identified priority needs of the ACT community.

Mr Humphries: Mr Speaker, more in the way of a point of order than anything else - - -

MR SPEAKER: Is it a supplementary question?

Mr Humphries: It is a point of order initially, Mr Speaker. I know that you have expressed the view on past occasions that supplementary questions are to be avoided by members, and I accept and understand that ruling, but it is very difficult when questions are asked of the Government successively by different members on this side of the house and no attempt is made in reality even to answer those questions.

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The question I have asked the Minister has not been answered, as is common with many other questions being asked today. I ask the Minister, as a supplementary question: Exactly how much is the Arthritis Foundation, not the arthritis program, receiving this year, until 31 December, and what response is the Minister going to make to the specific complaints of the people from the Arthritis Foundation who have written to him?

MR BERRY: Mr Speaker, I take it that it is not really a point of order; it is really a supplementary question. I think I made it clear in my answer that the foundation received a grant of \$10,520 from the ACT community health grants program. I also said that, in line with interim funding arrangements announced for services funded under the ACT grants program, the foundation has been guaranteed continued funding at its current level to 31 December 1989.

In relation to the answering of questions, I think I answered the question about sitting on things. I have indicated fairly clearly that I am not going to sit on things. I also made it clear about funding for the Arthritis Foundation. I think that is responding to the question about what I was going to do about the complaints. I do not have the letter in front of me, so I am not completely aware of all of the complaints, and I am not able to answer each of them in detail here. But what I can say to you is that from 1 January 1990 its application will be assessed in the light of the new funding arrangements about which I talked in my answer and the identified priority needs of the ACT community.

I do not know what more I can do in relation to the question, other than to indicate to Mr Humphries that I am prepared to have a look at the letter from the Arthritis Foundation and consult him about the issues raised by it.

Personal Explanation

MR WHALAN (Minister for Industry, Employment and Education): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

MR SPEAKER: Proceed.

MR WHALAN: During question time, in a question addressed to the Chief Minister, Mr Jensen made a most outrageous and mendacious allegation in relation to the Tuggeranong Community Council. His allegation was that my office had in some way intervened to prevent the Tuggeranong Community Council receiving a briefing from the Interim Territory Planning Authority in relation to the Eastern Parkway.

We have been informed by the Interim Territory Planning Authority that it is not aware of any approach whatsoever made by the Tuggeranong Community Council or any representative of the Tuggeranong Community Council for a

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briefing on the Eastern Parkway and that, if such a request had been made, it assures us that that briefing would have been provided. In addition to that, officers of my department have contacted us to say that they also were not aware of any request for such a briefing and thus it was impossible for them to intervene in any way whatsoever. It is yet another example of misrepresentation by the Katharine West party.

Tender for Badges

MR BERRY: Mr Collaery asked a question in relation to the provision of badges for the ACT Ambulance Service. That was on 26 July 1989. I seek leave, if the Assembly does not wish to hear my verbal response to it, to table that answer.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, proceed.

MR BERRY: I seek leave to table that answer, but I can respond, Mr Speaker, if you hand the answer back. The question raised by Mr Collaery was:

...can the Minister tell the Assembly why a tender for the supply of badges to the ACT Ambulance Service was not awarded to a local ACT manufacturer when his price was lower and the quality equivalent? Is the Minister aware that the same supplier tendered for a contract in Western Australia for badges and was informed by the Western Australian Government that it was a matter of government policy to buy only Western Australian made products?

My response, Mr Speaker, is that the manufacturer that has been identified wrote to me on 24 July 1989, and I have subsequently replied to his letter. In relation to the manufacturer's unsuccessful quotation for the embroidery of badges, the decision was made on the basis of the ACT Department of Community Services and Health tender policy. That policy states that the "lowest suitable quotation or tender is to be accepted".

All prospective suppliers' samples underwent a thorough assessment, including both the price and the quality of the badges. The badges are to be worn on shirts, which require frequent washing, as well as on jumpers and jackets. An important consideration for my department was the badges withstanding the wear and tear of daily washing. My department, as an additional comparison, also contacted other users of the suppliers' badges.

I was informed by the manufacturer that a Western Australian Government agency, as a matter of policy, bought only Western Australian made products. However, this appears contrary to the national preference agreement which was ratified by all State governments in 1986, and my officers

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have asked the ACT Government purchasing group to consider this matter urgently.

Radiotherapy Treatment

MR BERRY: A further question was raised on 26 July by Mr Moore. It was:

Has the Minister received a letter from the Royal Australasian College of Radiologists detailing the parlous state of radiotherapy in Australia? If so, what steps has the Minister taken to ensure that ACT patients do not suffer as a result of the problems identified by the college?

My response is as follows: The Royal Australasian College of Radiologists has recently mounted a national campaign to publicise a shortage in equipment and staffing levels in radiotherapy services throughout Australia. I have replied to the college's letter on this issue.

I am fully aware of the need to maintain and improve services in this area. As such, the ACT Department of Community Services and Health is currently in the first stage of a five-year equipment renewal program for radiotherapy services. Computer equipment to the value of \$600,000 to improve patient planning has already been purchased. Future equipment requirements include the installation of a \$2m high-energy linear accelerator by 1995.

The need for additional staff is also being addressed. In developing the renewal program, my department will closely examine the specific staff requirements and the issue of recruitment.

In addition, my department will be preparing a statement on the future planning needs of oncology services at Woden Valley Hospital. In this context, I have asked for a report to be provided to me to ensure an appropriate service is provided to the community.

MR BERRY (Minister for Community Services and Health): I would like to make a personal explanation in relation to a question that was raised by Dr Kinloch earlier about nurses. My response to Dr Kinloch's question related to nursing staff generally, and I feel that the area of nursing to which Dr Kinloch was referring was enrolled nurses, although that was not mentioned specifically. I might respond in relation to that, and it may clear the matter up, although I have already indicated that I would be prepared to consult Dr Kinloch on any advice that he might have in relation to nursing shortages in aged persons institutions.

There is currently an oversupply of enrolled nurses in the ACT, and a temporary slowdown in training will allow the

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oversupply to be gradually taken up. My department has already undertaken extensive consultations with the Institute of Technical and Further Education, the Canberra College of Advanced Education and unions, with the objective of transferring this training program to the tertiary education sector in 1991, and that is part of the budget papers.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

MR SPEAKER: I would like to go back to the item on the daily program headed "Statement by Speaker". I had to pass by that one as neither Mr Collaery nor Mr Kaine was in the house at the time.

On 23 May I informed the Assembly that I had received a letter from Mr Collaery, leader of the Residents Rally, expressing concern at the legality of the Assembly's action on 11 May 1989 in amending standing orders to provide for the election of a Leader of the Opposition and in proceeding with that election.

The letter asked that I seek legal advice on behalf of the Assembly on this matter. I indicated that I would take steps to obtain legal advice and that, when I had received it and considered the matter in detail, I would make a further statement to the Assembly.

I instructed Macphillamy Cummins and Gibson, barristers and solicitors, to brief Professor Jack Richardson for this purpose. I have received Professor Richardson's advice, and I now table it.

No doubt, members will wish to study the opinion in detail, but I will summarise it by stating that it confirms the propriety and legality of the actions taken by the Assembly on 11 May. Professor Richardson advises that in his opinion the decisions of the Assembly were correct in law and in accordance with parliamentary conventions.

Members will recall that, during the ballot for the election of a Leader of the Opposition, Government members of the Assembly abstained from voting after advising the Assembly that they would not participate in the ballot. The opinion suggests that the Assembly should consider a formal amendment to the standing orders to provide that members of the party or parties in government be excluded from the election of Leader of the Opposition.

I advise the Assembly that I will ensure that this matter is examined by the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures during its forthcoming review of the standing orders. Any conclusions reached by the committee will of course be reported to the Assembly, which will determine whether or not the standing order should be amended. I table the following paper:

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Appointment of Leader of the Opposition by the ACT Legislative Assembly - Legal advice from J.E. Richardson, 14 August 1989.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister): Pursuant to subsection 25(4) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988, I table a statement in relation to the availability of the Supply Act 1988-89 at the Commonwealth Government Bookshop on the day the law was notified. I present the following paper:

Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act - Non-availability of laws - Statement - Supply Act 1989-90.

MR WHALAN (Minister for Industry, Employment and Education): Mr Speaker, pursuant to section 6 of the Subordinate Laws Act 1989, I table the gazettal notices for a number of declarations and ministerial determinations and two regulations made by the Executive. To assist members, I also table a schedule of the subordinate laws and instruments to be laid before the Assembly, which identifies each declaration, determination and regulation, and the editions of the Australian Capital Territory Gazette in which each may be found. Copies of the gazette notices and regulations are available from the Assembly Secretariat. I present gazettal notices for the following:

ACT Institute of Technical and Further Education Act - Determination of fees, dated 22 June 1989.

Adoption of Children Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Agents Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Architects Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Betting (Totalisator Agency) Act - Determination of percentage, dated 25 July 1989.

Building Act - Determination of fees 1989 - No. 9.

Business Franchise (Tobacco and Petroleum Products) Act - Determination, dated 14 August 1989.

City Areas Leases Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Community and Health Service Act - Determination of fees and charges - 1989 -

No. 1.

No. 1 (Corrigendum).

No. 2.

Co-operative Societies Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Dangerous Goods Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

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Dog Control Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Hawkers Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Housing Assistance Act -

Long stay caravan housing assistance program - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Scheme for providing concessional home loans - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Scheme for providing or assisting in providing dwelling houses - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Instruments Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Lakes Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Lotteries Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Machinery Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Motor Omnibus Services Act - Determination of charges - 1989 - No. 10.

Motor Traffic Act -

Determination of fees - dated -

7 June 1989 (No. 8).

25 July 1989.

Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Regulations (Amendment) - Regulations 1989 - No. 13.

Taxi and Private Hire Car Regulations (Amendment) - Regulations 1989 - No. 18.

Nature Conservation Act - Declarations (2), dated 12 July 1989.

Nature Conservation Act -

Declarations (2), dated 12 July 1989.

Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Plumbers, Drainers and Gasfitters Board Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Pounds Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Rabbit Destruction Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Racecourses Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Real Property Act - Determination of fees (2), dated 25 July 1989.

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Registration of Deeds Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Roads and Public Places Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Scaffolding and Lifts Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Surveyors Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Taxation (Administration) Act - Determination for the purposes of the Payroll Tax Act, dated 14 August 1989.

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Unit Titles Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Water Pollution Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

Weights and Measures Act - Determination of fees, dated 25 July 1989.

COMMONWEALTH BUDGET 1989-90 **Ministerial Statement and Papers**

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister), by leave: I would like to speak today about the Commonwealth Government's budget, its relevance to the ACT budget and other matters of a financial management nature. The Commonwealth budget is a responsible and fair response to national economic conditions. The Federal Treasurer has forecast economic growth of 2.75 per cent this year, with a similar increase in employment.

The ACT, with its increasing emphasis on expanding the private sector, should benefit from this continued growth in the national economy. In particular, I welcome the additional assistance for people most in need, including age pensioners, women and homeless youth.

The ACT Government has a strong commitment to social justice, and the Federal Government's initiatives will complement our efforts in this area. One specific new initiative that will be of great benefit to our young people is the provision of capital funds of \$166,000 to provide for medium- to long-term youth accommodation. The ACT will meet the matching requirements of the Commonwealth under the supported accommodation assistance program, to provide a total of \$300,000 in capital and recurrent assistance for youth accommodation.

There has been some concern expressed about the level of the Commonwealth capital works program in the ACT. It should be noted that expenditure by the Commonwealth in 1989-90 will be around \$84m. In addition, \$105m will be spent over the next two years on the new Social Security complex in Tuggeranong, which is being built for the Commonwealth under a lease-back arrangement.

The capital works program outlined in the ACT budget statement of 25 July will also make an important contribution to the level of construction activity in the ACT. Expenditure on capital works by the ACT government sector in 1989-90 will be over \$200m.

The most significant aspect of the Commonwealth budget this year in relation to the ACT is what it does not do. It does not set priorities or determine programs for Territory functions. Priorities and programs for ACT functions are, for the first time, the responsibility of the ACT rather than the Commonwealth Government. Commonwealth funding for the ACT in this year and future years is primarily

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determined through the Premiers Conference rather than the normal Commonwealth budgetary process relating to its departments and authorities.

The Premiers Conference agreed to real reductions in Commonwealth funding for the States. The Commonwealth budget confirms this, with the growth in Commonwealth general purpose payments to the States of only 3.2 per cent in nominal terms. This will be adjusted through the year to reflect changes in the actual outcome of the consumer price index.

Whilst the ACT has been treated on the same basis as the States, Commonwealth appropriations to the ACT for 1989-90 also incorporate additional funding, in line with the real terms guarantee. The additional amount is to be paid into an ACT transitional funding trust account established by the Commonwealth. I have written to the Prime Minister seeking release of these funds for restructuring projects to assist the ACT to achieve parity with State-type funding arrangements.

The 1989 Premiers Conference also agreed to major changes to the Commonwealth-State housing agreement in which the ACT will participate. An amount of \$7.1m, which was advanced by the Commonwealth to the ACT at a concessional interest rate in 1988-89, will be provided as a non-repayable grant as a specific purpose payment for housing in 1989-90.

The Commonwealth is also providing significantly increased funding in joint Commonwealth-ACT programs. These include increased funding from the Commonwealth for hospital grants, funds to combat AIDS, supported accommodation assistance, legal aid, water and sewerage assistance and other programs. The Commonwealth has also agreed to maintain its funding in real terms for national capital influences on local government programs in the ACT.

One Commonwealth budget measure about which the Government is concerned is the proposed sale of Gowrie Hostel. There has been no consultation over this proposal, either on future housing needs of its residents or on the sale of an asset declared as national land only a few months ago. The Government will be taking this up with the Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, the Commonwealth's budget will require little change to the ACT Government's draft budget. The Commonwealth has changed some of the parameters we have used in calculating our estimates, and this will have the effect of marginally increasing recurrent outlays. This will be largely offset by an increase in general purpose funding which has also resulted from the changed parameters. I have provided, for members' information, a reconciliation on Commonwealth funding. In essence, however, the ACT budget remains on track.

Mr Speaker, the Commonwealth budget came midway through the consultation phase of the ACT Government's budget. It is

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appropriate to review not only the Commonwealth budget's impact but also the current state of the consultation process and comment to date.

Initial reaction to the budget was positive, and the debate in the Assembly was restrained. The budget consultation process has started smoothly, and I welcome the participation of Mr Kaine, Mr Collaery and Mr Duby. However, just recently there has been some general discussion about the Government's budget strategy. Some comments have been directed at whether the proposed cuts are sufficient, and others have suggested that the cuts are too large. Mr Speaker, such comments demand a response.

The Leader of the Opposition has criticised the Government's intention to cut the overfunding identified by the Commonwealth Grants Commission by only \$10m.

I would suggest that the task of setting a budget strategy after only a few weeks in office was undertaken in a responsible way by the Government. It would be a very foolish government indeed that would advocate major changes in direction, of the magnitude he suggests, within such a short time frame. As an example, he suggests bigger cuts in the health budget. Mr Speaker, I am not going to take to vital services, like the health service, with an axe.

When we came to office, a steering committee was considering Dr Kearney's advice from late last year to establish a principal hospital in Canberra. Mr Kaine and all other members of this Assembly have been given summary material on the various options available. We are talking about capital expenditure of at least \$150m over the next few years. As an offset there will be potentially large savings - up to \$8.5m per annum - in recurrent expenditure, to be achieved over the longer term.

Such decisions must be taken with proper analysis. The whole fabric of Canberra's health services faces great change. The steering committee has just reported, and my colleague the Minister for Community Services and Health will be tabling the report this week. Also I will make a statement to the Assembly once the Government has considered that committee's report.

On the other hand, Mr Speaker, there have been some genuine concerns raised in the budget consultative process about the differential effects of the recent land revaluations on the amount of rates that will be paid by certain ratepayers. This is especially so in the commercial sector, in which some revaluations have risen by as much as 250 per cent. Mr Speaker, I must point out that the Government had no control over the amount of these increases. The land valuations were independently reassessed in accordance with the triennial statutory requirement. Where residential ratepayers experience genuine hardship in meeting their rates obligations, they may apply for consideration under one of the available assistance schemes. I have asked the

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Treasury to examine options for similar arrangements to apply to non-residential leaseholders as well.

Another area of concern that I am having examined is the difficulty experienced by first home buyers, particularly in the current economic climate. For those who are already purchasing a home, the Commonwealth, in its budget, has provided a very welcome \$248,000 for mortgage relief in the ACT. But there are a number of people who are unable to enter the housing market at all. My Government recognises their plight and will be examining the scope for some assistance for this group within the restraints of the budget.

I would now like to turn to some financial management issues. Some members of the Assembly have said that, on coming to government, we should have established an independent audit of the ACT's financial position. Mr Speaker, this Government has always maintained that it is not only prudent but also essential to have a sound understanding of the ACT's financial position on handover from the Commonwealth.

This does not, however, require an exhaustive and expensive examination by outside organisations. As I advised in answer to a question on this issue in the Assembly on 23 May, a review of ACT finances has been commenced by this Government to ensure that a strategy is developed for the efficient management of the assets and liabilities of the ACT Government.

Mr Speaker, the process of realigning ACT finances as a consequence of self-government was not completed on 11 May 1989; rather it was just beginning. The highest priority is to establish a viable financial relationship with the Commonwealth. A range of issues could not be resolved prior to self-government, as they involved policy matters that could be resolved only at government-to-government level. These include undertakings foreshadowed by the Commonwealth to provide establishment assistance, unique national capital aspects of ACT finances, a question of funding capacity for transferred functions and liabilities, and the need to strengthen the ACT's financial position in the context of Commonwealth-State financial relations.

It is timely, having passed our first 100 days in office, to advise the Assembly of some of the major outcomes, commencing with the areas of potential liability, to show the progress the Government has made in resolving the ACT's initial financial position. Firstly, I turn to superannuation. The employer superannuation liabilities of the ACT Government, including its statutory authorities, accumulate at \$60m per year. Of this large amount, some \$13m is provided for by agencies which have the capacity to do so. Major examples are the ACT Electricity and Water, municipal services and, in part, the hospital system. For the rest, it is an accumulating, unfunded liability.

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Naturally, we would like to set aside the full \$60m each year so that future governments do not have to meet the superannuation costs arising from the provision of government services in past years. But the Government - indeed any government - has to have the capacity to do so. The Commonwealth suggested adding to the ACT's general revenue grant an amount of some \$47m in 1988-89 to be paid back to the Commonwealth's consolidated revenue, together with the \$13m generated from the ACT's revenue. The Commonwealth would then pay superannuation benefits as they emerge. However, that seemingly simple solution was an unsatisfactory option. It would have placed the ACT in the same relationship with the Commonwealth for superannuation purposes as a Commonwealth statutory authority like Telecom or Australia Post.

So the Government is currently negotiating with the Commonwealth on an alternative arrangement. The Commonwealth will pay benefits to retirees and meet the full costs of superannuation liabilities accruing until 1 July 1989. The proportion of the emerging benefit that arises from service with the ACT Government after 1 July 1989 will be reimbursed to the Commonwealth by the ACT on an annual basis. Obviously this amount will be very small in the first few years and will be based on actuarial assessments.

Allowances made by the Grants Commission in future reviews for superannuation expenditures will be available to the ACT. The ACT can then decide within the limits of its resources how much it wishes to set aside for its superannuation liabilities. Furthermore, the payments formerly made to the Commonwealth consolidated revenue fund by ACT agencies will in future be retained by the ACT.

The Commonwealth treated these payments as revenue. The ACT will set the funds aside as part of its reserves and invest them. We will then have the necessary funds to reimburse the Commonwealth for benefits paid in future years to former employees of these agencies. We shall, of course, be keeping this major financial issue in the area of Commonwealth-ACT relations under close review because of the continuing changes in relevant Commonwealth legislation.

Mr Speaker, I now wish to turn to the question of debt. Prior to self-government, a debt profile was established for specific agencies, including the electricity and water authority and the ACT Housing Trust. Principles had also been established for determining an appropriate level of historical municipal debt. The servicing of debt in all of these instances is already being met from the income streams of the respective agencies.

I have also put to the Commonwealth the proposition that the Territory should start with a zero debt position for assets that produce little or no income to service debt. This mirrors the agreement reached for the Northern Territory. In this way, the level of debt in future will be under our control. As for superannuation, the Commonwealth Grants

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Commission will in time establish debt servicing expenditure needs for the ACT without the risk of an inherited debt liability exceeding this capacity.

The ACT's contingent liabilities arising from claims of an insurance nature are being addressed in some detail. Following a major consultancy by Alexander Stenhouse Ltd, the Government has decided that the ACT will, as is the case with other governments, adopt a self-insurance policy. However, recognising the smaller financial base of the Territory, I have sought from the Commonwealth an indemnity for claims in excess of \$1m for two years.

We are also identifying the areas of government which should be subject to more detailed risk management review and implementation. This will complement the Government's initiatives in the field of occupational health and safety. The ACT will also participate, for the first time, in Commonwealth-State natural disaster relief arrangements.

A further area of liability inherited from the Commonwealth is accrued long service leave. There has been an actuarial assessment of the extent of the unfunded liability transferred from the Commonwealth. The assessment estimates the liability to be \$58m as at 1 July 1989. Accordingly, I have written to the Commonwealth proposing that a capital assistance grant of \$58m be made to the ACT Government in 1989-90 to compensate for the accrued long service leave liabilities transferred from the Commonwealth to the ACT Government and for which financial capacity has not been transferred.

The other side of any review of a major organisation's balance sheet is, of course, an analysis of its assets. In the area of fixed assets, the Government is undertaking a review of property to ensure that its approach to asset management is both responsible and responsive to the changing needs of government. For example, the Government has put forward a plan to use surplus school buildings and land. Community views are very important on sensitive issues such as these, but getting value for assets is an essential part of future financial planning.

In the area of current assets, the Treasury conducts a cash management operation which trades actively on the national money market to ensure that the Government obtains the maximum return on its cash balances. The initial budget statement includes \$10m from this source, and systems are still being improved in this area.

Mr Speaker, the Government is also conscious that on self-government day it inherited an audit Act which was essentially a working adaptation of the Commonwealth Act. The financial administration and audit legislation of the ACT is the most fundamental protection that this Assembly and the community at large have as to the probity of government action. This is an area in which the States have expended considerable attention over recent years, and the Government wants an audit system appropriate to ACT needs.

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On 5 July this year, the Government asked the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to examine principles relating to appropriate financial administration and audit legislation. I look forward to the opportunity that this provides for wide-ranging input from the community and the business sector. The committee synthesis of their views and the aspirations of the Assembly will provide vital building blocks in this important area of legislation.

To sum up, Mr Speaker, both the direct and indirect effects of the Commonwealth budget on the ACT contained no surprises. The Premiers Conference and Loan Council arrangements are the single most important determinant of direct funding from the Commonwealth to the Territory. This was known prior to the development of the Government's budget strategy, and it was the foundation on which it was built. The Commonwealth's economic and fiscal strategy was generally in line with our expectations.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, it is easy to make sweeping statements about the budget strategy and the need for bigger cuts, and to demand wide-ranging, expensive reviews and audits. The Government has been taking note of important concerns about the budget, and I welcome the many helpful, constructive comments. As well, we have gone a long way towards ensuring the ACT is not burdened with levels of inherited financial liabilities that would jeopardise future ACT Government flexibility.

Mr Speaker, I present the following papers:

1989-90 Commonwealth Budget - Ministerial statement, 22 August 1989; and
Commonwealth Net Payments to the ACT - 1988-89 and 1989-90.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

MR KAINÉ (Leader of the Opposition) (3.34): Mr Speaker, I have been listening almost open-mouthed for the last 25 minutes to a statement which I thought the Chief Minister said was to do with the Federal budget. She seems to have traversed every subject matter that could possibly be dragged up in relation to anything financial, and I do not know whether she did that in order to try to obscure the trail, to try to put us off the scent of the consequences of the Federal budget for the ACT, or whether she really thinks that some of the things about which she talked were relevant.

I did detect, Mr Speaker, that, amongst other things, she is very sensitive to the question of budgeting - but not the Federal budgeting; rather her own draft budget. Otherwise, I cannot imagine why, with a consultative committee in place, which is not going to lead to anything conclusive for at least two more meetings, she chooses now to traverse

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matters that that consultative committee presumably will be assisting her to resolve.

I can assume only that the Chief Minister feels she is on very shaky ground with her budget and feels compelled to defend herself against some of the comments that have been made, not only by me, as Leader of the Opposition, and my colleague Mr Collaery, but also by many members of the community, many representatives of organisations of all kinds out there, who are making it clear to the Chief Minister that her version of the budget, as presented for discussion, is not acceptable to them.

Hence, I can conclude only that she has taken this opportunity today to try to assure the public that this consultative process is indeed a consultative process and that indeed their comments will be listened to. But I will wait with great interest, Mr Speaker, until the end of September when the budget is finally brought down, to see just how, if at all, it does change from the document that was presented to us for discussion in the first place.

The Chief Minister traversed such matters as independent audit of assets and public debt, superannuation and the Audit Act. It is fascinating, since the Audit Act, as she acknowledged, has been referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for review. Why, then, does the Minister raise the question in the context of a budget debate, particularly one that is supposed to have to do with the effects of the Commonwealth budget? Why does she intend to anticipate debate that will take place when the opposition members of this house demand that an external audit of assets and public debt be carried out? I use the word "demand" advisedly, because it will be a decision of this Assembly that the Government, kicking and screaming, will conduct such an audit. Superannuation is a wide-ranging subject that has not been raised in the context of the budget debate, but we were subjected to a 10-minute talk on superannuation.

Mr Speaker, I would like now to get back to the subject which I thought this debate was about, and that is the effects of the Federal budget on the ACT, because it does have some very significant effects on us, despite the Chief Minister's assertion that it does not. To begin, Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has stated - she stated it before and she stated it again today - that the Federal budget "is a responsible and fair response to national economic conditions" and will not require the ACT Government to make any changes to the initial statement already issued for the ACT budget. That is a very confident statement, Mr Speaker, but wrong. Rosemary is wrong again.

That assertion by the Chief Minister really warrants some reflection, because either it indicates that she is totally inflexible in terms of her budget and will not change it despite the facade, the charade, of community consultation that is taking place, or perhaps she simply does not

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understand the issues. Let me make a couple of points. I think her assertions are wrong, Mr Speaker, both in terms of the assumptions underlying the Commonwealth budget and ours and in terms of the content of those two budgets.

Let us look at the assumptions. The assumptions behind the Federal budget are, first of all, a consumer price index growth in this fiscal year of 7.5 per cent, wages growth of 7 per cent and an employment growth of 2.75 per cent. The Chief Minister's initial budget statement says that the assumptions behind her budget are a 6.9 per cent growth in CPI, 6.5 per cent growth in wages, and 2 per cent growth in employment. They are very significant differences. Either the Chief Minister or the Federal Treasurer is wrong.

I am not going to argue which one of them is right, but the fact is that, if the Federal Treasurer happens to be right, the Chief Minister's assumptions have to be seriously questioned. There must surely be required changes to the ACT budget if you assume that her assumptions were wrong and that those of the Federal Treasurer were right. You cannot proceed with a budget in its present form based on a 6.9 per cent growth in the CPI if it is going to be 7.5 per cent; nor can you proceed with an assumed 6.5 per cent increase in wages if that wages increase is going to be 7 per cent; nor can you proceed on the basis of a 2 per cent growth in employment if it is going to be 2.75 per cent. You might as well not budget at all if you are going to proceed with your assumptions being that far out.

Let us look at her example of an assumption of a 6.5 per cent wages growth. This assumption was first made, Mr Speaker, in the forward estimates produced on 9 June this year. But, since then, the forward estimate for wages and salaries has been revised downwards by \$13.4m - I quote from a government paper - "due to lower national wage case provision in reviewal of revised estimates from the Industrial Relations Branch".

In other words, this statement indicates, Mr Speaker, that the original 6.5 per cent wage growth assumption has been revised downwards to an unstated, lesser percentage. Meanwhile, as I say, the Federal Treasurer has used a budget assumption of 7 per cent for wage growth - clearly, a greatly different figure.

The validity of the figure used by the Chief Minister in her initial budget statement must be questioned, and the gross effect on the total local budget, of a billion dollars plus, must surely have to be taken into account. The other two basic assumptions about CPI and employment changes must be questioned also. They raise serious doubts, in my view, about the validity of the entire draft budget. Some major revisions would now appear to be mandatory, but the Chief Minister says it does not require any change in her budget at all.

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I must comment also on the Federal Government's commitment to the ACT, prior to the granting of self-government, to maintain real levels of financial assistance to the ACT. The Chief Minister keeps defending the Commonwealth Government on this matter, and I think she is wrong to do so. Simply put, the Commonwealth has not stood up to its promise to maintain its real terms expenditure in this Territory. It has reneged on its promise, and it is using the establishment of its so-called special trust fund of \$22.7m to obscure the fact. To date I have seen no clear evidence that these moneys or any part of them will actually be made available for use by the ACT Government.

I note the Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister, but I cannot think of any reason why the Prime Minister would abdicate from his earlier position that they are going to stay in a hollow log and that we are not going to get them. In addition to this \$22.7m that the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer have stuck in their hollow log, there is an amount in our budget of \$67.7m which has been assessed as payable by the ACT to the Commonwealth as the amount owing for fully serviced and partially serviced land transferred to this Territory.

The Commonwealth has arbitrarily deducted this amount from the 1989-90 payments to be made to the ACT. In other words, it has already taken the dough. This simply is not acceptable. At best, you could argue that the money should be payable to the Commonwealth only at the time that the land to which it relates is actually sold - and I will guarantee that most of it has not yet been sold. It should not be taken from the ACT without negotiation and agreement - and I have no knowledge of any negotiation or agreement on the subject - nor should it be taken in one lump sum. There is simply no justification for the Commonwealth to do that arbitrarily.

I understand that the amount is rather elusive, having increased from a figure of about \$50m in April to a round figure of \$68m on 25 July of this year. That is an average growth of half a million dollars a week. What are we talking about? Why is the Commonwealth arbitrarily and unilaterally deciding to stick this money in its own piggy bank? Furthermore, I understand that there is interest accumulating on this, and interest on \$68m is a lot of money.

Such a debt, if it were sustained in this fiscal year, has the potential for a major dislocation of the ACT's financial stability, just at a time when we need to be adjusting for the withdrawal by the Commonwealth of its extra support 18 months or so downstream from that. The Chief Minister is very serene about this. She says, "No problem at all. We don't have to change our budget".

The Federal Government seems determined to victimise the ACT financially, despite its previous undertakings. Yet, apart from a token objection at the Premiers Conference, our

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Government - our Chief Minister - has done and said nothing on this vital matter. It seems reluctant to offend or upset its Federal partners. The ACT taxpayer, Mr Speaker, must pay the price eventually if nothing is done about this.

I turn to the Federal capital works program - I should say, what remains of it - of which the Chief Minister made much. A notable exclusion from this 1989-90 Federal capital works budget is the promised National Museum of Australia. It has been promised for years, but I notice now that Ros Kelly, one of our Federal representatives, considers it to be a luxury. There are a lot of people who would not agree. Neither is there provision for refurbishment of the old Parliament House, which some of us have been expecting to occur for some time. The place will fall down before the Commonwealth finds money to refurbish it.

The Federal Government's capital works program for the ACT last year was some \$200m. Its new works program for this year is projected to be only about \$61m. It is difficult to tell what the actual expenditure in the ACT will be this year because, like our budget, this important information is omitted from the Commonwealth budget. It and our budget mention the capital works program only in terms of total capital cost. It does not tell how much is actually going to be spent. So it is one of the problems with our budget, and it equally applies to the Commonwealth budget. But I would submit, Mr Speaker, that with the falling off in the total program from last year to this year there must be a significant reduction, and it could possibly be as high as 50 per cent, compared with last year. I am talking about actual expenditure in the ACT, which is what counts for us.

The Chief Minister says that the expenditure on the Federal works program is to be of the order of \$80m. She may be right. I do not know where she got it from; it is not in the budget. But that is irrelevant, largely, unless you know how it relates to what was spent last year. Is it a 50 per cent or a 100 per cent drop from last year? Unless we know that, it is meaningless. But to say that it is not going to have any effect on our budget and therefore we do not have to worry about it, when perhaps you do not even have the information, is quite wrong.

Such a dramatic reduction, if it were 50 per cent - I see no reason why it should not be - would be a cause for great concern in the ACT and reminiscent of the stop-start economy which the ACT thought it had left behind years ago. Clearly the ACT Government does not have the capacity to make up the shortfall. We are talking about our works program, but we obviously do not have any wherewithal to pick up any slack in the Commonwealth's program.

The effect on the ACT building and related industries and the consequential social impacts will be enormous. But the Chief Minister's response to this is merely to note that the Federal Government's capital works program in the ACT "compares well with the \$200m committed last year" and that

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"the ACT budget remains on track". I am not that confident, and I do not know how the Chief Minister can be either. It may be reassuring, but it scarcely acknowledges the true situation.

Mr Speaker, there are a couple of incidental points. Sustained higher interest rates are having a significant effect on the ACT, just as they are elsewhere in Australia. Canberrans have mortgages, and sizeable ones at that, just as other Australians do elsewhere. The Commonwealth budget, which has done nothing about mortgage rates, is going to continue to have its effect on us.

Retail sales activity has been reducing considerably during 1989. Go and talk to any retailer out there and find out what has been happening to him since about last February. Retailers are in dire straits. The effect on business, particularly small business, is great and could, if it continues, be devastating in many cases. But what does the Federal budget do about that? Not a thing. Nor, I submit, Mr Speaker, does ours.

The Federal Government, to its credit, has given some \$250,000 to the ACT for mortgage relief from a total national package of about \$15m. However, at the same time it has reduced the amount available nationally under the first home ownership scheme by some \$30m. So it is \$15m in for mortgage relief and \$30m out for first home buyers. The net effect is a reduction over the nation of \$15m. We are going to feel the effect of that here, just as everybody else will.

So the net effect on our economy has to be a negative one. The Chief Minister says, "Don't need to change our budget. She'll be apples. Steady as she goes". With regard to all of these factors, there can be no doubt that the Federal Government's budget will have a large and adverse impact on the ACT, and it is a negative impact, despite the Chief Minister's serene approach to this subject.

Now that it has granted self-government to the ACT, the Commonwealth's attitude appears to be that the ACT can look after itself. This is despite its undertakings prior to self-government and the requirement as well that, self-government or not, nationally determined standards must be maintained here. (Extension of time granted)

To make matters worse, the ACT Government in its budget statement has not addressed the real problem facing the ACT and has presented an initial budget which at best could be described as window-dressing. I do not intend to debate the ACT budget with the Chief Minister now; it is not the purpose of this debate. I will debate that at the right time and in the right place, and I am not going to traverse those subjects such as independent audit, public assets, superannuation and the Audit Act. They can be dealt with elsewhere. It is interesting to note that during the election campaign Labor questioned whether there was an \$85m

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overfunding of the ACT, as identified by the Grants Commission, and even went further to say that a surplus existed on last year's budget.

In her opening address to the budget consultative committee the other day, the Chief Minister stated that on the basis of 1986-87 information the Grants Commission's findings were that the ACT is overfunded compared with the States to the extent of \$84m. She went on further to state that there is nothing to suggest that this position has improved in the interim. I agree with her entirely, but this is a complete contradiction and a turnaround from her stance during the election campaign, which surely constituted a deception practised on the electorate. The effect of the Federal budget on the ACT, Mr Speaker, combined with an unimaginative, cautious and inadequate ACT budget, which will in all probability, even now, turn out to include some hollow promises which cannot be kept, will have serious implications for the ACT.

So, Mr Speaker, on balance, I must strongly disagree with the Chief Minister's comment from which my comments spring, that "the Federal budget is a responsible and fair response to national economic conditions and will not require the ACT Government to make any changes to the initial statement already issued". That is patently absurd; it is patently wrong; and nothing could be further from reality.

MR COLLAERY (3.51): I join with Mr Kaine in expressing surprise at the defensive nature of the remarks made earlier by the Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett, in her statement. There is a budget consultative process, and the opposition parties were going to give that the measure of respect it deserves at this stage and restrict our comments to the Federal budget response. I note that the Chief Minister chose today not to amplify her one-page knee-jerk reaction to the Federal budget issued on 16 August 1989. The Chief Minister welcomed this budget. Really, when the Residents Rally saw this Chief Minister into government, we were of the view that we were going to see widespread and informed initiatives taken in this Territory, so that even on budgetary issues we could have some exemplary and innovative ideas about attending to the social justice concerns, the business concerns and all those other matters in which the Labor Party professed its interest in its pre-election manifesto. Instead, we have a slavish response to the Federal budget, and that reflects the very sad nature of the ACT draft budget. But we will withhold further comment, other than general comment, on the latter draft budget.

Mr Speaker, the Federal budget was notable for a number of matters, all of which my colleague Mr Kaine has covered. To avoid repetition in this Assembly, the Rally has chosen to concentrate on those issues that are dearest to its interests, and they lie in the community interest in a budget.

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Very few Australians would read the budget statements of the Federal Government, very few would understand them, and certainly there are many Australians who could not afford the \$163-odd it costs to buy those documents. So really there is considerable pressure on parliamentarians in Australia, particularly the Assembly members in this Territory, close to the seat of government, to give informed comment on the budget. We have not had a comprehensive response from the Labor Party members of the ACT Assembly. The Chief Minister has failed to allay fears in the wages sector of the ACT. One aspect of the Federal budget is that it is predicated on stable wages growth. My colleague Mr Kaine referred to quite different scenarios produced in the two budgets, of the ACT and the Federal Government.

The people of Canberra heard Hugh Morgan indicate this morning on ABC radio that the wages accord, the famous pact, was only as good as those who were persuasive enough to keep it in place. So really, to avoid a breakout in wages and a destabilising effect on the Federal budget, there is required to be a great deal of union stability and recognition of the broad interests of society. Yet, on the same radio program, we heard a representative of a very large union group in the ACT make a number of divisive, totally wrong and improper allegations against the Residents Rally, a community based group working to assist its members as well as the rest of the community. If that is a measure of what is going to happen to the wages accord and those who stand by it, then there could be troubled times in the Territory. The airline strike shows just how shaky things are in the Federal arena.

We have a very narrow reliance on interest rates and the attempt to use the Federal budget surplus to restrain interest rate movements. The tight monetary policies of the Federal Government have their very clear impact on the Territory in the difficulties of home ownership, mortgage interest rates and the like. The \$15m assigned to mortgage, rent and other relief schemes, even if they are ever workable and equitable, was tokenism at its worst. Sadly, the Chief Minister failed to reflect the initiatives taken in the Federal budget on youth homelessness, for instance. It has taken the Federal Government to remind this Government here of its obligations in that area.

The \$200,000 allocated, as it will come from the Federal budget to the ACT in that area, is most welcome, and the Rally welcomes that initiative in the Federal budget. But, of course, we have to lament the failure of the Follett Government to take its own initiatives. Likewise, we see the announcement by Senator Richardson of the additional \$100m over the next four years for sporting assistance. Sport adds greatly to society, to the health and well-being of this community, and it is an integral part of all of the socially related budget issues. That grant, provided it is seen to be relevant and appropriate beside other provisions, particularly in community based social areas, is very welcome. We see already how the allocation of those funds, if left in this Government's hands, would be handled.

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We saw in recent days the Deputy Chief Minister give a grant-in-aid to a clay pigeon shooting club before the planning committee of this Assembly, in its examination of the capital works, had concluded on the propriety and appropriateness of a \$700,000 grant to put a road into Kowen Forest simply to get up to the clay target club. We need to know whether we have a credible and a competent financial manager in the ACT for our fortunes. The signs are, in the Chief Minister's response to the Federal budget, that we are simple cousins at the end of a string; puppets to be served up, as the Chief Minister has indicated in her sycophantic response, the conclusions that the Federal Treasurer reaches for society.

The Chief Minister could make signal measures and, because of the proximity to the Federal Government, could have taken strong steps to see that there were other initiatives in the Federal budget. We have heard nothing from her as to the effect of the proposed sale of the Moomba to Sydney gas line with its spur lines. That sale is of considerable significance to people living in the suburbs because it presents an opportunity for the main supplier here, if it wished, to acquire that pipeline, with or without funding assistance from the ACT Government. It is certainly a community based issue. It should have been mentioned by the Chief Minister in her response because it has local effect.

Similarly, there are a number of other issues in the Federal budget, one of which is the proposed asset sale of Gowrie Hostel. We have commented on that already, to indicate that the timing of it suggests a great deal of opportunism on the part of the Federal Government. But, more importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, in budget paper No. 2 at page 23 it is revealed that the Department of Finance estimates that it will receive a total of \$70.4m interest from the ACT Treasury on matters which are yet to be fully detailed. That is a heavy interest payment already to the Federal Government, and this Government proposes to take on other loans. We will comment about that in due course.

Mr Speaker, we do not know yet what the basis was for the agreement between officers for the proposed payment of \$67.7m dollars to the Commonwealth for land development costs incurred by the Commonwealth, allegedly, prior to self-government day. That is such a large item in the future of the Territory, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Rally believes there should be a separate and full accounting examination by the Public Works Committee of this Assembly of that issue. We call for the negotiating documents and the papers relating to the agreement reached before this Assembly was sworn in relating to those sums.

It is right and proper that that proposed payment be examined. Also, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Federal Government was prepared, when Mr Field came into government in Tasmania, to waive a \$48m debt that that State was alleged to have owed the Commonwealth. We received no such dowry as

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was given the Field Government in Tasmania. We have heard no comment from the Chief Minister why Tasmania gets off paying its \$48m debt and why we should still have scheduled in the budget papers of this Territory an acknowledgement that we are to hand over that \$67.7m. (Extension of time granted)

The efficiency of the Federal Budget in its impact on the Territory requires detailed assessment and analysis. To receive a one-page assurance that all is well, that everything is okay, in a thankful tone is not reassuring to the ACT people.

Mr Speaker, there are clear issues in the Federal budget papers that do impact on the Territory. Let me give just one example in the time allowed to me. The Federal budget proposes that no new subsidised overseas students come into this country after 1990 for higher education and technical and further education courses and that private overseas students will, in future, be full fee paying students. That is a profound decision. It is taken after a number of reviews, including the Jackson committee review, with which I am familiar. But it requires comment from a city so dependent for its image and some of its income on subsidised students and scholars in this Territory. At a time when the ACT has perhaps the most vibrant TAFE network in the country, we are giving up the chance to bring in here subsidised students. I speak particularly of those from the Third World, Pacific rim countries - Tonga, Vanuatu and other places.

Mr Speaker, that is one aspect that this Minister failed lamentably to address in the budget. There are many other examples, but I do not believe I should detain the house any longer on those issues, other than to say finally that the Residents Rally believes that the steady-as-you-go, cynical Federal budget that really has hidden expansionary issues in it is no document that this Chief Minister should have applauded. She has her own problems with her budget. We will reserve comment on those for another occasion.

MR DUBY (4.03): Mr Deputy Speaker, I join with Mr Kaine and Mr Collaery in commenting on the almost lackadaisical attitude adopted by the Chief Minister in relation to the Commonwealth budget and its effects upon the ACT. This budget was brought down a week ago. There are quite disturbing features in it for people who, like me - and I do not class myself as an economic expert - have to wade through these figures. The bottom line is that it appears that funding for the ACT from these figures is reduced by the order of \$148m.

When inquiry was made of the Government, as Mr Collaery has also brought to our attention, the day after the budget, there was a steady-as-she-goes, everything-is-okay statement released by the Chief Minister. What are we provided with? There is this cryptic piece of paper which details astronomically large amounts of money - \$67m, \$47m for superannuation, and \$30m cuts in expenditure on education -

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which, as it turns out when a close examination of the figures is made, are not true indicators of the real case. Nevertheless, I do not think it is good enough.

We have a government which is supposedly committed to consultants - obviously committed to consultants in relation to the budget - and to consulting other people, other members of this house, and in trying to explain things. I would have imagined that the way this Assembly should be going in relation to the Commonwealth budget is that of, if not a bipartisan approach, a quadripartisan approach so that all parties in the house could fully understand and digest the implications of the Commonwealth budget upon the citizens of the ACT.

If it had been a non-Labor government, I guarantee that we would be hearing howls of derision from the Labor members, saying how badly done by the citizens of Canberra are. All in all, I do not think it is a good budget for the people of the ACT, but it has taken me a week to go through the figures. No matter which way I look at it, the figures always seem to be different.

In the budget statement presented by Mr Keating, at paragraph 7.15, I almost had heart failure when I read this:

As a result of ACT self-government, outlays specifically on the ACT will decrease overall in 1989-90 by approximately \$325m.

That is what it says, at paragraph 7.15 of that statement. Outlays for other functions also have decreased. But then when you go to the other side you realise that revenue from the ACT will decrease by approximately \$260m. I assume that it is revenue which previously went into the Commonwealth and then was fed back to us, but which we are now keeping, so the Commonwealth has stopped receiving those figures.

Nevertheless, the bottom line, as far as I can see, is that, as a result of ACT self-government, outlays will decrease by \$325m. Revenues from the ACT will decrease by approximately \$260m. That still boils down to the fact that it is spending \$65m less in outlays on the ACT. Nowhere in this statement has this figure been addressed by the Chief Minister. We have these magical accounting variations to describe how a cut in funding of \$148m is not a cut in funding at all. I just do not think this situation is good enough.

I do not know whether other members of the house have noticed, but when those figures were handed out last week by ACT Treasury folk they did not add up; they were out by \$5m. We had to ask, "What is going on?". Of course they said, "Somebody else made a mistake; it was not us". I asked for a detailed statement. The Chief Minister knew of my doubts and concerns on those items. What do we get? It is consultation, all right - a handout of a speech and, finally, some explanation of what these items refer to.

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They were explanations in relation to which surely it would have been easy enough to arrange a briefing between the various groupings in this house so that we could have known beforehand what was going on. All in all, I have sincere and grave doubts about the effect of the Commonwealth budget on that of the ACT.

I also note, along with Mr Kaine and Mr Collaery, that in relation to a number of the items that are mentioned in the Commonwealth budget, even though they are nice and easy to understand - in particular, the \$67.7m relating to repayment for land - it is simply not on that that money is to be paid to the Commonwealth in this financial year.

In my opinion, the ACT budget bleeds its citizens white and cuts funding on social justice policies quite dramatically, yet here we are, kowtowing to the Commonwealth, forking out almost \$70m of taxpayers' money in the first year of self-government, when surely some arrangement can be made for what is undoubtedly a legitimate debt to be paid off over a period.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will finish my comments there. There is not much more to be said. We will be examining these figures further, hopefully lifting the veil of bureaucratic doubletalk on a lot of these items so that they become clear to us over the next weeks, and hopefully they will be examined in further detail with a full debate on the ACT budget.

MR HUMPHRIES (4.10): Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that some of the previous speakers have been a little harsh on our Chief Minister. I have heard the comments of Mr Kaine, Mr Collaery and Mr Duby, criticising our Chief Minister, but I believe that they are somewhat ill-considered, and I do hope that they will withdraw them.

I believe that the Chief Minister has exhibited extraordinary fortitude, extraordinary strength of purpose, in facing up to the problems of this Federal budget, and she has done so by eschewing the approach of many of her colleagues, her fellow Labor leaders, in the States. Rather than picking up the cudgels, as they have done, and criticising this Keating-Hawke budget, Ms Follett has bravely charted her own course and said, "We are very happy with this budget. We think it is a wonderful budget". So, she has sallied forth, smiling serenely, as Mr Kaine has indicated; she has ignored the blustering gale blowing about her, the howls of complaint, and has exhibited complete equanimity within herself and within her Government. She deserves great credit for that. I think she shows great fortitude.

Look at the things she has had to contend with, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is the \$22m locked up by the Federal Government. Rather than say, "What a dastardly deed this is; how terrible it is of the Federal Government to lock away \$22m which forms part of the allocation that the

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Federal Government should make to the ACT to be consistent with its funding promise before self-government", rather than make rash accusations about the Federal Government, Ms Follett has said that one of her achievements in the first hundred days of her government has been to ensure access to Commonwealth funding of \$22.7m which the ACT would not otherwise have received. In other words, Mr Deputy Speaker, she has realised that this money was unobtainable before and that now, because it is in trust, it is actually more obtainable than it would have been. It is a wonderful pas de deux on the political stage, and I think she deserves congratulations for it.

Mr DUBY: A pas de what?

MR HUMPHRIES: A pas de deux. It is a ballet term, Mr DUBY. Obviously you did not attend the New Zealand Ballet performance the other night. Let us look at other achievements of this wonderful Chief Minister. For first home owners \$30m is slashed from the Federal Government's first homeowners scheme, but \$15m comes back as assistance for mortgage relief. Rather than complain about this, our Chief Minister bravely has said what a wonderful thing it is that we are getting a quarter of a million dollars in the ACT's coffers to make up for that \$30m which has been cut across Australia, and presumably a commensurate amount was cut from the ACT.

Gowrie Hostel is being sold, with not a cent coming to the ACT. I must say that here at this point perhaps the Chief Minister's guard slips a little. I sense a little grinding of teeth behind the smile on this occasion. She probably is not too happy with this decision but, rather than make much of it, she has glossed over that fairly quickly.

There is the funding shortfall - a funding shortfall of \$85m identified before the last election by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The Chief Minister, before the election, denied that such a shortfall existed. She denied there would be any funding shortfall but now, sweetly, serenely, she has come to the conclusion, as Mr Kaine has pointed out, that there will be a shortfall of that amount. It has been identified after all, but, oh well, we are all friends around here; we can work it out somehow!

I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Chief Minister deserves congratulations for sporting a black eye in her brave fashion and letting on to no account of her pain in this process. I think that she could certainly teach Mrs Ros Kelly a lesson or two. Mrs Kelly has not been quite so gracious in the face of pain as our Chief Minister. Mrs Kelly has responded to the news by saying that the National Museum of Australia is now a luxury and will not be available to the citizens of the ACT, and indeed to the whole of Australia, in the near future. Despite earlier assertions in the media, I seem to recall that over many years the Museum of Australia was a vitally important thing to the people of the ACT, but now Mrs Kelly says that she

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never had any hope that there would be large amounts of funding for the museum in the Federal budget. How very sad! She has not taken the same approach as the Chief Minister. She has just argued that she never really thought that there would have been much hope for a museum in any case.

I find it immensely sad that the Museum of Australia has not gone ahead. It is a false saving on the part of the Federal Government to spend a million dollars, as it presently has, on a program to maintain, catalogue and conserve items in the museum's collection, because a large part of that \$1m will go towards conserving items which are presently deteriorating because they are not properly displayed in a proper museum. In other words, the Government is spending money in its Federal budget to keep items in a safe condition, in a good condition, which otherwise it would have on display. If it were spending the money to build the museum it probably would not have to spend that money on conservation.

Equally surprising is the decision not to take any steps to ensure that the old Parliament House is properly dealt with. Here is the fine woman herself. She enters the chamber. Again, her smile is intact. She is braving the cold winds. No doubt, she has been facing some horrendous media onslaught about her comments.

Ms Follett: Mr Speaker, could I ask you to make a ruling on the relevance of this matter.

MR SPEAKER: Chief Minister, I am afraid I have just taken the chair. Please proceed with the matter at hand, Mr Humphries.

MR HUMPHRIES: I will be relevant, and I will not comment on the Chief Minister's smile any more than is absolutely relevant and necessary. But I will say, Mr Speaker, that we have a decision, or rather the lack of a decision, in relation to the old Parliament House. There is no commitment of any funds, as far as I am aware, to refurbish that place. It is supposed, in the course of time, to house the National Trust, I think, a government information office, and other things, but not, of course, this Assembly.

It is something of an irony that that is the case, because I have no doubt in my mind that, were this Assembly to be housed in that building now, there would be money spent, from our coffers, on at least refurbishing that part of the building into which we would be moving, and that at least would preserve that part of the building and make it accessible to people of the ACT. At present there is no access by people of the ACT or anybody else to that building. It is deteriorating, as people would be aware. It is of some sadness to me that that should be the case. I am very sorry that the ACT Government, led by its smiling Chief Minister, should have declined to take any steps to ensure that there would be some funds available to refurbish old Parliament House, but she sara, sara.

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Mr Speaker, as I said, I want to congratulate the Chief Minister for her brave face in the course of this onslaught - all this bad economic news. It takes a special kind of woman to endure this kind of ignominy. I am sure that the rest of us, however, can convey adequately to the people of the ACT the very great pain which this budget is inflicting on the Territory. It has already been amply demonstrated by my colleagues who have already spoken and who, I am sure, will continue to do so, but I am sure that the Chief Minister will continue to show her own special mettle in this matter.

DR KINLOCH (4.18): Mr Speaker, I am just a little confused. Have we reached the discussion of the matter of public importance about the Government's performance during its first 100 days? It does seem to me that that is what we are talking about. So I would rather reserve my comments for when we come to the discussion of the matter of public importance of the 100 days. We do seem to be overlapping mightily in this matter.

MR MOORE (4.19): I would like to make some comments on the Federal budget in the context of its relationship to workers in the ACT. It seems to me that the Federal Labor budget basically ignores what I would call the middle ground for employees. What Labor has done in this budget, as it has done over the last six years, is to look after the very, very wealthy and the powerful in this country, particularly the media magnates, and to look after the powerful building and industrial unions.

One of the ways of doing this, of course, was by the wages accord. One cannot help asking what exactly has happened to the rest of the community, the part of the community that does not quite fit into the concepts of the wages accord. I will tell you what has happened to them. They are the ones who have gone backwards. There has been a transfer of the money that can be earned by people away from the middle ground - the professional people, the middle income earners - to the very wealthy, whose profits we see soaring, and to the tradesmen, the powerful union representatives and their members.

The wages accord method claims that it looks for restraint. I think that that in itself is a very good philosophy and that is why we have been able to pull the wool over the eyes of so many people for so long. The methodology of productivity is appropriate for certain unions and for certain people, but if you happen to be in a service area, if you happen to be a teacher or a nurse or a journalist, if you happen to be a public servant, then in the last years - in all the years of Labor government - you would have watched your earning capacity go backwards.

On a comparative basis in particular, no longer do you have the recognition in terms of status, in terms of your salary position, but in fact you could well have lost almost half

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of the sort of advantage that you had by virtue of the training you did, by virtue of the time you gave up and by virtue of your profession. So, in fact, when the accord was agreed to there were two choices for these earners in terms of productivity. They had to take either wage cuts or job cuts across their union because that was the agreement that they got involved with.

I believe that that is one of the problems with the whole budgeting approach of the Labor Government, and it is one of the problems that is coming to a head at the moment with the pilots strike. I do not put them in exactly the same category as the people we have got there, but they probably feel the same frustration about going backwards, about productivity, about losing their position.

And what does that mean locally? That means locally for our budgeting that we can also sit back and watch those professions go backwards and, as we also make cuts to the areas of health and education particularly, then we can perceive that there will be a further reduction in the position of those particular members of our society. Those areas of the budget happen to be particularly important areas for anybody with a long-term view of what is going to happen in Canberra. Education and health are very, very important to our whole well-being as a territory. Therefore, the relationship of the ACT budget with the Federal budget has to be taken very much in the light of those comments that I have just made.

MR JENSEN (4.23): I have a few short comments to make in relation to this particular matter. The Federal Government's grab for the grey power vote is of interest to the ACT, I would suggest, with its ageing population and increasing popularity as a retirement area. I know that is one area that my colleague Dr Kinloch and other members of the Social Policy Committee will be looking at with great interest.

However, the \$2 increase to single pensions above normal indexation is an insult. Increases in rent assistance and indexation of rent allowance from March 1991 are in themselves only of marginal help in these stringent economic situations.

The abolition of income tax for all pensioners from 1995 is little more than a cynical exercise of mortgaging the future for short-term political gain. I suggest that a number of the commentaries in that particular area were related to that and I feel sure that those in that particular category in the ACT will see through that sort of cynical political exercise.

Let me turn quickly to capital works. We see that for the ACT they are down from \$200m to \$160m despite the Chief Minister's rationalisation that the ACT Government's capital works take the total to \$215m. The Commonwealth clearly has a declining financial interest in the development of the

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ACT. The writing is on the wall, and the ACT will have to come to terms with this particular matter.

Now that the Deputy Chief Minister is in the chamber I will refer to his particular reference. It applies to the budget because it refers to a press statement that he issued to the media on 9 August. The first item on his list of works programs for capital expenditure in Tuggeranong related to an archives repository for a spending of \$1.263m. I looked very carefully through our own budget, and it was quite clear that that figure was not mentioned there, so I wondered how it was possible for that to be transferred from the Federal budget to the ACT budget. That is a very interesting activity that I am sure Mr Keating would like to have a look at. I am sure he would be quite happy for the ACT Government to pay for federal capital works in that particular area, but I suggest that the people of the ACT would have some problems with that.

In the first home owners scheme we saw cuts of some \$30m, which will put further pressure on an already depressed local building industry, with obvious flow-ons to the ACT as a whole. We see now, with increasing interest rates and the effect that they are having on the community that is involved in the building industry in the ACT, that those sorts of cuts are not going to do those small business men and women who operate in that area any good at all.

Tax deductability increases from 1 July next year in relation to self-employed people will no doubt help some local businesses and consultants and perhaps, as the Treasurer anticipates, will help with the domestic savings, but might I suggest once again, Mr Speaker, with rising interest rates and other problems in relation to that area and concerns of the small business area, that is only of marginal assistance to them as they struggle with those particular problems.

The forecast economic growth is 2.75 from 3.3 per cent last year, with inflation of 7.5 per cent from 7.4 per cent last year - and I seem to recall, Mr Speaker, that in the statement by the Chief Minister on this particular matter the figure that she proposed for inflation was slightly below 7.4 per cent. It is interesting to note that Mr Keating must have found a major increase in inflation rates in the couple of days since the time the Chief Minister prepared her budget statement. That is a bit of a problem, it is a bit of a worry, because clearly, although they are of the same persuasion, they must not have been talking on those particularly important Treasury matters.

We notice also that unemployment of 6.25 per cent, which is a slight drop from 6.6 per cent, does not indicate much for the improvement of the ACT economy. But I will say this, Mr Speaker, in relation to this matter: It behoves this particular Government, this minority Labor Government, to ensure that the development of work and employment incentives and issues in this particular city are put

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forward and do not become blinkered by one-off projects in the hope that the building industry will be improved. It is more than one or two major projects; it is long-term development; and it is a long-term plan for the development of the ACT that is important in this particular issue. I trust that the Chief Minister and her Government will be looking very strongly towards that area to ensure that happens, and will not concentrate on single-issue developments in this particular area.

MR WHALAN (Minister for Industry, Employment and Education) (4.29): Yesterday, I was invited to represent the Government at the launch of the national plan for sport and recreation by the Federal Minister for Sport, Senator Graham Richardson. At this launch the Minister unveiled a financial package of \$230m for sport and recreation. This represents an increase of more than \$100m on previous allocations and involves the most significant boost to Australian sport ever provided by any Government.

The main purpose of this increased expenditure is to encourage participation and excellence in sport. This announcement recognises the Federal Government's continuing commitment, not only to the elite and Olympic champions of the future, but also to all levels of sport in the community. The announcement also comes at a time when the ACT is looking for further opportunities for economic growth, particularly in local industries.

Sport, recreation and racing are having a major impact on the ACT economy. At a national level, sport and recreation account for approximately 20 per cent of total private consumption and approximately 10 per cent of gross domestic product. The ACT will benefit from this extra allocation by the direct allocation of moneys to expand the Aussie Sports program and the establishment of what is described as a youth support scheme. Both of these programs in the ACT and the surrounding region will be expanded.

The primary aim of the scheme is to promote ongoing participation in all sporting pursuits by post-primary age students. This will overcome what has become nationally a noticeable decline in sports participation by teenagers. This trend has been, regrettably, most notable in the young women of our community. To ensure that the young sports people of Canberra are able to obtain immediate benefits from these moneys, I have already established a working party of agencies within the Government to examine the most effective means of distribution of these funds to targeted youth areas.

This working party comprises the Government Sports Advisory Committee, the Department of Education, the Office of Sport, Recreation and Racing, and the Children's Day Care Service. I can assure the Assembly that the Government will not be tardy in implementing this initiative. In particular, I will ensure that the funds will be devoted to program areas and not eaten up by unnecessary administrative expenses.

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The options currently being examined will include an extension of the after-school care and vacation programs; greater utilisation of youth centres; the targeting of selected schools, both government and non-government; the upgrading of coaching development courses and extensions of such courses; the targeting of selected sports and the provision of assistance to their coaches; and the establishment of sport development and coaching centres in key geographical areas.

The ACT will also benefit from the additional moneys allocated to the elite sport area, a large proportion of which will be spent on facilities, coaching and enhanced administration at the Australian Sports Commission. This will result in improved facilities and enhanced support systems for the ACT's top sports people. These measures will enhance the activity and progress already initiated by our Government in the short period in which we have been in office.

As the Assembly is aware, the Government has already made a substantial commitment to the advancement of sport and leisure in the ACT, not only because of its economic benefits but because of its importance to the general well-being of the community. The ACT is recognised as the political capital of Australia and can also rightly claim to be the sporting capital of the nation, with a participation of 120,000 registered sports persons. This does not include the many social joggers, the tennis players, and indeed the golden oldies rugby players.

Prior to self-government, the ALP gave a number of undertakings to the sporting and recreation community of the ACT. During the first 100 days in office the Government has continued this strong commitment, being responsible for a number of major achievements directed toward enhancing sport in the ACT. These have included the establishment in my department of a separate Office of Sport, Recreation and Racing. This office has a direct reporting responsibility to me as Minister. In recognition of its role, it has been given an enhanced budget.

We have also had the establishment of a broad based Sports Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Dr Alan Roberts. We have acquired the Bruce Stadium and have initiated its ultimate conversion into a multipurpose sporting venue of international standard. Establishing an equivalent facility would have cost ACT taxpayers in excess of \$40m. We have had the establishment of the Bruce Stadium trust, which will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the stadium.

I have already secured an agreement with the Canberra and district rugby league for the Canberra Raiders to use Bruce as their home ground from the beginning of the 1990 season. We have had discussions with other football codes and potential users for the use of Bruce as their sporting

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venue. We have been advising sporting organisations that funding and the use of ACT sporting facilities will be subject to adherence to the principles of the Gleneagles agreement. This is in keeping with the Federal Government's strong commitment to opposition to sporting-type links with South Africa.

Dr Kinloch: Hear, hear!

MR WHALAN: Thank you, Dr Kinloch. The finalisation of an ACT drugs in sport policy, following the Federal Government's announcement of the establishment of the Australian Sports Drug Agency, will ensure that no ACT taxpayers' money is used to support any sports organisation or individual that breaches the established code of ethics.

We have seen the approval of almost \$1m under the ACT sports development program; we have seen the allocation of an additional grant of \$1.2m to the ACT Netball Association to assist with the development of a major netball complex at Lyneham in recognition of this sport's high participatory rate in the ACT; we have seen the allocation of a further \$250,000 to the ACT Hockey Association for improvements to the indoor complex at Lyneham; and we have seen the provision of assistance totalling \$3.2m under the sports loans interest subsidy scheme.

This scheme is the first of its type in Australia and enables sporting bodies to receive a subsidy of up to 10 per cent of their loan repayments. This has already benefited the ACT Bocce Club, the Southern Canberra Gymnastics Club and the ACT Tennis Association, all of which are receiving assistance under the scheme.

We have reached agreement with the chairperson of the Australia Day Sports Committee, Ms Elizabeth Grant, to financially assist the event, which will be held in Canberra in January 1990, and we have made a commitment to the Sport and Recreation Association for People with Disabilities to provide administrative support and accommodation.

These are but a few of the achievements which demonstrate our continuing support and commitment to sport in the ACT. We share our Federal colleagues' vision for Australia to achieve the pinnacle of sporting success internationally and for our community to have the best opportunity to engage in regular and fulfilling sporting and leisure activities.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

MR JENSEN: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation in accordance with standing order 46.

MR SPEAKER: Do you claim to have been misrepresented?

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MR JENSEN: Yes, Mr Speaker, I do. I refer to Mr Whalan's reference to me as being mendacious. The use of polysyllables does not change the nature of those allegations. To assist in establishing the veracity of my question to the house that Mr Whalan was referring to, I would like to read from a letter to me from the chairman of the Tuggeranong Community Council, dated 18 August 1989. I will leave out the names of government officials in this particular letter. The letter reads:

I am concerned that we were briefed only partially by a Member - [Mr X]. When I asked for details - it showed only the flyover. I fear we will end up with a roundabout at Isabella Drive as a cost-cutting exercise when really it deserves a flyover approach to separate out heavy traffic going to Hume, et cetera.

I rang [Mr Y] of the ITPA on 10 July for a briefing on Eastern Parkway variations - proposed several dates. He told me meeting was going to be cleared by Paul Whalan's office and that they would deal with me direct - nothing eventuated. Notwithstanding this I want to see the IPA able to brief us without fear of political considerations.

This letter relates, I would suggest, to a letter published in the Canberra Times today. I leave it to those present in the house to judge the veracity of Mr Whalan's statements and attack against me and, by implication, the chairman of the Tuggeranong Community Council.

SOCIAL POLICY - STANDING COMMITTEE Extension of Reporting Date

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

That paragraph (2) of the reference of matters, concerning the needs of the ageing, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be amended by omitting "31 August" and substituting "14 October".

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE - STANDING COMMITTEE Amendment of Resolution of Appointment

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

That the resolution of appointment of the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure be amended by omitting paragraph 1(a) and substituting the following paragraph -

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"1(a) such planning and development proposals -

- (i) as are referred to it by the Assembly; and
- (ii) as are considered by the committee to be matters of concern to the community;".

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE - STANDING COMMITTEE
Printing and Circulation of Proposed Report

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

That -

- (1) If the Assembly is not sitting when the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure has completed its inquiry into the new capital works program the committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker who is authorised to give directions for its printing and circulation; and
- (2) The foregoing provision of this resolution has effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

GOVERNMENT'S FIRST 100 DAYS
Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

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

The Government's performance during its first 100 days.

MR Kaine (Leader of the Opposition) (4.43): Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister recently released a self-congratulatory statement recording her pleasure at what her Government had achieved since taking office. I have to say, Mr Speaker, that the response to her claims from the community, a deafening silence, was entirely expected by those of us who do not subscribe to the Chief Minister's rose-tinted view of her Government's performance.

Her claims, Mr Speaker, pose two important questions: firstly, how soundly based are the claims to success, and, secondly, has the Government achieved anything, and is it not rather the case that the Legislative Assembly has achieved results and not the Government?

Let us examine the first question. Just what has the Government achieved? Some of the claimed achievements can be discounted immediately. Other Liberal and opposition members will deal in detail with matters falling within

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their own areas of responsibility. I will refrain from dealing at great length with that aspect, but I will mention just an example or two. A superficial scrutiny of the list of achievements attached to the Chief Minister's media release shows that many are no more than statements of intent; they are not achievements at all; for example, the Melba Flats redevelopment. How this project is to be funded and implemented is a matter about which the Government has yet to inform us, so how can it be claimed as an achievement? The Chief Minister seems to be suffering from the delusion that the announcing, initiating or introducing of something equals the achievement of the desired result, and of course that is far from the truth.

Elsewhere the Chief Minister claims to have "ensured access to Commonwealth funding of \$22.7m which the ACT would not otherwise have received". This is not supported by any publicly available information, and I can only assume either that there is no foundation for the claim or that the Government's "open and consultative policy" has failed to materialise once again - just another mirage on the Chief Minister's horizon.

Given the present economic situation in Canberra, the most glaring omission from the achievements list is any reference to getting control of land planning and land use policies and legislation, a subject now becoming so hot that we, the Liberals, will be raising it as a matter of public importance tomorrow. Of course, there are also many private home owners out there still waiting for some recognition and some relief from this Government. The Government has ignored them entirely as well.

Despite the Government's self-aggrandisement, it is significant that, even after nearly four months in office, Ministers cannot find sufficient government business to take up available time during scheduled sitting days of this Assembly. An examination of today's notice paper of government business will amply demonstrate that particular problem. I find it difficult to believe after the hiatus in government following the announcement of self-government, now almost a year ago, that there is so little business needing the attention of the Government and the Assembly. Indeed, comments coming to me from the community would indicate that there are many matters of concern that the Government should be addressing as a matter of urgency. But there will be more on that, I am sure, from my colleagues.

I turn to the second question that I posed earlier. A major question surrounding the Government's assertions, of course, is whether the Government can really lay claim to any of these things. The Chief Minister and her Ministers seem to have completely lost sight of the fact that they are a minority government of only five Labor members. They do nothing without the consent of the opposition parties in this Assembly. For them to assume the arrogance - and I use the word advisedly - of a securely entrenched majority government is foolish in the extreme and they delude nobody but themselves.

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Much of what has been initiated has been so initiated only with the support of the opposition parties in the interests of stability and for the benefit of the community. If the Government members think they have had our goodwill and support for any other reason, I can assure them they are wrong. Some of what has been initiated has been the result of initiative by the opposition, even against the objections of the Government. As an example, I quote the current inquiry being conducted by the Social Planning Committee on the needs of the ageing - a Liberal initiative opposed by the Government.

Some of the Government's initiatives have been greatly modified by the opposition, to the Government's dismay and discomfort. Here the outstanding example is the Occupational Health and Safety Bill. Three months ago this was the Government's top priority. It was needed immediately. Now, after being modified greatly by the opposition, the Bill is on the back burner. The Government's wish is that it never sees the light of day because the unions do not want it in its present form. But curiously, the Chief Minister still claims it as one of her achievements in the first 100 days. That is quite astonishing, I submit.

There is much that the Government has done in its first 100 days that it would wish not to claim. Noticeable amongst these is its blatant politicisation of even the most trivial administrative act or event. A couple of examples make my point: advertisements in the print media dealing with the asbestos removal program, containing a photograph of the responsible Minister, for crying out loud; a glamour launch of an ACTION bus timetable, which commuters have to buy if they need one; a piddling \$2,000 cheque to the conservationists being handed out by the Chief Minister, one of a series of cheques from public funds being handed out by Ministers for purely political purposes. The CDF is becoming a little goldmine for these ceremonies, so it is no wonder the Government has reneged on its promise to abolish it.

The list is endless, even in the short life of this Government, and I am sure that other members will add to it during this debate. The opposition members, on whose goodwill the entire minority Labor Government edifice rests, find this behaviour grossly offensive, and I believe the taxpaying public do too.

I referred earlier to the arrogance of this Labor minority Government. This reflects in some most trivial of ways: for example, the arrogation by the Chief Minister to herself and her Ministers of the right to use the only media room available. Non-government members and the media can do their work in the rain, the hail or the sleet in the public square outside the building. No bread; let them eat cake. I would ask the Chief Minister to remember what happened to the lady who said that. Such small-minded assumptions of

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the power of office do nothing to support the Government's image of itself.

It is interesting to note that, of all the achievements listed by the Chief Minister, many are acknowledged as being dependent upon passage of the budget, which will not even be tabled for debate until the end of September. These "achievements" include 50 aged persons units; a new TAFE tourism and hospitality facility, which is to open we are told in February 1990; and a new primary and preschool in Theodore. These are merely wish-list items at this stage in terms of Government achievements. How the Government can sensibly claim such achievements at this stage in the so-called consultative process of the budget is beyond me.

Incidentally, also included in this category is "indexation of funds available to the CDF". Since funds available to the CDF come from clearly identified sources, I am not sure how the Government intends to index revenues from those sources, but that is what it is saying. This Government's reliance again on the goodwill of the opposition in assuring a budget outcome acceptable to the Labor minority Government, while at the same time claiming the achievements for the Government, is yet another example of the Chief Minister's presumption.

Mr Speaker, I have made a point that this minority Labor Government ignores at its peril. It is a minority government; it depends absolutely on the goodwill of the opposition parties; it assumes an unattractive and unwarranted arrogance when it claims for itself alone the achievements so far of this Assembly. It acts unwisely when it anticipates further support based on the goodwill of the opposition parties while at the same time denigrating or entirely dismissing that support and goodwill. The Chief Minister and her Ministers must, in their own interests and those of the community, which elected this Assembly, recognise the reality of their situation and modify their behaviour to accord with it, otherwise their pretensions will be brought home to them rather forcibly, Mr Speaker.

MR COLLAERY (4.51): The structure of the comments by the Rally will be that I will comment to the Assembly on the vision the Rally saw of this Chief Minister and the manner in which this Government would be expected to proceed in office over its 100 days.

The Rally anticipated something innovative, something new, and something that would attend to those issues that keep the people of this Territory off the footpath, where they are making their claims. We are seeing, if anything, an increase in the number of public demonstrations, where the Rally had its origins. It is sad, as far as the Rally is concerned, that we are moving again to stake our claims to legitimate issues in the arena of footpath protests, and that of course is the worst thing for the Rally.

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The fact is, Mr Speaker, that this Government is already under siege in its first 100 days, and the people cannot be wrong. Something is wrong. The Rally is deeply concerned about why it finds itself after a mere 100 days, which includes a relatively short number of sitting days, with such distaste for some aspects of this administration and such disappointment for some aspects of how the Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett, has proceeded to treat it.

I think one measure of that is that since 11 May I have probably not had, as leader of the Residents Rally, one discussion about policy in private with this Chief Minister. Not once has the Chief Minister consulted me about any issue, any speech, any decision - - -

Ms Follett: Bernard, that is not true.

MR COLLAERY: She has not consulted me about any decision that we were going to take in the areas of importance. I am happy to stand corrected. If there have been times when the Chief Minister has consulted me, then the Chief Minister has the chance in reply to enumerate those. They do not come to mind.

We added up the number of press releases this morning in the Rally office and we came up with a total of 250 pages, some of them back-to-back, but 250 raw pages. The Chief Minister has issued 81 pages of press releases and copies of speeches; the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education has issued 79 pages; the Minister for Housing and Urban Services, 72; and our dear friend, our unassuming Minister for Community Services and Health, 18. We congratulate the Minister for Community Services and Health on his dedication to the forests of Australia.

Mr Speaker, those 250 pages will be a monument to those 100 days. There are some people in the United States who like to be buried with their motor cars and other items around them, and one presumes that the members opposite us are preparing their folders.

Mr Speaker, the other issue that really disappoints the Rally is that of standards being set. I find I have the same popularity poll as Mr Whalan. This of course, Mr Speaker, is of deep concern to me and, I am sure, to the rest of you. If this is the manner in which this Government wishes to bring about brotherly love and affection, then I am quite concerned about how we determine those issues.

There are some things that surprise me in my early days in politics, and they include the difference between political comment and sheer mischief. My colleague Mr Kaine referred to the setting of standards and the real issues of good government. One issue stands out in my mind, and that is a press release by the Deputy Chief Minister, dated 9 August 1989, in which he used these words - and I will not labour the point:

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The distributor road will cost an estimated \$2m...This will serve the whole of the south Tuggeranong area, not only the suburb of Gordon.

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Chief Minister likes always to get me to table anything I have in my hands. I have with me here a map given to me by his own officer the other day showing that that road in fact is a connecting link between two parts of the suburb of Gordon. It is not - I repeat, not - a distributor road serving "the whole of the south Tuggeranong area, not only the suburb of Gordon", and we have seen my well-reasoned colleague Mr Jensen get to his feet with genuine concern today again on that issue.

Mr Speaker, the question of credibility would be one, were I Chief Minister or even Deputy Chief Minister, that I would force very strongly on my colleagues. I would inspect releases of that nature and particular relationships between Ministers and senior officials to ensure that those events did not occur.

The setting of standards is another issue that the Rally was interested in in this new government. I regret to say, Mr Speaker, that we have not seen - even I have been drawn into it - the standard that we would have expected of the new European-style parliament that this Assembly is. I regret very much that there have been disruptions in the past. There will not be in the future, Mr Speaker. You can be assured that the attempts today by the Deputy Chief Minister to again call us names - Katharine something; I forget the other word.

Mr Duby: West.

MR COLLAERY: West. Mr Speaker, you can be assured that we will not rise on those issues any more and we are going to see that the next days of this Government that pass are spent wisely and usefully in ensuring that the people of the Territory get some measure of government with our support.

It is very clear from Mr Kaine's comments and it becomes clear in detail from my colleagues that this minority Government is not working. It is not working simply because it is not the consultative model that was promised. It is not the type of European assembly that my colleague Mr Kaine and, I seem to recall, Mr Fry, in the wilderness, were proposing some months ago. It turned into something else. To an extent the Rally, and I perhaps, erred in not bringing this Chief Minister into line earlier, but I am saying today, Mr Speaker, that this Government in the ACT is off the track. It is seriously off the track and it needs to ensure that the next few meetings, the next few openings and the next few presentations in the public eye are not used to vilify opponents and are not used to promote short-term ephemeral political lines. I am sure my colleague Dr Kinloch will refer to a couple of those incidents that have been most unhappy and have brought the Assembly largely into disrepute.

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The Chief Minister herself is easygoing. She needs to be a lot tougher with at least one of her colleagues. We need to keep the view in mind that the people of the ACT wish to ensure that they are getting value for money and that we have the best interests of the Assembly in mind.

The 100 days statement lists announcements, attendances and a whole range of issues which, as my colleague Mr Kaine pointed out, are often proposals or issues that really do not mean achievements. They simply amount to a pleasant musing over the last 100 days, spent pleasantly on the fifth floor while, as my colleague Mr Kaine said, we stood out there with the members of the press, banished to the outer square where we began, in the rain, in the wind, often, putting over our own views and protests about the 100 days.

Mr Speaker, the other issue of course is that one of the achievements mentioned is the re-establishment of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. We have given this Government an equal opportunity. It has not taken the offer, and it will need protection soon from its own stalwart supporters, in the way of the unions and the federations, as my colleague Mr Moore will mention.

Truly, there are achievements mentioned here with which we differ seriously. The announcement of a 24-hour mental health crisis service is a tokenistic gesture. We have been saying in the Rally that we needed a proper mental health facility for months in this Territory. People are released from ward 12B of the Woden Valley Hospital in circumstances where they need a halfway house. They do need further surveillance and compassionate assistance. We do not have it in the Territory. We need it for those people and we need it additionally for those people who are facing legal process, but we have got a mental health crisis service. It is wholly inadequate.

Mr Speaker, another proposed announcement is that we are going to bring the federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission here. Even our colleague Dr Tomlinson of ACTCOSS says that the Government's human rights record is woeful. To bring its own mechanism back here when it has failed to properly protect human rights, when it has failed dismally and signally in the areas in which I have been involved, is not the way to go. We are old enough and big enough to have our own protective mechanism established here within existing resources.

There are other issues such as measures to tighten stamp duty and payroll tax. The pejorative word is "tighten". This is an adversarial comment. It should really be "measures to review stamp duty and payroll", but we see the ideological word "tighten". If only people knew how hard it is for businesses in this town to survive, how difficult it is for young couples to get their stamp duty together, but this has got to be called a "tightening" process. I think

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the knot is tightening somewhere else at the moment, and that will be a problem that I hope the Chief Minister will put her mind to in the budget.

The Chief Minister says she has instituted community consultative meetings. The first meeting was held on 21 June 1989. We will be interested to know what other meetings have been held during this 100-day progression. There are a variety of claims, such as the release of the Canberra heritage study. That was only released under pressure, from my memory. A number of issues were already in the pipeline, to my knowledge, by former officers of the Administration, and I want to place on record the Rally's appreciation to those ACT public servants who largely produced what measures of success this Government had, meagre though they are.

They were matters that were already in the pipeline and were already the thoughts of effective, competent public servants. To claim the credit politically for them is somewhat churlish, in our view. That includes one of the claims of upgrading ACTION services. We all know about those rolling programs. That is being claimed as a 100-day success. We wait to hear what this Government has done about early proposals for the conversion of these buses, particularly the smelly ones, to gas. What real initiatives have been taken there? There has been a gas conversion proposal for months and months and months. So where is the initiative?

Mr Kaine: In 1993.

MR COLLAERY: My colleague Mr Kaine is being generous to the Government. There are other issues such as the construction of a new primary school and preschool in Theodore. That is a matter that is currently before a committee of this Assembly. It seems to be presumptuous of the Government to claim that as a success since that primary school has been identified for construction for several years. If only the press knew how hollow this claim is; if only they knew the cynicism in some of our party offices about these first hundred days! It reminds us of things that we heard during the bicentennial as ships sailed their way to Australia and went up into the Roaring Forties and down into a gale. We are not sure where the next few days will bring this Government, but certainly the establishment of a 24-hour mental health crisis service might be one measure that the Government knows it has to take when it starts to ponder its errors.

The indexation of funds available to the community development fund in recognition of important work done by the community groups is another little pat on the back, another attempt to gain friends out of a meaningless nonsense statement. We all know, as my colleague Mr Kaine said, the meaninglessness of saying "the indexation of funds". We would like to hear what that means because we do not understand it.

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Now, I turn to the SAAP funding agreement. The position of homeless youth, the position of the housing crisis in this Territory, is not being adequately addressed. I invite the Chief Minister to walk down to Garema Place and other places and talk to the community groups, the service receivers, in this area. There is no proper coordination of the youth homeless situation in this Territory. This Government is proposing to cancel utterly a foster home scheme.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Collaery, your time has expired.

MR DUBY (5.07): Phrases like "the first hundred days" and this sort of malarkey, are very reminiscent of things like the "Paris Commune" or perhaps the "Reign of Terror", or the "Thousand-Year Reich". What exactly are we trying to get at with this "hundred days"? We have got a list here of 41 items about which this Government says, "Isn't it fantastic; we have got these 41 items that we have achieved". I have had a look through them. Of the 41 items, 14 are asterisked.

Mr Kaine: Fifteen.

MR DUBY: Fifteen, is it? You are better at figures than I am, Mr Kaine. Fifteen of them are asterisked as relying on the passing by this very Assembly of the program in the budget. Another 16 of them, by my calculation, are things that would have occurred anyway, whether we had self-government or not. I can assure the Minister for Housing and Urban Services, when I notice things like "opened the Woden Office of the ACT Housing Trust", that there has been one there for five years. All it did was move 100 yards, and she has opened the office at Woden to let people get a better place. There is a whole number of other items here. One is the announcement of the replacement of public houses and the Melba Flats. We have known that was coming for years. There is nothing new in that. There is no great achievement in that.

But let us give credit where credit is due. There are some achievements in this statement which are genuine achievements.

Mr Kaine: Can you find one?

MR DUBY: Yes, I can, Mr Kaine. I think it is terrific that we have had to announce our pecuniary interests, because I know everyone has wanted to know for a long time how much money you have. Let us face it; that is a genuine initiative, as is instituting the policy of 50 per cent representation for women on boards and committees. That is a genuine initiative.

Mr Kaine: It has not happened yet. Ask the Government to tell you one where they have got 50 per cent.

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MR DUBY: Nevertheless, out of the 41, let us face it, I can find a couple that are genuine initiatives which need to be complimented. There are other things that have happened in the magic 100 days of this Government that need to be listed also. In the 100 days of government we have had increases in rates on private residences and commercial residences, some of them, as admitted today by the Chief Minister, of up to 250 per cent. We have had increases in motor vehicle registration charges. We have had increases in motor vehicle licence fees. We have had increases in ambulance levies, which have been put on people who are paying for private medical insurance.

We have had decreased assistance to community groups. Mr Collaery was going to mention before he was cut off the Galilee group, which provides an excellent service to youth - not necessarily homeless youth - in danger in the ACT. We have had decreased funding for hospitals, a decrease in the nurses' working conditions, and decreased funding for education.

I believe next week we will see teachers having a rally outside this very Assembly to complain about their treatment by this Government. We have had a decrease in the number of preschools. It is touted in here that we have cut the preschool fee. If you have not got preschools, you do not need a fee, do you? You have only got to think about it that way.

So let us get these things in perspective. It is all very well to issue, at the expense of tree after tree after tree, item after item after item, what are supposed to be grand initiatives. Let us get it in perspective. There are only a few things there that are worth while, and the rest of them are, frankly, waffle.

MR STEVENSON (5.11): Mr Speaker, indeed the matter of the Chief Minister's last 100 days is a matter of public importance.

Mr Kaine: I am glad you said "last".

MR STEVENSON: It is a pleasure. Specifically, I would like to look at the Chief Minister's dealings with the citizens of the ACT. By this I mean with their representatives in the house, and I should say the representatives of the large majority of citizens in the ACT. There are some major concerns that I wish to point out. We were told that the Government would be open and consultative. The Government controls much of the information that is necessary for the effective working of the ACT. Without this information the opposition in the Assembly is largely hamstrung. So we need to get information from the Ministers.

One example is that on 31 May, Michael Moore, in this Assembly, asked the Chief Minister how much money was being spent on the personal staff for each party in this Assembly. That is information that would be readily available and

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should have been immediately given to this Assembly. The answer did not come until more than two months later, and that was on 1 August. Two months it took. How on earth are we supposed to represent people when we cannot get information?

A matter of far more importance than the time it took is what the information was that the Chief Minister gave this Assembly. The information - and this was on 1 August - was that the ACT Executive's staff budget was \$548,769, just over a half a million dollars. This was after two months of waiting, two months of preparation of this document, if you like, and it said it was \$548,000-odd.

The total staff number, in another document I have, listed 14 personal staff for the Labor Party excluding Mr Wood, yet, effective from 1 August, there is a document entitled "Industry, Employment and Education Portfolio: Ministerial and Senior Officers Telephone Numbers". Incidentally, I know members will be aware that we have our telephone numbers in this document as well. When you count up the number of personal staff for the Ministers in this book, you arrive at not a figure of 14 but a figure of 21 - 50 per cent extra.

If we look at the amount of money for the first 14 as being \$548,000, the second 50 per cent would be a sum of \$274,384 - more than a quarter of a million dollars greater than the information given to this Assembly by the Chief Minister. The total budget under that sum for the Ministers for personal staff only - not to mention the other 17,000 advisers - is \$823,153.

We have got two documents on the same day that are clearly misleading, one presented in answer to Mr Moore's question to this house showing that the budget for the Ministers was just over a half a million dollars, but we find that effective from the same day there was 50 per cent more than that.

The Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Bill 1989 was recently presented by the Chief Minister. In presenting that Bill, the Chief Minister introduced it as a Bill to provide for the employment of consultants and staff - consultants and staff - by Ministers, certain office holders and members of the Legislative Assembly. When we look through the Bill we find that it does mention consultants. It mentions consultants underneath "ministerial consultants". Nowhere else in this Bill is there an allowance for consultants. The introduction by the Chief Minister is misleading. It is not a Bill to provide for the employment of consultants for certain office holders and members of the Legislative Assembly, but only for Ministers.

That brings me to a point that members are all aware of: the effective firing of my staff. This is one of the things that has happened in the first 100 days of this Assembly. The average minimal allowance per member for parties in this

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house is 1.5 staff members, if you like - an amount of about \$45,000 - except in my case, with the Abolish Self Government Coalition, which has one member only and an allowance of some \$31,000.

Ms Maher: And Bill.

Mr Whalan: Bill has only got one.

MR STEVENSON: I did mention party allowance. I do not particularly think it is necessary to go into the matter of Mr Wood.

Mr Whalan: Why not? He is a very important person.

MR STEVENSON: Indeed, Mr Wood is an important person. But I think it is not particularly necessary to suggest that, because Mr Wood is a member of the Labor Party, there may be such things as questions asked of Ministers - and there was a good example of that today - that Ministers are well aware of, basically dorothy dix questions.

So to look at the only relevant party that the Coalition can be compared to, the Residents Rally, the Rally has six staff members for four elected members, a total of \$184,000-odd, which divided by four - in other words, per person - is something like \$46,000. That is the allowance that my party should also receive.

What happened was that the matter could not be resolved by me until I received the full allowance and I was able, as a part-term situation to fill the gap, to hire a consultancy. I effectively got three for one staff member pay. I saved thousands of dollars, because the consultancy pays for holidays, superannuation, insurances and other things. Now, what did the Chief Minister do after I had hired the consultancy? She said that there are concerns about hiring a consultancy, notwithstanding that these concerns are apparently not relevant in her own requirement for hiring consultants.

There are concerns about insurance and tax minimisation. The insurance and minimisation should not need to be commented upon but nevertheless insurances are controlled by the consultancy. They are not a concern of the ACT Administration. As far as tax minimisation is concerned, the ACT Administration uses consultants. It is not a problem there. The Chief Minister will use consultants, if the Bill goes through, and it is supposedly not a problem there. I must make the point that tax minimisation is legal, unless there is something in store for the businesses in Canberra that I do not yet know about.

So I put a submission in on this five weeks ago. A week or so ago I was told by the Chief Minister's secretary that it had been lost. What happened, effectively, was that my staff were fired last Friday. Is this an example of the first 100 days? If so, I am concerned about the second 100.

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DR KINLOCH (5.21): Very quickly, in relation to Mr Stevenson's comment, I would say a farewell to the Hesketh and Chamberlain family. We enjoyed the presence on the first floor of John, Trudy and Jason. We are very sorry indeed to see them go and I hope between us all we can reinstate Dennis Stevenson's 1.5 staff members as quickly as possible.

Now I move on to a couple of examples that my friend and colleague Mr Collaery referred to. I was distressed the other day at the Floriade breakfast. It was a delightful occasion. We all enjoyed it. It was really a good occasion and well put together on a cold, foggy morning, beautifully arranged by the public relations people who did it, but I did truly object to the speech by Anthony Steel effectively being turned into an ALP media release. I felt that it was not called for. I felt he demeaned himself before that audience. I was looking forward to hearing him. That was one reason I went - to hear him - and I hope if he is brought to Canberra again he will give a much more bipartisan, or quintipartisan, or non-partisan reaction to the commitment we all have to the arts. So I would ask that whatever group is in government - I am not speaking to any one group; but whichever group it is - does see its role as a multipartisan role on many issues.

I could go on about that. There are many examples. Mr Duby has given some other excellent ones. Might I suggest, Mr Duby, that your speech was an excellent summary of the 100 days and it deserves an oral press release. It was most enjoyable. Things like completion of road works and announcements of grants do not call for some self-congratulatory media release.

Might I, by contrast, very quickly say that one occasion we all went to - a citizenship ceremony - was non-partisan. That was beautifully done. It was not a party occasion. I think the Red Nose Day launch was very similar.

Now I return to the 100 days. May I first of all say I quite enjoy the notion of evaluating activities after 100 days, a political tradition much loved not only by many politicians but of course by journalists and historians; and I bow in that direction. Some of us have enjoyed writing articles of that kind over many years and may we all look forward to similar judgments after 250, 500 and 1,000 days, leading up to that most crucial public assessment in February 1992, and that will be the one that counts.

But may I worry about the concentration of this 100-day analysis on the activities of the minority ALP Government, sometimes known as the Katharine West party. I believe that the Chief Minister should concentrate on being proud - indeed as all of us should be proud, as all Canberrans should be proud - not of the ALP but of the activities of this entire Assembly over 100 days.

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And so may I tentatively, as an historian, reflect on those 100 days as seen not in a partisan political way but by all of us. The first point: we exist. We exist despite sniping criticism, often uninformed slanders and libels, distortions in the media, I have to say, from people who have not necessarily seen us in action here in this chamber, here in our committee rooms and throughout Canberra as all 17 of us perform our many duties, often seven days per week. If we are to be congratulated on the 100 days, then we are all to be congratulated, but there is a sting in that tail. Wait for it.

Secondly, we exist; we exist and we thrive. We have all made the system work over these 100 days - all of us. In this connection I especially commend our Clerk, Deputy Clerk, the Clerk's staff and the Serjeant-at-Arms and his staff, who have helped us do that. But we should congratulate ourselves basically for maintaining and supporting a brand new system, learning how to cope with it and move within it.

The ALP members should not be proud of their so-called 41 achievements in some kind of vacuum, but they should be grateful that they have had our careful sufferance - our careful sufferance. So I especially commend the leadership of all five parties for working together. Understandably, there have been occasional outbursts of frustration, but the basically good-hearted men and women in this Assembly have learned to come to terms with each other over these 100 days, including a mutual acceptance of some rhetorical plays from some members of the five parties.

During those 100 days we have shared many good times together also, even in this chamber, I believe. I think of a briefing session at ACTEW. Thank you, Ellnor. I think of that terrific trip to Pialligo, a multi-party trip. I think of community organisations we have visited and of shared experiences in the arts. I think of the New Zealand Ballet the other day, and educational events and functions, all on a non-partisan basis. I especially remember Robyn's delight in this matter as some of us rode the ACTION bus with an Elvis Presley look-alike. That was not a party occasion. It went beyond that. Our friend and colleague Wayne Berry is not here, but he was also on that bus.

In other words, there are many, many things that we have done. We could make a list of 100 things that we have all done together that we have not put out media releases about. Those of us who from time to time have played our own games during these 100 days now recognise that some members here enjoy confrontational slanging matches, a kind of verbal croquet, which the rest of us do not take seriously, although we sometimes object to it. I ask them to enjoy higher levels of game playing.

We exist; we exist and thrive; we exist and have a sense of joy; we exist and thrive and have a sense of joy; and we achieve. I believe those achievements - often quiet, often

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behind the scenes, not related to press releases, certainly unsung by the media - arise from our active, fascinating and productive committee system, and that too is bipartisan, although in the case of Bill Wood, you have to be bipartisan for everybody. And, Bill, I do pay you tribute for the terrific work you have done over those 100 days.

I will not go into detail, but I congratulate all members for these 100 days - all our contributions, especially those of us who are not members of the formal Government. One thinks of occupational health and safety, public accounts, section 19, the move-on Bill, tertiary amalgamation. I will not go through the whole list. Any fair-minded journalist or historian in future will take special note of that committee work. It has been a tremendous learning process and I think the people of Canberra should be grateful for it. But they do not see it. They do not see it, but they will see the results of it one day.

So we exist; we exist and thrive; we exist, thrive and achieve. Yet at the same time there are negatives or qualifications about the preceding 15 weeks since 11 May. Very quickly let me say that I think there has been a failure of this Assembly over 100 days to break away from an adversarial system of government and opposition. We had a chance for a collegiate system but we blew it owing to party rigidities, especially the dinosaur parties - and I had better not go into that. I suppose you could say our party at least is not a dinosaur party. We are now locked into this "In" or "Out" system, and I would prefer a ministry of all the talents.

Secondly, we have had a corporate failure - all of us - to convince the electorate of Canberra of the benefits to the community of what we have been doing together. All too often we see in the media - as I saw in the John Laws column on Sunday - things said about us that we all know are untrue. We have to think about a joint media approach where the whole Assembly lets Canberrans know and lets Australians know of what we have achieved and what we can achieve. We have not achieved a National Museum of Australia. That has already been referred to. I will not go through that again. We have accepted all too easily an administrative and bureaucratic system which surrounds us - this building, its physical nature, our holus-bolus absorption into or takeover by the former ACT Administration. What in fact is in the best interests of the people of the ACT? I do not think we have always addressed that fully.

I think we have also failed in these 100 days to confront the Federal Government on many issues which concern us, and my colleagues have already discussed some of those related to land, finances and taxes. We have failed in these 100 days in our sad inability to excite and enliven the people of Australia about our new enterprise. My friend and colleague Gary Humphries referred to an article in that connection on a previous occasion.

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Our image has not been improved throughout the country, and we need to work on that. We are too parochial, too incestuous and too self-congratulatory, and may I remind us all, including myself: "Pride goeth before a fall". We need to let all Australians know then that their capital city is in good hands on their behalf. So I call on all of us - - -

MR SPEAKER: Order! Dr Kinloch, your time has expired.

MR HUMPHRIES (5.31): Mr Speaker, I come to close off this debate in the remaining 10 minutes and I note in doing so, first of all, that the Government has taken no opportunity in the course of this debate to say anything whatsoever. That astonishes me, quite frankly. This matter of public importance as raised by the Opposition Leader is very neutrally expressed - - -

Mr Whalan: If you cut yours down to five minutes, I will speak for five.

MR HUMPHRIES: I am sorry, you have lost your chance. I have 10 minutes worth of stuff to say about your performance, and you can sit and listen to it.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Please address your comments through the Chair.

MR HUMPHRIES: This matter of public importance is neutrally expressed. It is not the Government's poor performance or the Government's lack of performance; it is the Government's performance. This is an excellent opportunity for it to stand up and justify this outrageously self-congratulatory document released to the media a few days ago and explain what it is about the performance of the Government that is so worthy of congratulations - an excellent opportunity in the Assembly, in the parliament of the ACT - but the Government has not taken any advantage of that opportunity.

We have seen nothing at all from Government members in this debate; and why? Perhaps it is because the audience here is a little bit more critical than that which they might find in the media. They can sell a load of rubbish to the media that they cannot sell here in the Assembly. I wonder whether we will see more examples of this kind of contemptuous attitude towards the parliament of the ACT and whether the Government will continue to pursue its media campaign, its self-aggrandisement campaign in the media, at the expense of coming to this Assembly and explaining to this Assembly what it is doing and why it is doing it.

Mr Speaker, as I said in a press release of my own earlier this week, I think this is a very sad anniversary. It is, as I said in my release, 100 days of wasted opportunity. It is wasted because, as I have said before in this place and I say again, I believe, irrespective of our positions on self-government before we came to this place, as participants at the highest level of self-government in the ACT, it is our

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duty to show what it is that self government can bring to the people of the ACT, what it is that we can achieve as a self-governing territory for the people of this Territory and, unfortunately, I believe that those 100 days have been largely days of wasted opportunity.

We have not demonstrated in that time just what benefits we can bring; we have missed opportunities; we have avoided issues; and we have deceived to a large extent the people of the Territory as far as what could and should be done. I say "deceived" advisedly. We have had this Government create again and again in its media work the appearance of progress, the appearance of achievement, the appearance of being able to do something about the Territory's problems, but in fact not really addressing those problems.

The first and foremost of those problems is the problem which we raised again and again during the recent election campaign and which really has not been addressed, and that is the long-term funding problems for this Territory. This Government has really not faced up to that problem in any sense at all. It is extremely sad that that should be the case, and I wonder at what stage the Government is going to do that, if at all.

We have had a propaganda exercise waged for some time, laying claim all the time to the achievements of this Assembly, as has been pointed out by other people. The achievements of this Assembly have been claimed by this Government as its own achievements, and that is very sad. My colleague Dr Kinloch referred to the fact that we have slipped into the old mode of adversarial government - government versus opposition fighting on issues - and it is a matter of sadness to some people in this community, I suspect, that we were not able to achieve what was called at various stages cooperative government, government that shared the responsibilities and the credit for particular decisions.

I think, to a very large extent, it has not happened because in its first 100 days this Government sitting opposite has consistently refused to share any of the credit for any of the things that this whole Assembly has done. It has consistently refused to provide for a real sharing of responsibility and credit across the board, and that is extremely sad.

I give one example, and this will not be shared by my colleagues over here in the Residents Rally. The decision on the casino was an extremely important one that this Government was very committed to.

Mr Whalan: We have consistently and publicly acknowledged the support of the Liberal Party and the No Self Government Party on this.

MR HUMPHRIES: You have consistently failed to do so. I believe that the Government has consistently failed to

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acknowledge the contribution of the Liberal Party in respect of the casino. It has consistently failed to do that. If it had spent a quarter of the time it spends attacking the Residents Rally for its opposition to the casino in acknowledging that this achievement has been a multiparty achievement, not just so far as the Liberal Party is concerned but also so far as the No Self Government Party is concerned, it might have made a little more headway in showing that this is an important cross-party decision which deserves credit across the board.

The open and consultative promise made by this Government at many points is still a matter of some contention. Again and again we have heard this Government say that it is engaging in open and consultative processes, particularly as far as its budget is concerned. Let me remind the Government of one thing: the point of parliamentary democracy is that it establishes a consultative process within the parliament itself, that it establishes the procedures within the parliament for the actions of the government to be scrutinised by an opposition, an opposition which is provided with the means and the wherewithal to sit down and face the government's actions, to criticise where they deserve criticism, and to engage in a process of ensuring the government is kept on the straight and narrow.

It cannot do that, it cannot be strong and effective, unless it is provided with adequate resources. And what have we seen from this Government? We have seen a deliberate denial of the sorts of resources that the opposition really needs to carry out its job properly. I invite the members of the Government to come and have a look upstairs. Upstairs in the Liberal Party area we still have 12 people sharing one word processor - 12 people on one word processor. How many word processors are they using upstairs in the Government's area? A lot more than that, I suspect. A lot more than that, a much higher ratio.

My friend Mr Stevenson has already made reference to the problems that he is facing.

Mrs Nolan: What about the phones?

MR HUMPHRIES: My friend Mrs Nolan reminds me about the phones. There is no proper phone system providing for transferability of calls from one phone to another. I will bet that the Government has complete transferability of phone calls from one phone to another. We are not able to get proper letterhead or stationery that describes who we are; we are not able to get a whole series of other simple items by which we can do our job effectively. The Government is not interested in that because - - -

Mr Kaine: Or even signposting in the building.

MR HUMPHRIES: Even proper signposting in the building. The Government is not interested in providing for a strong and effective opposition because it does not want to engage in

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open and consultative government within this Assembly. That is where it should be occurring; not outside necessarily, but here in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I will go through the list of so-called achievements of this Government. A whole lot of things have been ignored. As I have said, it has been 100 days of wasted opportunity. Now let us look at some of the things that the Government has promised or has ignored. First of all, there was the promise about preschool funding, abolishing the preschool fee. It did not mention in this litany of achievements that it at the same time cut preschool education by \$900,000. There was no mention of that. There was no mention of the cuts to the reading recovery training scheme in this document the Government put out.

They have cut 100 teachers, and this is the Government that promised not to cut education. They are cutting non-government schools by cutting funding to the interest rate subsidy scheme in the order of about eight per cent. Where is the Government's commitment to education there? In health, it is increasing the tax burden on families by whacking a \$50 a year tax on families with private health insurance. It is doing nothing to improve the low morale of the health services.

It is doing nothing to recover any of what the Commonwealth Grants Commission identified as overspending in the area of health delivery, the health bureaucracy in this Territory. It is doing nothing about redirecting that towards actual health delivery. It is cutting welfare programs, particularly the ones like the Galilee program already referred to.

Mr Speaker, I am astonished by the things the Government members have said and I am astonished by the audacity they have in claiming credit for a whole series of mismanagement. Look at this list of promises or claims of credit for things that they have achieved: attended the first Premiers Conference and Loan Council; reaffirmed a fundamental commitment; claimed that they have done something by saying they reaffirm this commitment to something.

Mr Stefaniak: It sounds like a solicitor's bill.

MR HUMPHRIES: Indeed. They are establishing a social policy division within the Chief Minister's Department - nothing tangible; throwing public servants at a problem; that is solving the problem. I looked through this document, half expecting to see among the achievements here something like "Sun coming up consistently every day of a 100-day government; birds still singing in trees; weather declining but Government effecting improvement towards late August".

MR SPEAKER: Order! Your time has expired, Mr Humphries.

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MR WHALAN (Minister for Industry, Employment and Education) (5.42): I would like to take this opportunity to speak on some of the achievements which we have seen in the portfolio area for which I am responsible which have occurred over the last 100 days, but before I go onto those initiatives I would like to pause to reflect for a moment on the uniquely difficult environment in which the Government operates. It is obvious that a minority government faces considerable difficulties in getting agreement for its proposals, but it is also often forgotten that a minority government has to trim its sails to the extent that it has to live with what it regards as imperfect decisions. We are often forced into positions which we would not normally adopt because we have to achieve what is possible.

Accordingly, I respond to criticism of the Government's action, or alleged inaction, by saying that in these circumstances the opposition has a fairly large say in this Assembly and cannot avoid some of the blame which it is attributing to us. By the same token, I should of course acknowledge the constructive support of the Liberal and No Self Government parties on important issues. It is important to accept that these parties have made a responsible contribution - - -

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

POLICE OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 [NO. 2]

MR STEFANIAK (5.43): Pursuant to the order of the Assembly of 25 July, I present the Police Offences (Amendment) Bill 1989. I move:

That the Bill be agreed to in principle.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the covering letter from the Legislative Counsel's Office, dated 10 August 1989, that accompanied the final Bill.

Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on this with a bit of a sense of *deja vu*, as I spoke in relation to my initial Bill, then in relation to the subsequent committee report, and I now speak in relation to the Bill the Assembly directed me to prepare. Firstly, Mr Speaker, let me deal with some relevant parts of the Bill. From the original Bill that I placed before the house and pursuant to the majority report in the committee, drafting instructions were sent - appendix 4 to the report - to the Legislative Counsel, who in accordance with those instructions prepared this Bill. Section 35(1) now states:

Where a police officer has reasonable grounds for believing that a person in a public place has engaged, or is likely to engage, in violent conduct in that place, the police officer may direct the person to leave the vicinity.

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Subsection (2) states:

A person shall not, without reasonable excuse, contravene a direction given in accordance with subsection (1).

Penalty: \$200.

The legislative drafter, in accordance with the directions of the committee, incorporated the four areas the majority of the committee wished incorporated - that is, crime of violence, fighting in a public place, intimidation of a person, or damage to property - in his definition of "violent conduct". Subsection (6) refers to violence, taking in the crime of violence, or violence, or fighting in a public place, intimidation of a person and damage to property.

Subsection (3), which was placed in the original Bill - and I will come back to that briefly - was left in on the recommendations of the committee. That has not been altered from the original Bill. Because the majority committee wished to put in 24 hours' community service, we had subsections (4) and (5) added. Indeed, in subsection (6), the definition section, there is a definition of "community service order" and "Crimes Act". Those subsections were necessary to enable the 24-hour provision, which was what the majority of the committee wished, to go in. I will come back to that later because there is a problem which arises there which committee members are aware of.

Also as a result of the majority committee report, a cessation of operation clause was put in - that is section 4 of the Bill - which states:

Section 35 of the Principal Act as amended by this Act, unless sooner repealed, shall cease to be in force at the expiration of 2 years after the commencement of this Act.

That is the sunset clause. No doubt by now all members have read the select committee report in relation to the Bill.

Might I say, Mr Speaker, as I said when I brought down the select committee report, that I believe this truncated version of my original Bill is not as effective. I believe what was initially placed before the house by me, and amended as per paragraph 3, which is still there, gave adequate safeguards and also gave a full and proper move-on power to the Australian Federal Police. There are problems, indeed, with any suggestion of sunset clauses in legislation, but that is the majority committee report and that has been put in the new Bill.

I think I indicated in my dissenting report that that is one thing perhaps that I do not see the necessity for, but nevertheless it is there. I believe the new Bill does cover most situations in which police would need to use a

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move-on power. I would think that not all areas, but certainly the main areas, have been addressed. So the Bill is workable, and the Australian Federal Police indeed believe that that is the case. It is not ideal, Mr Speaker, but perhaps we can get to that in the detail stage.

Mr Speaker, I would point out now, in relation to section 25(3), that that may not any longer be necessary. That is a result of the new definition of what is required; that is, the violent conduct aspect, the crimes of violence, fighting in a public place, intimidation and damage to property. Indeed, it has been suggested to me by the Legislative Counsel that perhaps that is something the Assembly may wish to look at because, in their view, subsection (3) is not necessary, although certainly the rationale for putting it in the original Bill was quite sound.

But I am assured by the drafters that there is no chance of this Bill, even without subsection (3), being used for demonstrations and pickets. Again that is something that people might like to think about later on during the detail stage. Mr Speaker, as I believe my colleagues on the committee, Mr Collaery and Ms Maher, have been advised by the Legislative Counsel as well, there is a problem with the 24 hours that may well need to be addressed, and that would mean that subsections (4) and (5), and the definitions of "community service" and "Crimes Act" should be deleted, because the 24 hours community service should be as an alternative to a term of imprisonment and not as a completely fresh penalty standing all by itself.

The whole rationale of community service is for it to be an alternative to imprisonment in any legislation and not something that does stand by itself where a term of imprisonment is not envisaged for the legislation. That, in reality, does cause only a minor problem, which can be addressed by those matters being deleted.

Having gone through those explanations, Mr Speaker, I would indicate that I rarely agree with the Canberra Times but I would just like to make a couple of points in relation to that. In their second editorial, which although less unfavourable to this Bill than their second-last one, and getting back perhaps a little bit towards their first one in April, which was very much in favour of move-on powers, they do say that powers such as this are hard to see as a miracle cure. I would tend to agree with that, because I do not think anything is a miracle cure, but a move-on power is a very great help in preventive policing and a very great help in cleaning up a number of criminal problems that Canberra has experienced in recent years. It is a commonsense power and is something the community obviously is very much in favour of.

I am not surprised perhaps by the editorial several weeks ago against this Bill. The editors of the Canberra Times, Mr Waterford and Mr Hull, I have known since university days and certainly their attitudes do not necessarily surprise me

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there. I was particularly interested, though, Mr Speaker, to see the opinion poll in the Canberra Times, which was published on Saturday. As I have felt for some time, a large majority of the Canberra population, the ordinary citizens out there - not minority vocal pressure groups, but the ordinary citizens of Canberra - support this power. Some 69 per cent - 73 per cent of women surveyed and 67 per cent of men, so effectively approximately 70 per cent - of the population support this power.

I was particularly heartened, in the light of some of the criticism coming from the Government benches, by the support this Bill has among the youth. Of those under 25, Mr Speaker, 58 per cent support it, 32 per cent are against it, and the rest are unsure. A significant majority of young people support this commonsense legislation. I was particularly heartened to see that, Mr Speaker. Indeed I think, out of all the opinion polls taken in the paper, this particular issue - the police move-on powers - received the most support by the Canberra community. I think, really, the Government should take heed of that.

A number of the arguments put up by the Government and some of its supporters - vocal minority pressure groups in many cases, and indeed probably not many, because there were not all that many of them who opposed this Bill - show up as spurious, facile, incorrect drivel put up as argument against this Bill. I now call on the Government to support this Bill as a result of the Canberra Times opinion poll. I now call on them to look at the consistent support one of their Federal colleagues, Mrs Ros Kelly, has given to police move-on powers. That is something they might like to take up within their factions, because she has indeed been, and remains, as I understand it, a consistent supporter of the move-on power.

I think, really, no matter which way one looks at the Government argument here, one has to detect just an anti-police bias coming into their argument because, no matter how they try to hide it, they are basically saying the police cannot be trusted with any legislation that will give them new power.

Arguments have been put up in relation to potential for abuse of this power. Any legislation is capable of abuse. Now, with the very minor penalty suggested for this legislation and indeed the further protection a citizen who is moved on gets in subsection (2) - it states that a person shall not, without reasonable excuse, contravene a direction given in accordance with subsection (1) - all the legitimate arguments raised against this Bill, and even perhaps some of the not so legitimate arguments, have been amply covered, and really perhaps too far covered, by this proposed new piece of legislation.

Mr Speaker, this debate on the Bill has now gone on for a number of months. I think the Government would probably never like to see this legislation actually get onto the

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statute books, but we are now most concerned that this legislation does in fact proceed and indeed I intend, Mr Speaker, and hope, that this legislation will proceed to finality this week in these sittings. I will do everything I can to ensure that that occurs.

This new Bill has been presented in accordance with the drafting instructions issued by the committee to the legislative drafter, who has prepared a Bill in accordance with those instructions. It is in accordance with a very lengthy and detailed committee report in relation to this issue which has now been around for a month, and indeed the issue - - -

Mr Berry interjected.

MR STEFANIAK: You should have got it last time, Wayne. It has been around since, I think, late July when it came down, and - - -

Mr Berry: This is the first time I have seen the Bill. I got it today.

MR STEFANIAK: That is the committee report. I think it is time the Government stopped prevaricating on this issue. This issue has been around now for some two months or more and I think the people of Canberra have overwhelmingly supported the move for move-on powers, and that is something this Assembly should take very close note of.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to present the explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Leave granted.

MR STEFANIAK: Mr Speaker, I present the explanatory memorandum to this Bill.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Follett**) adjourned.

Assembly adjourned at 5.57 pm

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following answers to questions were provided:

Awarding of Contracts (Question No. 2)

Mr Collaery asked the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, upon notice, on 24 May 1989:

- (1) What ACT waste removal contracts and concrete maintenance work contracts have been awarded to G. Henness and/or "Nifty Waste Disposals" since 1980.
- (2) In relation to each contract (a) for what periods were the tenders called and (b) were subsisting contracts extended; if so, on whose instructions and why.
- (3) In relation to a minor concrete works tender called in or about October 1987 (a) who were the tenderers, (b) at what times were the tenders opened, (c) which parties were present, (d) what were the tender prices, (e) what decision was made on the tender and (f) was a tender contract awarded; if not, why not.
- (4) In relation to a minor concrete works tender called in or about February 1988 (a) who were the tenderers, (b) at what times were the tenders opened, (c) which parties were present, (d) what were the tender prices, and (e) who was the successful tenderer.

Mr Whalan: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The question raises the allocation of contracts to Mr Henness' company and is clearly designed to imply that Mr Henness has behaved improperly or has received special favours.

I understand that Mr Henness was a principal witness for the prosecution in a case in which Mr Collaery acted for the defence.

On that basis, I regard the question as improper and a clear indication that Mr Collaery is prepared to confuse his public duty with his private interest.

Notwithstanding the above, I provide the following information.

- (1) G. Henness firstly in partnership with others and later as Nifty Waste Disposal was awarded the following contracts:
 - TB 101/78 in July 1979 for waste disposal;
 - TB 79/81 in September 1982 for waste disposal in zone 5;

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- No. 7034 in January 1986 for minor concrete works in various suburbs, (northeast zone); and
- Nos C87/134 and C87/135 in May 1988 under tender TB87/090 for minor concrete works in various suburbs, (southwest and south zones).

- (2) TB 101/78 for waste disposal was called for two years with an extension clause. The contract was extended firstly for twelve months and then for a further three months. Approval was by the secretary of the department. The three-month extension was an interim measure to continue garbage collection services while contract TB 79/81 was let.

TB 79/81 for waste disposal was called for one year, with an extension clause. There were seven zones in this contract of which Nifty Waste Disposals held zone 5 (Florey, Hall, Macgregor, Page and Latham). Extensions for all contractors, including Nifty, were approved annually from 1982 to the end of the contract in 1985. A second contract identical to the first was entered into with all previous contractors while the "big bin" issue was debated. Approval was by the assistant secretary, technical services (now known as the general manager, urban services). In April 1986 the then Minister for Territories advised the ACT House of Assembly that he would not proceed with a proposal to introduce 240 litre big bins, and the matter would be handled by the incoming self-government. Arrangements were then made to extend the contracts on the northside as this was the lowest cost option. Nifty defaulted on this contract on 3 February 1989.

Contract 7034 for minor concrete works was called for two years with an optional one year extension. The contract was extended for 12 weeks to 12 March 1988 in order to complete unfinished works following application by the manager, general works section to the assistant manager, supply.

TB 87/090 for minor concrete works was called in March 1988 for two years with an optional one year extension. Nifty has withdrawn from one of the two contracts let to them under this tender.

(3)

- a. Details of the tenderers are considered to be commercial-in-confidence. Successful tenderers are gazetted.
- b. Tenders were opened at 2 pm on 27 November 1987.
- c. The tenders were opened by staff of the supply section in accordance with the procedures outlined in chapter 45 of the Commonwealth Purchasing Manual. The names of the staff are available to the auditor but are not published.

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- d. Details of the tender prices are considered commercial-in-confidence.
 - e. No decision was made on this tender.
 - f. No contract was awarded because the tenderers used different methods to present their submissions; and it was not possible to establish a fair basis of comparison between tenders. As the administration is obliged to terminate a tender where it is not possible to undertake an objective assessment, a second tender specification was then prepared which could be objectively assessed.
- (4)
- a. Details of tenderers are considered commercial-in-confidence. Successful tenderers are gazetted.
 - b. Tenders were opened at 2 pm on 13 April 1988.
 - c. The tenders were opened by staff of the supply section in accordance with the procedures outlined in chapter 45 of the Commonwealth Purchasing Manual. The names of the staff are available to the auditor but are not published.
 - d. Tender prices:
 - Tenderers were invited to submit a price as a percentage of the administration's estimate for any or all five zones. Details of the tender submissions are considered commercial-in-confidence.
 - e. Successful tenders:
 - The lowest tenders were received from J.W. & C.A. Todd for all zones; this firm was awarded two zones on the northside. The second lowest tender was submitted by Nifty Waste Disposals. This firm was awarded two zones on the southside. The third lowest conforming tender for the southeast zone was Poppett Pty Ltd, which was awarded this zone. This basket of contracts was used to reduce the vulnerability of the administration to the fortunes of a single contractor.

Staff Costs
(Question No. 3)

Mr Moore asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 30 May 1989:

What are the estimated costs of providing staff for the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Residents Rally, the No Self Government Party

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and the Abolish Self Government Coalition in the Assembly.

Ms Follett: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The Government did not approach the question of staffing on the basis of provision for political parties. Rather, it intended to provide a basic entitlement to each member to support them in their Assembly duties. The Government proposal for back bench members was generous by any reasonable comparison - for example, with entitlements in the Northern Territory or Tasmanian Assemblies.

The Government also proposed modest extra provision for the additional workload and responsibilities of the various office holders.

Persistent representations from several parties led the Government to increase the staffing allowed for back bench members and to provide a staffing allocation, including dedicated keyboard resources, to the major parties.

The cost of all staff allocations for Assembly members and office holders is as follows -

		\$
ACT Executive	548,769	
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly		94,908
Leader of the Opposition	137,861	
Liberal Party	118,583	
Residents Rally Party	184,936	
Abolish Self Government Coalition		31,693
ALP (Non-Executive)		31,693
No Self Government Party	86,890	

**Community Mediation Service
(Question No. 4)**

Mr Moore asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 30 May 1989:

Why was the proposed 1988-89 budget allowance for a Community Mediation Service dropped from the final budget allocations.

Ms Follett: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Decisions about priorities for 1988-89 Commonwealth budget allocations were not the responsibility of the ACT Government.

The proposed Community Mediation Service is now operational on a pilot basis under the title of Conflict Resolution Service. It is administered by volunteers and uses the

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Griffin Centre for accommodation purposes. Volunteer mediators have been trained and a management committee is responsible for the running of the service.

During the election campaign, the Government pointed out that the Conflict Resolution Service will help resolve conflicts in the community and reduce the need for costly legal actions.

As Mr Moore would be aware, I announced in the Government's 1989-90 Budget Initial Statement that the Government proposes to provide \$100,000 to fund the Conflict Resolution Service in 1989-90.

Tourist Development (Question No. 7)

Mr Jensen asked the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, upon notice, on 27 June 1989:

- (1) Is the land made available for a tourist development on the Monaro Highway, near Gilmore, now being released on a direct grant basis.
- (2) If so, (a) what are the conditions of the grant; and (b) what method was used to calculate the price to be paid by the approved developer.

Mr Whalan: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The policy for the direct negotiation of the sale of land for commercial purposes encompasses the following categories:

- (A) Doctors
- (B) Dentists/other paramedical purposes
- (C) Veterinarians
- (D) Manufacturing/high technology sites - with the support of the Canberra Development Board (CDB)
- (E) Tourism developments - projects of a uniquely tourist nature supported by the CDB
- (F) Special situations - where a project is solely attributable to the applicant's innovation and forethought, with the support of the CDB
- (G) Commonwealth departments/agencies.

The ACT has operated within these policies and in respect to (D), (E) AND (F) above the criteria against which an assessment is made include:

- . Employment creation and/or growth prospects.
- . Prospects for long-term economic viability.
- . Financial and managerial capabilities of the proponent.
- . Introduction of new technology or products/services into Canberra.
- . Contribution to Canberra's service infrastructure base

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to support local industry.
. Compatibility with environmental standards and performance criteria.

And in the specific case of tourism related projects:

. One-off tourist oriented developments involving special features requiring special site identification relating to the unique development.

Applicants are required to lodge detailed submissions to the Office of Industry and Development. Submissions for direct allocation of industrial land were made through the Canberra Development Board. Major tourism related development applications were also channelled through that board.

In the main, past direct land applications have applied to innovative tourism and manufacturing projects which met the Government's objectives of attracting productive investment and diversifying our economic base.

In the case of the tourist development on the Monaro Highway near Gilmore, the proposed project was considered by the Canberra Development Board in December 1986 and by the new Canberra Development Board in August 1987. Both boards strongly supported the project. The then Ministers, Mr Brown and Mr Holding, approved of the direct sale of the site on the Monaro Highway for the tourist development involving a restaurant and service stations, recognising that it would represent a significant addition to Canberra's tourist attractions and infrastructure, would provide a useful increase in availability of low-cost accommodation and would provide jobs for at least 100 new employees, especially young workers.

The premium to be paid for the grant of the lease is calculated in the same manner as a premium for any direct allocation lease. The Australian Valuation Office advise the premium, having regard to the terms and conditions provided for under the lease arrangements. The valuation will take account of the uses and any requirements for the lessee to carry out work, both on and off the lease, and for any restrictions placed upon the lessee in relation to the use of the lease.

At this stage, negotiations are continuing with the proposed lessee as to the full conditions of the lease, and these negotiations would be in confidence. When the negotiations have been finalised I will release full details of the lease and the premium paid.

**Isabella Plains Primary School
(Question No. 10)**

Mr Moore asked the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, upon notice, on 4 July 1989:

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- (1) Is the Minister aware that the Isabella Plains Primary School is close to enrolment capacity.
- (2) Will the failure to build a primary school in Bonython stretch the Isabella Plains school's enrolments beyond its capacity; if so, what arrangements are being made to alleviate overcrowding at the Isabella Plains Primary School.

Mr Whalan: The following information is provided in response to Mr Moore's question:

- (1) Enrolments at Isabella Plains Primary School are well below capacity.

The school currently has an enrolment of 336 students which is expected to increase to 410 by the beginning of 1990. The school's capacity is 480.

The ACT Schools Office provides transportable classroom units to meet enrolment demand above capacity. It is expected that the peak enrolment for the school will occur in 1995-96 and will not exceed 600.

- (2) Current plans allow for the provision of a primary school in Bonython to open in 1992 or 1993, depending on enrolment demand. The first land sales in Bonython occurred in late March 1989.

Isabella Plains Primary School is the designated holding school for Bonython until the new school opens. This arrangement follows standard planning practices. There are, at present, no Bonython students attending the school.

Promotions for Teachers (Question No. 12)

Mr Moore asked the Minister for Industry, Employment and Education, upon notice, on 4 July 1989:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of changes in promotion procedures within the ACT Schools Office.
- (2) Do these new procedures require the filling of a teaching position by a compulsory transferee regardless of (a) any superior claims of other applicants and (b) any decision taken by the relevant school board as to the preferred applicant.
- (3) Are the rights of school boards established under the Schools Authority Act 1976 in any way limited by these new procedures.
- (4) Will the Minister ensure that teaching positions will be filled on merit and that full weight is given to decisions made by school boards.

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Mr Whalan: The following information is provided in response to Mr Moore's question:

- (1) There have been no changes to procedures since the middle of 1988 when joint selection committees were introduced in line with changes in other areas of Commonwealth employment and following amendment of the then Commonwealth Teaching Service Act 1972. A working party is currently reviewing these procedures, but its report has not yet been presented.

The 1988 amendments to the then Commonwealth Teaching Service Act did not alter the power to make compulsory transfers but created some doubt about appropriate procedures under section 28(1). This was discussed with the ACT Teachers Federation and both the chief education officer and the Federation obtained legal advice that it would be appropriate to further amend the Act to clarify the situation. Such a proposed amendment to the Teaching Service Act is being prepared for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

- (2) The current procedures provide for promotion or transfer to level 2, 3 and 4 positions on merit. However, there are occasions when officers who have no substantive position need to be placed. Such officers are only placed in positions for which they are considered suitable. It is sometimes necessary to place these officers ahead of others in the merit ranking, but this is normal, accepted practice in a career service.
- (3) For some years now, school boards have been directly involved in the selection of school principals by having a nominee on the selection panel for each position and by compiling two of the six selection criteria. However, this is an agreed procedure, and not a right that exists under the Schools Authority Act 1976.
- (4) Recommendations of selection committees to the delegates are made purely on merit, but, as outlined in (2) above, there are times when officers on compulsory transfer have to be placed.

For non-principal positions, the principal of the receiving school is a member of the selection committee. He or she will have the needs of the school in mind, but there is no legal provision for decisions of school boards to be considered by a selection committee. Indeed, section 33(5) of the Commonwealth Teaching Service Amendment Act 1987 states:

A member of a Joint Selection Committee, while acting as such, is not subject to direction by any other person or by any body or authority other than a court.

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Bruce Stadium

Mr Whalan: On 6 July 1989 **Dr Kinloch** asked the following question:

Is the Minister aware that the planned construction of an access road as part of the Bruce Stadium works will remove part of the main cycleway from Belconnen to O'Connor? If so, will the Minister give this Assembly an assurance that alternative arrangements will be made for the cycleway?

The proposed modifications to the warm-up track at Bruce will require closure of a short section of the O'Connor to Kaleen cyclepath. A temporary path through the Australian Institute of Sport will be signposted while construction work is under way, pending construction of an alternative permanent path.

Gazettal of the permanent path was considered by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the ACT on 15 May 1989 and the committee's recommendations will be tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament when it resumes on 15 August 1989. Once gazettal is finalised the work can commence on the replacement path. My colleague the Minister for Housing and Urban Services is aware of the need for satisfactory cycle access in this area and is currently examining the options for ensuring that the cyclepath network is properly maintained.

Radiotherapy Treatment

Mr Berry: **Mr Humphries** asked me the following question on 26 July 1989:

Is the Minister aware of the frequent breakdown of the radiotherapy machine at the Woden Valley Hospital used to treat cancer patients? What does the Minister intend to do about this deplorable situation? Is he prepared to replace the machine as a matter of priority?

The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Since June 1987, the radiotherapy linear accelerator at Woden Valley Hospital has been operational for 99 per cent of the scheduled time for patients. Any delays which have been experienced are below established delays in other institutions throughout Australia. I consider the dedication of the technical staff at Woden Valley Hospital ensures that patient inconvenience is minimal.

The linear accelerator at Woden Valley Hospital has a comprehensive preventive maintenance routine. It includes the manufacturer's recommended daily maintenance schedule,

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fortnightly planned programmed maintenance and the comprehensive record of any breakdowns. The ACT Department of Community Services and Health seeks to ensure that the highest quality of patient care is maintained.

My department will be preparing a statement on the future planning requirements of the oncology department at Woden Valley Hospital, to address the Royal Australasian College of Radiologists' recent concerns on the state of radiotherapy services throughout Australia. In this context, I have asked for a report to be provided to me on radiotherapy services to ensure an appropriate service is provided to the community.

My department is also addressing the re-equipment needs of the oncology department. It is currently in the first of a five-year equipment replacement program. The program has commenced with the purchase of a sophisticated computer system to improve patient treatment planning and will culminate in the installation of a \$2m high energy linear accelerator by 1995.

Driving Licences

Mrs Grassby: During question time on 6 July 1989 **Dr Kinloch** asked for information about the requirement for drivers over the age of 70 to have annual medical examinations in order to have licences renewed. I can now provide the following information:

The recent tightening of regulations relating to aged drivers was introduced to reduce the high accident rate of aged drivers. Road accident statistics show a steep increase in the accident rate of drivers over 50 years of age, reaching, at the age of 75, an accident rate above that of the 17 to 25 age group. The accident rate of young drivers is principally linked to inexperience, but that of the aged is more likely to be linked with physiological deterioration.

The proposal to introduce a graduated driver licensing scheme is specifically targeted at assisting young drivers to develop responsible road use attitudes and behaviour patterns. The older driver is now required to have more regular eye tests from the age of 50 and annual medical examinations from the age of 70.

Although the rate of physical and mental decline varies greatly from person to person, the physiological changes that accompany ageing eventually affect everyone's ability to drive safely. The borderline between acceptable decline and hazardous deterioration is best judged by qualified medical practitioners. An unfavourable medical report does not necessarily mean that a person will lose his/her licence. Restrictions may be recommended where driving is difficult or fatiguing, e.g. long journeys, night driving, peak hour traffic and high-speed freeway driving.

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On the question of additional costs for medical examinations, the driver has the option of being examined by either his/her own doctor or a Commonwealth medical officer (CMO). No charge is currently made for an examination by the CMO although this may change in the future.

Construction Industry

Mrs Grassby: During question time on Thursday, 6 July 1989, **Mr Stefaniak** asked me a question about private sector building and construction statistics for April 1989. I undertook to examine the matter and provide him with details of the outcome.

It is unclear from the question just which statistical summary he is referring to. The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes monthly details of building work approved by local authorities and contracts let, or work approved by Commonwealth, State and local governments. The bulletins exclude minor works: those below \$10,000 on residential buildings and below \$30,000 on non-residential buildings. It covers each State and territory including the ACT. The bulletins are published at the end of each subsequent month and there have been no delays.

The Office of City Management produces a statistical summary, both monthly and quarterly. All transactions under the Building Act 1972 are summarised, including the number of plans lodged and the number and value of building permits issued. Works valued at under \$10,000, such as carport and fireplace installation, are included in the summary.

I am informed that the aim is to release these statistics within two weeks after the close of the month and that this target has generally been met this year. There have not been any significant delays of the magnitude suggested by Mr Stefaniak in his question.

The ACT Treasury also produces a quarterly economic report which contains information about construction activity in Canberra. This report utilises information published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the ACT Government and is released between eight to 10 weeks after the end of each quarter.

As members can see, there are a number of summaries, none of which has been subject to the significant delays in release that have been suggested. Perhaps Mr Stefaniak could provide me with some additional information about the figures he was referring to so that I may examine the matter further.

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Water Recycling

Mrs Grassby: I refer to a question without notice asked by **Mr Prowse** on 6 July 1989 regarding the use of recycled water to defer the next water supply dam for the Territory.

The use of recycled water from the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre was investigated some 10 years ago. It was found that the cost of developing a new water supply system using a dam on either the Cotter River or the Gudgenby River was less expensive than the cost of developing a water recycling system.

This is because of the cost of the second water reticulation system required for the recycled water. The current water reticulation system represents the total capital cost of the water supply system.

The operation and maintenance cost of pumping and reticulating water from Lower Molonglo on a similar basis to the current water supply system would be some three to four times more than at present.

The use of recycled water and second-class water from Lower Molonglo and ACT lakes and rivers is undertaken where this is found to be economic. For example the Royal Canberra Golf Course is irrigated using water from Lake Burley Griffin; effluent from the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Works is used on the Duntroon playing fields. ACTEW is currently negotiating to use effluent from the Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre to irrigate the Belconnen Golf Course and the Parks and Conservation service is investigating the use of second-class water for the Yarralumla Nursery and grass irrigation adjacent to lake sources.

It is worth noting that effluent released from Lower Molonglo represents only some 2 per cent of the total flow in the Murrumbidgee River entering the Burrinjuck Reservoir. The effluent is therefore available for reuse in the Murrumbidgee River Irrigation Area. The water is not lost simply because it is returned to the river.

I also draw attention to the 1989-90 budget initial statement presented to the Assembly by the Chief Minister on Tuesday, 25 July 1989. In her speech Ms Follett announced that the ACT Government planned to upgrade existing irrigation systems in ACT parks to eliminate overwatering and achieve better resource management. An amount of \$986,000 has been allocated in the proposed new capital works program for the project.

ACT Electricity and Water has assured me that it will continue to actively support both the recycling of water and conservation to delay as far as practical the next water supply dam.