



**DEBATES**

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

29 March 1990

## Thursday, 29 March 1990

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

**CONSERVATION, HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Alteration of Terms of Reference**

Motion (by **Dr Kinloch**) agreed to:

That paragraph (2) of the terms of reference of the Committee's inquiry into integrated energy resources and environment policy for the ACT be omitted.

**PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE - STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Alteration of Reporting Date**

**MR JENSEN**, by leave: Mr Speaker, I move:

That paragraph (2) of the terms of reference of the Committee's inquiry into alterations to current policy concerning fences on suburban/residential building blocks be amended to read "11 September 1990".

I will speak very briefly to this. I appreciate that this term of reference has been on the committee notice paper for some time, however, since that motion was put on the notice paper the committee has taken on a number of important responsibilities, particularly in relation to the planning legislation that is currently being put before the house. This will provide us with an opportunity to complete that task and then review the issue of fences.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Ms Follett**: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; under standing order 218, I believe that committees are required to fix a date for reporting. I had expected Dr Kinloch to go on and fix a date, but he has not done so.

**DR KINLOCH**, by leave: Mr Speaker, the situation is that the second committee consisted of Mr Stefaniak, Mr Wood and myself - three of us. As of yesterday the committee will now be Mr Stefaniak, myself, Mrs Grassby and Mr Moore, who I think will be added to the committee today. It seemed to me improper, or not wise, to make decisions until the committee actually met. We had to negate the original

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date, which was 1 April. Obviously we could not produce a report by 1 April. If there is a need to create a date, we could do so.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Standing order 218 refers to select committees and not standing committees. Therefore, there is no requirement for Dr Kinloch to set a date.

**NEEDS OF THE AGEING - SOCIAL POLICY STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**Report**

Debate resumed from 22 March 1990, on motion by **Mr Wood**:

That the recommendations be agreed to.

**MS FOLLETT** (Leader of the Opposition) (10.35): I welcome the opportunity to comment on the Standing Committee on Social Policy's report, "Needs of the Ageing Inquiry". I think it is a significant report. Of course, this reference did attract a degree of bipartisan support when it was first put up in the Assembly. The committee has been chaired by my colleague, Mr Bill Wood. I think that everybody in the Assembly would agree that the report that has been produced reflects his experience and expertise in these matters.

The report itself has certainly made a very useful contribution to our understanding of the demographics of ageing in the ACT and to the needs of ageing people and the current range of services that are provided. One of the most important aspects of the report is its definition of the ageing, which distinguishes very carefully between the ageing and the frail aged. The ageing is a much larger group and the report makes the point that the majority of people who could be classified as ageing never need specific services or accommodation for the ageing and never lose the ability to lead active and satisfying lives. I think that it is very important that we do not just dump together the needs of frail aged people, or people who may be very ill, and the needs of people who are simply maturing.

One aspect of the definition that I think could have been made more of in the report is the fact that ageing is very much a women's issue. I do not believe that the report has drawn that out quite adequately.

**Mr Kaine:** Do not men age?

**MS FOLLETT:** It is a fact that women do live longer. Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister comments that men age also. I think we have got living proof of that in front of us.

**Mrs Grassby:** Right in front of us. You asked for it.

**Mr Kaine:** But how can you claim that ageing is a women's issue, for God's sake?

**MS FOLLETT:** I am about to address that question, Chief Minister.

**Mr Kaine:** There have to be two sexes and we both get old.

**MS FOLLETT:** Ageing is a women's issue. It is a fact that women do live longer and more women live to age than do men. It is also a fact that women, as they age, can face some pretty specific difficulties and one of those difficulties, of course, is poverty. Women in our society still do not have the same opportunities as men to earn good salaries and to become economically independent. As they age that relative poverty that they have had throughout their lives can be much increased because they are widowed, or because they have not got superannuation, or because they have not had the same earning capacity as men throughout their lives.

There is another aspect that makes ageing in particular a women's issue, and that is women as carers of the frail aged. It has been my experience that when there is a frail aged person in a family, it is most usually the women of that family who take care of that person and who take responsibility for all of their needs. I think that perhaps the report could have addressed the particular needs of ageing women somewhat more specifically and included some reference to women in the ageing population as having specific difficulties.

It is not just because of the demographic trends that we should take a greater interest in the needs of the ageing in the ACT. While the proportion of people in our community aged 60 or more is increasing rapidly - and that is a particular feature of the ACT's population - there has recently been greater recognition by public policy makers of the contribution which aged people can make to the community. There has also been a greater recognition of their needs as individual people - hence my comments particularly about the needs of women as they age. For too long I believe that ageing people have been treated as somehow separate from the rest of the community, and I think that is largely because most of them do not participate in the paid work force. They are set aside as a separate group. They have been put aside as a group of people who are left out of sight and out of mind, whether because they are in institutional care or merely because of their separate interests, their separate activities and the fact that they are no longer in the paid work force.

It is now commonly recognised that ageing people do have different needs and very different abilities. Their contribution to our community in both social and economic terms has been vastly underrated. I would like to refer in particular to the activities of ageing people as volunteers in our community. I know that there are any number of

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community organisations and community services which draw upon the aged population - the retired population - and they perform extremely useful and sometimes essential work in the community. It is done by ageing people. The committee report itself has drawn attention to that volunteer community effort by ageing people and I therefore commend the report for that.

The Labor Party's approach to the needs of the ageing has been guided by one very important principle; we believe that as people age they should be given maximum independence for as long as possible. We believe that the community should provide appropriate support services to enable people to live in their own homes for as long as they wish to do so. And, of course, we must also be prepared to provide the kind of institutional care that frail aged people in particular require. We very much welcome the Government's agreement to 55 of the 60 recommendations from the committee and I think it is appropriate that they have agreed to take on the vast majority of those recommendations.

There are, however, a couple of areas where the Government's commitment to the report has given me some concern. I refer, of course, to the Chief Minister's statement, the blueprint for the ageing. First of all, I think the blueprint places an undue emphasis on institutional care. As I have said, I think it is important that governments provide services to enable people to stay independent and in their own homes wherever that is possible. We need to put greater emphasis on ensuring that all government programs and services are sensitive to the requirements of aged people. We cannot lump them all together into a home. Greater sensitivity and awareness stretching from planning decisions through to the siting of bus-stops will contribute to the satisfaction, independence and dignity which aged people experience.

I have had a recent example of this - amongst my own constituents. I have a household of four ageing people, none of whom drives, and it is their wish to continue to catch ACTION buses to their daily activities, of which there are a great number. Now, they are faced with a very steep hike up to the bus-stop and an equally difficult trip back from it to their home. We have been very disappointed and I have been very disappointed on their behalf that Mr Duby has not been able to run the buses past their front door - but never mind. The alternative, of course, is to provide an all-weather footpath for them down to the bus-stop. They currently have to traverse some very rough and steep territory, and a footpath would enable them to get to the bus-stop. I know they have taken that up again with Mr Duby, and I hope that he will be able to see his way clear in the near future to put in that little bit of footpath which would so increase their independence and their ability to get out and about in Canberra.

I am also a bit disappointed that the Government has not taken up the committee's recommendation regarding the taxi rebate scheme. It has backed away from the criteria for that. I think we must acknowledge that there is a long waiting list for that scheme. Clearly, the need is there, and I would urge the Government to take on board the committee's recommendation and increase the service rather than try to cut back the cost. The service is obviously necessary.

On that question of transport, we have to deal with the question of transport concessions. When I was in Government I had repeated representations from the current Chief Minister regarding the question of transport concessions, and yet his report indicates that they will conduct a review of concessions during the next two years. Clearly, there is not a strong commitment there. There is obviously a need to coordinate concessions policy across the Government to provide uniform eligibility rules and to tackle the question of poverty traps. But there is one simple step which must be undertaken immediately (Extension of time granted) Let me announce that as soon as a Labor Government is returned in the ACT, we will introduce a seniors card to provide transport concessions to all people over 60 years.

Mr Speaker, on this side of the Assembly we have also been disappointed with the Government at its report on the committee's report has not said anything much about the specific needs of ethnic aged people. Mr Wood's report, excellent as it is, indicates to us that some 23 per cent of the ACT population are born overseas. That is much higher than the national average and, of course, those people are ageing as is our general community.

I have been concerned to follow up the question of the Government's policy on multiculturalism and the needs of ethnic people. I am sure the Assembly recalls that on February 22 I asked the Chief Minister for an indication of Government policy. I am still waiting on that. When it comes I do hope that it will address in particular the needs of ethnic aged people.

**Mr Kaine:** Where is your policy on the ethnics? You were in government for seven months and you did not have one.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order!

**MS FOLLETT:** I would like to reiterate one other point which I think is most unfortunate. It refers again to the Chief Minister's response to the committee's report and it concerns the continued claims by the current Chief Minister and his Government to having done things which they have not. In his speech last Thursday, Mr Kaine said that he would assure us that "We will continue to make representations to the Commonwealth on a whole range of income security matters".

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As he has demonstrated in question time, he has not made representations. There is no question of continuation; he has not done it yet. I believe he tried to create the impression that he was doing that, but he is not.

On another issue which he also addressed in the blueprint, he went on to say that he had introduced legislation to allow enduring powers of attorney. Mr Speaker, as the record shows I introduced the Powers of Attorney (Amendment) Bill on 28 September 1989. It was passed by this Assembly on 17 October 1989, long before Mr Kaine became Chief Minister. So that is, I believe, an inaccuracy in the Government's response to Mr Wood's report.

To conclude quickly, we welcome the fact that the Alliance has accepted many of the committee's recommendations. I believe there is scope for it to go further, particularly on those five recommendations which have not been endorsed and particularly on the issues that I have raised in addressing the Assembly today. We will be actively monitoring the Government's performance and taking appropriate action on its sins of omission every time we believe they have occurred.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (10.49): Mr Speaker, I will address the bulk of my remarks to those recommendations of the report which fall within the health portfolio. I note that of the 60 recommendations in the report of the Social Policy Committee approximately half do fall within the health portfolio. It is therefore appropriate that some time be spent concentrating on that aspect.

I was a little puzzled by Ms Follett's reference to bipartisan support for the committee's inquiry in the first place. I do not have a distinct recollection of this but I do seem to recall some resistance on the part of the former Government to the establishment of this inquiry in the first place.

**Mr Wood:** No, no, there was not.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Perhaps one of the speakers on their side of the chamber might elucidate that for me when they come to speak later on. I certainly seem to recall some Labor resistance to this idea in the first place. Perhaps the form was not appropriate to Labor. I do recall Mr Kaine making reference to that when he, as Leader of the Opposition, moved for this inquiry to be referred to the Social Policy Committee.

Mr Speaker, I am quite excited by the report and I am also quite chuffed that the Government has been able to address so many of the concerns expressed in that report in its response which was tabled the other day by Mr Kaine. I am chuffed because usually with a report of this kind where so many things come out and so many issues are raised and, in



particular, so many costly options are identified, it is often extremely easy for governments to say, "This is too hard"; or, "We'll pick up just a few of these points but most of these long-term planning issues can't be faced up to". I think, with respect, that as these things go we have done a very good job. I think we will be able to pick up a great many of the ideas and recommendations of that report and run with them. I am pleased with that. The report has been addressed in a fairly comprehensive and strategic way through the blueprint on the ageing that Mr Kaine announced. It covers matters such as the promotion of independence and a positive image of elderly people, health promotion and education, as well as issues relating to care and support services.

It ought to be noted that most elderly people do not experience any great disability. The specific health problems they do suffer are not wholly limited to older people - that is a point that is worth noting. There is a certain danger in segmentalising or corraling elderly people into a category that puts them off from other people in the community. The fact is many problems that occur, particularly with older people, do occur across the community; things like continence problems, stroke, dementia, and other forms of disability are common to younger people as well. Obviously they are of a particular concern to older people but they are not exclusively confined to older people. Health promotion and education, of course, can delay or prevent the onset of frail health and dependence. This is what was drawn to the attention of the Assembly by the Social Policy Committee's report. It is by no means inevitable that aged people will require extensive support or care services and there is much that can be done before such services become necessary which will postpone or prevent such care.

I hope that we do not ignore that factor. It is pretty obvious that a lot of health dollars in this community, as elsewhere, go into the addressing of health issues once they have become manifest, that is, once diseases or illnesses have actually occurred. I repeat what I have said before, the more money we can divert to health promotion and health illness prevention, the better off the community as a whole will be. That is particularly important as far as the aged are concerned because, as I have said, the majority of them do not face serious problems until very late in their lives. Many of them experience quite long periods of being in the aged category before they need any special services. The longer we can extend that period of independence and mobility the better off we will be as a community.

I want to turn to what I believe is the most exciting aspect of the Government's response to the committee's report, and that is the area of convalescent and hospice facilities. I note that Ms Follett was critical of the Government's position in a number of regards. That is perhaps fair enough, but I was disappointed that she was

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not more responsive to the Government's very major commitments in the areas of convalescent and hospice facilities because they are one of the most significant developments that have occurred - in fact, I would go further than that - they are the most significant developments in these areas that have ever occurred in the ACT. This Government has gone further with respect to those things than any previous government has gone, and I think it is unfortunate that we have not had a little more acknowledgement for that.

The committee recommended that a convalescent facility be proceeded with and that a 20-place hospice be developed. This Alliance Government, as part of the hospitals redevelopment project - in fact, because of the hospitals redevelopment project - has agreed that these facilities will be provided. This is, I believe, of very great significance.

As I have said before, the redevelopment of the hospital system will give us the opportunity to further improve the range and quality of our health services. That is not just because we have to reorganise things. It is because the savings that we will make in the area of hospital redevelopment, particularly by providing only a two-hospital rather than a three-hospital system, will free up valuable health dollars, some of which will have to be saved but some of which can be spent on additional important health items. Of those, as this committee recommended, a hospice is very important.

The convalescent facility has also come very close to the top of the health item agenda. Subject to the availability of Commonwealth funding, I think that the convalescent facility should make special provision for the special needs of veterans. I am not sure whether that was referred to in the committee's report, but if it was not that is an issue that needs to be faced up to in Canberra. At this very stage the Department of Health is working to bring forward detailed proposals for early consideration. I mentioned on Tuesday that the inquiry by ITPA will quickly identify a range of issues that need to be faced up to in terms of the use of the Acton Peninsula site, but I think that that is one of a number of exciting options for it.

Let me turn to nursing home requirements in the ACT. The Alliance Government recognises that the need for nursing home and hostel places in the ACT does warrant examination. Much of that depends on the position of the Commonwealth since it plays such a large role in the provision of nursing home beds in the ACT. The current Commonwealth formula provides for some 40 nursing home places per 1,000 people aged over 70 years. Whether or not that is satisfactory across the board in other places than the ACT, I do not think it is satisfactory in the ACT. I do not think it is adequate for our future needs. We will have to negotiate with the Commonwealth for a realistic allocation of nursing home places.

I know it has been said that the ACT is, in some respects, overallocated for nursing home places and we have already got our full entitlement. That may well be true, but it either means that factors need to be reconsidered to take more account of local needs or that the whole Commonwealth formula needs to be reassessed. Whatever it is, we have to face up to that fairly quickly.

The committee also recommended in the course of its report that the Jindalee Nursing Home be relocated and that the construction of a new facility be funded, at least in part, through the proceeds of the sale of the current site at Narrabundah. I would appreciate getting - and perhaps Mr Berry will give this when he speaks later on in this debate - a clear idea of the ALP's position on this particular proposal. I may be mistaken, but I have sensed a certain reticence on the part of the ALP in the past to the idea of selling the Jindalee Nursing Home. That may have changed as a result of this report; I am not sure. Certainly Mr Berry is on the record as having said that.

I imagine Mr Berry would have visited the home in the course of his tenure as Minister for Health and he would have seen the very obvious inadequacies of that site. It is not a particularly suitable location for aged care. (Extension of time granted) People who have visited the site will be aware that, apart from the rather steep ramps in some places, there is a very large space, a very long distance, between the upper and lower parts of the home. Apart from reducing or virtually eliminating the possibility of any people from one part of the home visiting the other part because they could not make it up the slope, or if they went down the slope they would not be able to make it back up the slope afterwards, it greatly increases the cost of running the site because they are so widely separated and require additional costs to make them run efficiently. For example, you cannot provide food services to both parts of the location.

I welcome the recommendation of the committee that the home be relocated and the sale price be spent towards providing new facilities elsewhere. As members are well aware, the Alliance Government has decided to relocate that nursing home to the Acton Peninsula as part of the overall hospitals redevelopment project. I think that is a very suitable idea not only because it removes the problems at Jindalee but also it provides an eminently beautiful alternative site. The Acton Peninsula is a site of enormous physical beauty and I think that the older people who would be the occupants of a nursing home there would very greatly appreciate the beauty that that site offers. So, as I have said, I would like to get some indication later in this debate from the opposite side of the chamber as to what the ALP's attitude is towards that relocation.

Continence services were also mentioned in the report. They are recognised by this Government to be an area of

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high need, and the community sector has firmly expressed the view that such a service would best be provided by the Government rather than by other people. That is obviously a matter of concern and we are addressing the need for such a service in the context of the budget.

There has also been discussion on discharge planning in hospitals. The committee found that there were problems with the discharge of elderly persons from hospitals to the community. If one looks at that issue as it has evolved over the last few years one cannot help but agree. The absence of appropriate or effective discharge planning processes often results in longer hospital stays with associated problems such as immobilisation syndrome. I can indicate that in the last few months we have introduced new discharge guidelines which will operate for an initial period of six months, after which they will be evaluated and improvements made, if necessary. We are also looking at making additional resources available in this area to make this an effective change.

The Government announced in December as part of its package that it would be collocating nursing home beds in our public hospitals. It is a matter of regret that we have to have nursing home beds in public hospitals, but the fact is we have a shortage elsewhere and we have to make do. While we have to make do, I think that is a sensible policy.

I want to refer just briefly to a number of recommendations regarding education and training programs for health professionals. Of course this Government has picked up and is seriously examining the issue of providing a clinical school for medical undergraduates in the ACT. I believe this would enhance the approach we take to this problem and I hope to see some speedy action in this regard. I would also expect that there would be follow-on effects from the development of this clinical school for other para-professional courses. We need to ensure that the needs of the ageing are adequately considered in any future development. Naturally, the ACT with its high proportion of aged people would be well-placed to address these issues in the training of undergraduates and even postgraduates.

The Chief Minister mentioned the other day that a joint agency committee is being established to oversee the policy development and coordinate service delivery for the ageing. My department will be essentially involved in this. The coordination of the policies and programs of my department with other agencies will be an important part of our efforts to ensure that the blueprint actually achieves its objectives. I cannot stress that point too much.

In concluding, I just want to say that I believe this is an exciting report and I think our response to it is also exciting. I hope that we can achieve even half of what we want to achieve because if we do the quality of aged care will be greatly enhanced.

**MS MAHER** (11.04): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to speak to the motion again, as I have already spoken once to the report.

Leave granted.

**MS MAHER:** Mr Speaker, I rise to say that I thoroughly enjoyed being on the committee. As I have spoken before, people can read my response to that in Hansard. I will be mainly speaking to the blueprint which the Chief Minister announced last Thursday. The blueprint incorporates the Alliance Government's response to the Social Policy Committee's inquiry into the needs of the ageing and goes further to spell out a framework for the integrated development of policies and service delivery for the ageing. We are all living longer due to advances in health and technology. The blueprint takes a broad view of drawing together health, housing, education and leisure to promote healthier, more active and more independent older people in the years after retirement.

The blueprint has the full support of the ACT Council on the Ageing - COTA. The chairman of COTA stated that: "The blueprint contains many positive statements of the Government's intentions and recognises the important areas requiring policy initiatives". COTA acknowledges that the Chief Minister, in launching the blueprint, identified the same issues as the Australian Council on the Ageing. These are to be addressed by the Commonwealth. COTA welcomes the positive approach on venues for the university of the third age, the review of concessions, home equity conversion schemes and joint housing ventures, and support for carers. As Ms Follett said, women are high in numbers in that area as they take on the job of caring for people who are frail, aged and disabled.

For the first time in the ACT we have a central focus for planning for the needs of the ageing across government agencies. The Chief Minister announced that a designated liaison position for the ageing in the social policy division of his department would be filled to ensure that there is effective and regular consultation with community organisations and other government agencies delivering services to the ageing.

In the past one of the major difficulties in dealing with policies for the ageing has been the fact that a central coordination point has been missing. This deficiency will now be remedied with the result that communication will be improved and policies and programs will be integrated and cohesive. Over the last couple of months in my position as Executive Deputy I have been going out visiting a lot of the agencies and the community groups. I have been discussing where they are having problems. I am available to them any time that they want to speak to me, so we are communicating with them.

The Alliance Government recognises that discrimination practices based on age are a major impediment to older

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people participating in community life. We will produce a consultation paper on age discrimination to address the issues of concern to the ageing. The age of retirement is, of course, a key issue. The Government will introduce general antidiscrimination legislation. As everyone knows, and as Ms Follett announced this morning, the enduring powers of attorney legislation commenced last year.

The policies and services for the ageing need to encompass considerations impacting on all portfolios. For example, health issues, important as they are to the frail and dependent ageing, must be seen in a broader context. When considering how best to meet the needs of Canberra's frail and dependent ageing population, we must also consider other services such as transport, communication, nursing services in the home, professional care, respite facilities to support carers, housing and supported residential accommodation. The blueprint adopts a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the ageing.

My colleague the Minister for Health has already spoken in detail on health policies and health service delivery for the ageing. Our blueprint addresses the cross-agency aspects and takes into account major policy initiatives such as the review of housing policy in the ACT and the Commonwealth-State housing agreement which takes into account aged persons' housing needs, in particular, design features for aged persons units; encouraging the private sector to take a more active role in providing residential accommodation for the ageing; joint ventures with the private sector for aged persons' accommodation; exploring ways to eliminate the after housing cost poverty trap; and home equity conversion schemes similar to those under consideration in other States.

There is the home and community care - HACC - program, which we jointly fund with the Commonwealth and where we will be negotiating to include key areas such as transport services, respite care and personal alarms as priorities for funding. There are negotiations with the Commonwealth on the provision of hostel and nursing home beds. Recently in the ACT, because of the improved delivery of services to the ageing in their homes, we have experienced a change in occupancy rates for hostels compared to nursing homes. We will be negotiating measures with the Commonwealth to redress the current imbalance in the ratio of hostel versus nursing home beds.

Another initiative is the delivery of a transport policy for the ageing, including the taxi rebate scheme for people with disabilities, health buses and policies for relaxation of parking infringement notices for taxis dropping off and picking up aged passengers. We will also consider the NCDC consultancy report on the "Review of Aged Persons' Accommodation and Services in the ACT".

The Chief Minister has already announced that a phone-in for the aged will be conducted during Senior Citizens'

Week. The ageing and their carers will have the opportunity to give their views directly on issues and services which affect their lives. In the past we have lacked a clear picture of how the ageing themselves perceive their needs. During the inquiry into the needs of the ageing, we found it difficult to contact people living independently. It was very difficult to find out what their needs were. With a phone-in, if these people contact us we will be able to find out what their needs are and we can improve services to help them.

The blueprint is a reasonable and responsible approach to the policies and services for the ageing; no empty promises, but a long-term framework with links to the budget cycle. For example, we will be examining how we might improve life for those most in need, particularly the ageing, by our review of concessions. Ms Follett spoke about the concessions and the review of concessions. The review has begun and we will be announcing some concessions hopefully in this budget coming up. We are a responsible government and we will be looking at them in the light of whether we can afford these concessions and how much they are going to cost us, and also in the light of the Priorities Review Board that is going around. Through the review of concessions the Alliance Government will achieve a more equitable approach to reducing the financial burden on low income earners, many of whom are elderly.

The blueprint takes a broad long-term view of the needs of the ageing, not just the frail and dependent ageing but also those who are reasonably independent and able to care for themselves with minimal support services. The Alliance Government believes that the ageing should be encouraged to continue to remain independent for as long as possible.

We recognise that social isolation is a multifaceted problem which besets the ageing. Our blueprint policy includes measures to improve the quality of life for those ageing, through long-term planning for better access to community, educational, cultural (Extension of time granted) and recreational facilities. The ageing have a right to continue to participate in community life and maintain their sense of dignity and worth.

Another issue that the Leader of the Opposition brought up was that we did not take ethnic groups into consideration. Well, our policy on the ageing does state that it is about the needs of older people, taking into account the needs of ageing women, Aboriginal people and people of non-English-speaking backgrounds. There is also a provision to assist people with disabilities who are ageing. I think that the Government does take on board a broad cross-section of services for the ageing and we will be improving on these as time goes by.

**DR KINLOCH (11.15):** I ask leave to speak because I was a member of the original committee.

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Leave granted.

**DR KINLOCH:** I would immediately like to re-echo Ms Maher's remarks regarding our concern about the ethnic community; there is no doubt at all that we have a very great commitment to that. Certainly, as an ethnic myself - an ageing ethnic at that - I would want to be supportive of all those activities. Indeed, we had witnesses about that before the committee. We discussed it. We are very much concerned with it. There is no way in which our committee was not concerned with it, and I am sure the Alliance Government will also be concerned.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Follett, for her remarks about the excellence of the report. Strangely enough, I will have one criticism myself later. Really, in a way it is about something which came up after our report was concluded, but I am glad that it was such a bipartisan report and many of the conclusions are now being taken on by the Alliance Government.

On the question of women raised by Ms Follett of course, men are the frail sex, we die sooner - - -

**Mrs Grassby:** It is just our way of getting back at you; do not worry about it.

**DR KINLOCH:** Thank you, Mrs Grassby; we will try to survive. I would like to make the obvious point that the committee, in looking at the needs of the ageing, found itself time and time again looking at the great majority of the ageing, who indeed were women, but there were men and women involved. I assure Ms Follett that we were concerned not in a gender way with the ageing, but with all ageing across the whole spectrum.

I would like to relate this discussion to the current debate about the Royal Canberra Hospital. On pages 56 and 57, the report deals with hospitals and convalescent facilities. In particular, there is a reference to the Kearney Report and a quotation in which Dr Kearney commented that:

... the absence of an ACT convalescent/slow-stream/rehabilitation facility is another factor aggravating the problems for aged care. Elderly people need more time to recover from illnesses or injury prior to being discharged into the community, or to a nursing home. At present they must remain in hospital.

Again, I would like to stress that the very first recommendation of the committee - the No. 1 recommendation - was to create a convalescent facility. I am very pleased indeed that the Alliance Government has now made it part of its policy - a clear part of its policy, vis-a-vis, hospitals - to create that convalescent facility. We are honouring those recommendations of the



report and I am sure this will receive approval from both sides of the house.

I very much welcome the fact that the facility now known as the Royal Canberra Hospital will not be closed but will remain as a convalescent facility. There is a lot of nonsense talked in the press - -

**Mr Berry:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; are we talking about the Government's restructuring proposal for the hospital system?

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Do not debate the issue. What is your point of order, Mr Berry?

**Mr Berry:** The point of order is that it is not relevant to what is the debate. We are talking about - -

**Mr Duby:** Of course it is. Convalescent services for the aged.

**MR SPEAKER:** Your objection is overruled. Order!

**Mr Berry:** Dr Kinloch can probably explain how he did a turnaround.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order. Thank you for that comment.

**DR KINLOCH:** Mr Speaker, I am truly trying to be relevant. I am not - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** I realise that. The objection is overruled.

**DR KINLOCH:** The Residents Rally, in particular, rejoices that the Acton Peninsula has been saved from any possible depredation by developers and that it will remain as a public health hospital facility. Therefore, there is a possibility in the future - in the twenty-first century - that it will again be a major hospital. At the moment it will be a convalescent facility, a mother and babies facility, a facility for all sorts of other reasons, but it will remain and we are honouring that report.

The Alliance Government repudiates any notion that the facility now known as the Royal Canberra Hospital will in some legalistic way be bulldozed or something of the kind. Absolutely not. It is about to take on this exciting and worthwhile new role as a convalescent hospital and a hospital for mothers and babies. I also welcome the Alliance Government's support for a hospice, which is the second recommendation of our committee's report. On page 59 there is a strong recommendation that a 20-bed hospice unit be developed with the suggestion that the possibility of siting the unit at Calvary Hospital be investigated. I would like to re-emphasise that second part, in particular. I understand no such decisions have yet been made.

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I now come, however, to what may be considered criticisms of our own report or worries about our own report. We did not address these because some of these worries have arisen since our report. This is very much about the needs of the ageing. I would like to put before the Assembly the question of superannuation for people over 65 and people over 65 staying in the work force. I understand that the present Federal Government makes it impossible for people over 65 to continue to roll over their earnings, for example; yet surely we should recognise the very great need in our society in the next 10, 20, 30 years to recognise that people over 65 are not on the scrap heap.

Our main way to keep such people off the scrap heap is to welcome their continuation in the work force; therefore to welcome their continued pay, their continued possibility for superannuation, their continued possibility in a society with equal rights to have all the rights of people under 65 in the work force. I am very sorry that our committee did not address this. Perhaps the Social Policy Committee could take that on as a possible area of concern - that is, the rights of people over 65 in the work force, vis-a-vis finance, superannuation pay, roll-overs and so forth.

At the moment there are often provisions for automatic compulsory retirement. I think our society will have to readdress that matter. We will have to think: should people be put on the scrap heap at 65? I want a resounding "no" from this Assembly on that question. Rather, there should be terms of work which allow for the possibility of continuing to work after 65 in the way that people have before. I quite recognise there might come a point at age 60 or 65, or in some cases 50 or 55, where a firm might say, "Is this person really up to scratch? Is this person performing?". I suggest it be asked in those terms of efficiency, not in terms of age. Some people at 40 perhaps should be asked to leave the jobs they are in and find other work, but there are many people in their sixties and seventies and onwards who can continue to work. They must be given equal opportunity.

The question of concessions has been raised. I would like to read into Hansard a letter in today's Canberra Times about concessions on trains. It is by J.P. Wilson from Turner:

Residents of NSW who are 60 years of age or more and not engaged in full-time employment and not a holder of a TC 1 (traveller's concession) card issued by the Department of Social Security ... are eligible for a Concession Authority card ...

I seek leave to incorporate this letter in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Document incorporated at appendix 1.

I would like to say to Mr Wilson that our committee was concerned about concessions, the former Government was concerned about concessions and, as Ms Maher has already said, our Government is concerned about concessions. I want to assure him that we will pursue the matter. I think he is quite right to say what he has said in his letter. I do hope that people over 60 - over 65 in the ACT - will have equal rights to the people of New South Wales on these matters which affect people in both communities.

I see time is moving. I have not any doubt that in terms of the future life of our nation, our Commonwealth, the needs of the ageing and especially the work of the ageing will be a very considerable matter. I have asked one member of my own staff to concentrate on this as a particular concern for the next two years while I am ageing in that period. I do believe that we have to address this, not in terms of people being frail but of people being part of the work force. Of course, people are frail, whether they are 5, 25, 45, 65, 75 or whatever, and their needs should be addressed in a health way. What we have to look at is a new process of social change in which greater and greater proportions of our society will be over 65. We have to look after them in the way that we would for all others in the work force.

**MR JENSEN (11.26):** One of the things that I want to pick up in relation to the matter that is before us, before I start talking about some of the planning issues of this report, is the comment by the Leader of the Opposition about our commitment to aged persons within the migrant or ethnic community.

My colleagues Dr Kinloch and Ms Maher have referred to our commitment to this and to our policy. What I would like to do is to refer very briefly to a project that is currently in the process of being developed and processed through the system in relation to this very issue. The project has been provided with a substantial injection of Commonwealth funds and a substantial injection of funds from that community itself. Last year they sought from the Government - in fact, the Government of the time - a site on which they could establish this particular facility for their group. This is not unusual; it is something that has happened in Canberra in the past. There are a number of these types of developments scattered around the community.

Last week I had meetings with the representatives of this particular group. The proposal which they have put forward and the location on which they have agreed as appropriate will now go out for public consultation with those residents nearby who may be affected, or who perceive they will be affected, by that particular program. Once that process has been completed, the offer of the lease will be made. To ensure that there are no delays, officers of the Office of Industry and Development and the planning authority are already working closely with the community during this period of public consultation to ensure that

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the final design and siting and plans are able to be approved very quickly once the community consultation has been completed.

As we all know, when you get funds from the Commonwealth or any other government there is usually a time limit. Therefore, it is important to make sure that that organisation does not find those funds disappearing back into the black hole on the top of the hill.

The Government and I strongly support this sort of project and proposal. We are ensuring that work commences and that procedures and processes are followed correctly so that there will be no delay in bringing this project on stream and so that bricks and mortar can start appearing on the ground as soon as final approval is given.

That just gives you one example of how this Alliance Government is prepared to put its policies into effect. Certainly the application was made prior to the Alliance Government taking its position, but what we are doing is ensuring that this proposal, once agreed to, is processed with all speed.

The other comment I wish to make is in relation to the taxi rebate system for elderly people. I received some advice - and I know I raised this issue with Mr Berry last year when he was the Minister for Health - about the possibility that some people who are currently availing themselves of this facility may be fully able to look after themselves in this area. Because the list has been closed, it is effectively reducing the number of people who really are in need and who are able to avail themselves of that facility. I trust that my colleague Mr DUBY will take this on board with a view to maybe looking at that issue so that the funds that have been allocated for this important aspect are properly and effectively utilised. In this way those who really need assistance will get it, as opposed to those who could possibly look after themselves in this area. I know it is difficult, but I think it is something that we have to look at very carefully.

I want to address some of the planning issues that relate to this report and the Government's response. If we look at the Government's response to the committee's report we will see that the Government agrees with the recommendations of the report on the planning side. It agrees without any qualifications with all but two of those recommendations. One of them, which is recommendation No. 16, is agreed in principle; with the other one the concept is agreed to. It falls within the realm of my colleague Mr COLLAERY, as the Minister for Housing and Community Services. I am sure that he will be looking at that issue - that is, that the Housing Trust should build units with at least two bedrooms. I think the days of single bedroom units for the aged are gone because, as we all know, the aged have relatives; many have grandchildren and I think it is appropriate for them to be able to entertain their relatives.

The other issue is that as aged people become more infirm, it may be possible that they may have to separate their sleeping arrangements so that they can have a good night's sleep each, or whatever the case may be. They may have some particular medical problems and it may be appropriate for them to have separate arrangements.

In regard to recommendations 13 and 14, all these aspects - that is, the planning, land release, lease description, design and siting issues in relation to the accommodation of the ageing - should be taken into the context of the Territory plan. As we develop the Territory plan, both those areas that are currently being developed and those we propose to develop in the future, our planners should ensure that they provide adequate opportunity for the development of aged persons' accommodation in accordance with basic accepted criteria in relation to location from shops, location from public transport and all those sorts of issues.

I think it is important that, as we plan our suburbs, we identify areas that may not be needed early on in the life of a particular suburb, but as the suburb matures and develops and changes we should be able to provide those sorts of facilities. It is important in those early stages that those areas are clearly identified so there is no confusion whatsoever on the part of the people who move into those suburbs that that is what those areas are going to be used for.

This can be a difficult area because to leave spare spaces or open spaces in land development is, effectively, a cost on the community. It is a cost on the community because the community has to bear the initial servicing cost and then has to maintain that area and retain those servicing costs over the period until it is required. The community has to be aware that these sorts of servicing costs and ongoing costs will have to be built into the budget. In other words, we are not going to get the money for that particular land straight away; we may have to wait later on until the money becomes available.

With regard to recommendation No. 15 which refers to the further options proposed by section 11 of the NCDC's community consultative report, I will quote from page 38 of the standing committee report, the bottom of paragraph 7.6. This consultancy report of the NCDC refers to:

... joint ventures, housing cooperatives, satellite retirement housing; or community options (extending services to people in their homes).

This is an area where we are going to have to see some lateral thinking on the part of our planners and also the office of Industry and Development when it is considering lease conditions, so that these sorts of projects can go ahead with no problems associated with them.

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In closing, Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to the whole issue of urban infill and urban consolidation which is part of this issue. (Extension of time granted) There is this whole problem of small-scale redevelopment. A proposal was put on the table and almost before it hit the deck there were all sorts of community concerns. What I would hope is that when that issue comes before this Assembly, by way of its standing committee, all the issues that caused those concerns back in those early days can be resolved and discussed at length by this Assembly committee. I am sure that this is one of the areas that we have to look at in relation to utilising the facilities that we already have much better and ensuring that, particularly in the areas closer to the city, we better utilise the large blocks of land that we have without degrading or denigrating the heritage or street scape value of particular sites.

That is one of the aspects that I think is important. I trust and hope that the wider community out there will be prepared to come forward and put their ideas onto the table so that they can be examined effectively and efficiently by this Assembly, by its committees and by the subsequent debate that takes place after that committee's report. On that note I will close my comments on this important issue. I commend the report and the Government's response to the Assembly.

**MR STEFANIAK (11.37):** I think this is a very timely report and I commend the members of the committee for it, and also the Chief Minister who, when he was Leader of the Opposition, initiated this report. It is one of the earlier acts of this Assembly. It is timely because we have an increasing number of aged in our community. For me this is one area which crosses into the welfare field where I have absolutely no doubts or worries about money being spent to assist these members of our community. Certainly there are certain recipients of welfare in our community who, I believe, could and should be better off looking after themselves, but not the aged. The aged in our community have brought up their families and have worked to build Australia into the fine country it is today. In very many cases they have participated in world wars and other wars, both for Australia and in the case of many ethnic people, for other countries, especially other allied countries. They are most deserving in their latter years of all the support the civilised community can give them. I think this report is most timely and it behoves us in this Assembly to do all we can for our aged citizens. (Quorum formed)

As Mr Humphries indicated and as the report indicated, the majority of the ageing never have need of specific services or accommodation and never lose the ability to lead active, satisfying lives. However, at the same time, increasing age does bring with it the higher risk of losing the ability to be independent and this loss of the ability to be independent may be manifested in any number of ways.

The report deals with two types of ageing, the younger aged, most of whom are well able to continue living very active and independent lives, and the frail aged, classed broadly as those persons over 75. In modern times many persons over 75 still live very active lives but it is a real problem because our population in Australia, especially in the ACT, is ageing.

There are a couple of points I want to deal with, Mr Speaker. I note there is a very small part of the report which deals with security, on page 14. That states that:

Submissions also confirmed that the primary need of the ageing is for a sense of security whether that is perceived as economic, physical, mental or emotional. One submission described the "overwhelming need" of the elderly for physical and economic security. Another, from residents of a retirement village, said that "fear of the future can cloud the pleasure of village residents".

Above all else, the Social Policy Committee would want the ageing community in the ACT to know that the community as a whole cares. The committee sees that measures in this report, as they are implemented, will play a positive role enhancing aspects of security for the ageing.

Physical security is terribly important for the ageing. I have a number of ageing relatives, including an elderly mother who lives alone in Narrabundah. I know that to her friends and various other relatives who are elderly and to whom I have spoken, physical security is of great importance. Basically the elderly feel very vulnerable in this modern age. I think this is something that this Assembly has to be aware of when we make laws; the frail, the aged are, in fact, helpless.

Certain things, I think, can be looked at here. I think this aspect may have been considered by the Social Policy Committee report into public behaviour, but this is something that I think we really have to look at a lot more than we have in the past. Some things that can assist here, perhaps, are increased police patrols. Indeed, when this Assembly comes to making laws, the effects of laws on the aged should be looked at.

I was not surprised at all to see that during the move-on powers debate last year that power was overwhelmingly supported by the aged. Some 88 per cent of persons over 60 supported that power with only nine against. That decreased as people got younger; under 18, I think it was 58 per cent for and 30 against and overall, counting all the members of the population, 70 per cent for and about 25 against. I think that is indicative of the fear the aged have in relation to physical security.

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Canberra is a big city now and the aged quite often are victims of crime in this city. That is something I think that it behoves this Government and this Assembly to look at, and I am sure the Attorney-General will do that. This is quite understandable. The aged cannot move as fast. Many have physical disabilities. They are frail and, indeed, they are picked on by many of the less savoury elements of this community. One only needs to look at some of the assaults and some of the robberies and some of the break and enters in Canberra to see that the elderly have been picked on because they are helpless. In some cases there have been some quite nasty incidents because people were elderly and unable to defend themselves. I can remember prosecuting some juveniles who beat up an 84-year-old woman rather horribly when they went to her house. They got away with about \$5.20. There are some very unsavoury elements in our community who prey on the aged.

One only has to look at Sydney, too, at the serial killers of those elderly women on the north shore; again, the aged are picked on. I think this is a question that we will have to look at in the future in terms of what assistance we can provide to assist the aged in relation to their physical security. It has ramifications not only in the criminal law but also in terms of planning retirement villages et cetera.

I can recall the shock and fear my own mother felt when she came back from seeing relatives in Wagga to find her house burgled and some of her property removed. The threat to her physical security was quite palpable and, although I am pleased to say she is over that now, I can certainly appreciate the impact such things have on elderly people in our community.

I would like to make a couple of other points, Mr Speaker. I think it is good to see a realisation in this report that many of the people classed as aged are active and, indeed, every encouragement should be given to keep elderly people active. They like it; it gives them a sense of purpose. I know this from both my parents. My father is now dead, but he was active up to the day he died in his capacity as the manager of the Polish Club. I know the number of committees my other elderly relatives and some elderly friends are on to keep themselves active. One thing I suppose we have to look at, not only here in Canberra but in Australia as a whole, is the fact that at 65 - that is a rather arbitrary age for retirement - there are many people who are very active, who want to continue on and who can provide invaluable assistance to the community.

When some of our aged are incapable of looking after themselves it is essential that we ensure that the facilities are there when they are needed, so that the frail and the infirm aged are looked after in comfort and in dignity. I am pleased to see a lot of mention made of that aspect in this report to ensure that that is occurring and will occur in Canberra. I would hate to see situations



here such as have happened in other States, where certain unscrupulous people have kept frail aged in basic institutions, charged them and their relatives exorbitant rates for keeping them there and provided very little in the way of facilities. I do not think we have that situation in Canberra. It certainly behoves this Assembly to make sure that that never occurs and that our frail and elderly and infirm aged are kept in comfort and in dignity so that they can live out the remainder of their years at a proper standard.

It is a timely report, Mr Speaker. I congratulate the members of the committee on bringing it down. I congratulate the Chief Minister on initiating it last year. I look forward to its implementation and the provision of relevant services for our elderly citizens.

**MRS NOLAN (11.46):** Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a few brief comments in relation to this report because I have already spoken as a member of the committee.

Leave granted.

**Mr Berry:** They are pushed for time if they have all got to speak twice. We are pushed for business.

**Mr Kaine:** Your lot are not even here to speak, so what are you worried about?

**MR SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Berry:** Oh well, if leave is granted.

**MR SPEAKER:** Please proceed, Mrs Nolan.

**Mr Berry:** It is long and boring. Everybody is speaking twice.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Berry:** Everybody speaks twice. Cannot you say it once?

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, Mr Berry!

**MRS NOLAN:** Mr Speaker, I would like to preface my remarks by saying that as a member of the committee I just wanted to say how pleased I was to see so many of the committee recommendations being taken on board by our Government and accepting them.. I was pleased to see that the blueprint for the ageing was actually brought out. I think it is a very timely document. I am happy to see that that has happened and that it has been brought forward as quickly as it has. I was also pleased to see that the Council on the Ageing has recognised how good that particular document is and that it supports the blueprint.

There are a couple of points that I want to talk about, one of which relates to the hospice facility. Only a little

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while ago, just over the Christmas period, my family spent quite some time involved with my very sick aunt in a hospice facility in a country town in New South Wales. Those people who have actually spent time with family in a hospice will realise just how important it is to have a freestanding facility. Freestanding can mean that it is in the same grounds as other facilities but that people do not have to go through those front doors of a hospital when they go in and out of a hospice facility.

I believe it is very important for Canberra, the national capital, to have such a facility. We have a population of 277,000 people. Many small country towns, and there are quite a few of them, in New South Wales have facilities attached to hospitals. Sure, there are only several beds, but the difference for those families when they spend that time in the hospital as against a freestanding facility, is quite remarkable - the reasons being, I think, the hospice programs. I would like to refer to page 58 of the report about the common goals that people, and especially the ACT Hospice Association, share. I think it is important that we look at some of these goals and the reasons why that separate facility to a hospital is very important.

Certainly we look at the needs of the patient. We are trying to keep the patient pain-free, comfortable and as alert as possible during the final phases of the illness. We are helping patients to remain as viable family members in their chosen environments and it is, of course, important to try to keep as many of their own personal effects around them, too. We strive to help each patient to retain a sense of personal identity. We support preserving the right of self-determination and we ensure active participation in managing the problems of one's remaining lifespan and death.

I think it is also important to recognise that we are not just talking about the in-patient here; we are also talking about the additional facilities. Very often people choose the palliative care service when they choose to stay in their own homes. Sometimes that is not possible. Sometimes people do want to remain at home, but there are times when people should use a hospice facility. Obviously, if that is not available, then they choose the alternative which may or may not be satisfactory, especially for their family.

The other point I would like to make about the report and the recommendations relates to the sale of Jindalee and the inadequacies of that site. I think it is important to recognise just how good a job the staff do there under those very inadequate circumstances. I mentioned when tabling the report the time that my uncle spent there. That came to an end in October last year. So over a long period of time, I was very familiar with a lot of the staff there and the service they provided. We all know that Jindalee is, as has been mentioned in the blueprint, the only nursing home in the ACT to be accredited by the

Australian Council on Health Care Standards. I think that is very important because I would never want anyone who is involved in that facility to be thinking that they are not providing as adequate services and care as they possibly can. They certainly have been doing that, but the facility is very outdated.

Mr Humphries mentioned the two sections of the hospital earlier and how there is a large hill that separates those two facilities. There are also lots of other problems with the area because of a lack of transport facilities and the like. Certainly I am very pleased to see that recommendation taken on board.

The only other point that I want to make is that we should be looking at this as an all-party report, a situation whereby we recognise the contribution that the aged community do make. Often overemphasis is placed on nursing home beds and hostel beds as against the amount of people who are out there in the community providing for their own retired years.

Currently we are looking at only just over 10 per cent of people who ever need to use such facilities, so we have a situation where 90 per cent of the elderly in our community are out there living in their own homes. I think more needs to be done for those people after the contributions that they have made throughout their lives.

**MR COLLAERY** (Attorney-General) (11.53): Mr Speaker, I rise to formally congratulate all those who authored this report and all those who assisted with it. It is a true example of the role of self-government in the ACT and I believe it stands for itself. I know Mr Berry is bored with the topic, I judge that by his interjections, so I wish to respond - - -

**Mr Berry:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; there is an imputation there.

**MR COLLAERY:** I withdraw the imputation that Mr Berry is bored with the topic, Mr Speaker. A number of specific comments were made and I thought that in my introduction I should put some of them down. The Chief Minister made a point in his blueprint for the ageing that adequately summarises the Government's viewpoint on the broad issue. On the finite issues, I would like to run through a few matters. The first was a comment made by Ms Rosemary Follett that the report does not address the needs of people who are non-Australian born, and migrant women in particular. For example, together with Mr Staples, the Federal Minister, I recently approved a grant of \$5,000 for the production of multilingual publicity to be used within the context of the HACC scheme that is referred to on page 18 of the report. That is a positive, pragmatic step and I feel that Ms Follett's remarks should not go unresponded to.

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On page 20 the report also refers to the need to do more in respect of home help. I accept the committee's enjoiner there, and it was with the knowledge of this report that came down in October that when we went through the proposed HACC grants recently we proposed and secured approval from the Federal Minister to grant \$202,000 to home help. That grant was to set up a personal care service and I believe it is a practical, substantive implementation of this recommendation. It was implemented, of course, before the Chief Minister gave his response on behalf of the Government, but I am sure that all members would have supported that recommendation.

Also the report emphasised the role of the carers and the carers themselves. I am pleased to say that another new project approved within the recent grants was \$14,000 to the Red Cross Society to run a series of courses aimed at people caring for frail aged and younger people with disabilities in the community.

I do not think we needed any churlish comments about a lack of resolve by our Government. This report itself is a benchmark in the skills of Government here, the skills of those who work in Government and the skills particularly of the committee staff who work towards it. I think we can get by without some sharp comments.

The committee report also referred at page 60 to the needs of the terminally ill and it referred specifically to the marvellous role of the ACT Hospice Society. I think Mr Berry was at Calvary recently, during the last couple of months, when we met those people publicly. I think Mr Humphries, my colleague, was there too. It was as a result of the recommendation at page 60 and our acceptance of the Hospice Society's activities that I substantially increased their grant under another program that I surveyed shortly before Christmas last. They received a grant of \$30,000.

These are pragmatic responses to issues drawn to our attention by this marvellous report. We should also acknowledge the role of the Housing Trust in our holistic approach to the concerns of the aged. The Housing Trust has 854 aged persons' units in its inventory. There is a waiting list of 236 new applicants, or thereabouts, at this time and there are about 400 tenants seeking transfer from existing dwellings. It was as a result of representations received from the Downer Residents Association and Ms Follett herself that I took unilateral steps to stop the construction of 26 aged persons' units at Downer so that the issue could be more adequately assessed in planning terms. I mean that comment as no rebuke to Ms Follett, but that means that our construction program decreased this year in the APU area. We expect to have about 50-odd in the program.

The myths regarding the old and the aged and all of those terms that apply to them were quite succinctly drawn out in a recent West Australian discussion paper on age

discrimination. That recent discussion paper put to rest a few myths. They were that older people cannot be educated or re-educated; that older people withdraw and disengage from interests and activities; that the elderly have the same interests and needs and that they are an homogeneous group; that the aged suffer senility, whereas only 5 per cent of those over 65 are so affected; and that the aged inevitably end up in an institutionalised setting. These are the sorts of myths, only a few of them, that lead us to institutionalised discrimination.

An aspect of that response by this Government is the fact that we have added to the antidiscrimination package that was proposed by the former Government. We have taken the initiative to add questions of discrimination affecting the aged. For example, I particularly refer - and it is something that I was aware of in private law practice - to the discrimination in the workers compensation area, where the entitlements of an injured worker in the public sector cease when the worker turns 65 years of age. Similar agreements in the workers compensation area operate in the private sector. It is argued, and justified, that the working life ends with the retirement age and that compensation by insurance companies or governments should not be paid after that mythical retirement age. This means that society assumes that, despite the faults and negligence of the employer that injured you, you go on to the aged pension at that retirement age. That is a legal fiction, a discriminatory fiction, and one that we must look at and address as part of our overall examination of the workers compensation law.

In a similar area there exists the question of legislation concerning the compulsory retirement age, when that compulsory retirement is not related to capacity or ability. Superannuation schemes follow that on by creating differentials between retiring ages for men and women. There is further discrimination for women because they are, in effect, forced to retire at 60. Therefore, they have a shorter contribution period in super schemes. I believe we need competent advice to examine the actuarial bases for some of the calculations of superannuation schemes, particularly for retiring women. The data often contains hidden lurks for those people and there have been some quite interesting inconsistencies thrown up when companions have retired together, in similar circumstances. It has been quite interesting to see the differing benefits drawn. I believe that these are issues that we need to address in a broad context.

This excellent report also referred to other topics, almost no-nos, such as euthanasia. Were the Assembly or the community so minded, we could refer this issue to the new Law Reform Commission that the Government has established. (Extension of time granted) My colleague, Mr Stefaniak - - -

**Mr Berry:** It is not obligatory to take up the full five minutes.

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**Mrs Grassby:** They have got no work. They have got to.

**MR COLLAERY:** Mr Speaker, there are interjections saying we have no work and that is why we are addressing this topic. I suggest that shows the piteous state of the Opposition.

**Mr Berry:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; standing order 40 - I have forgotten the second number, but it is in relation to relevance.

**MR SPEAKER:** The objection is overruled.

**MR COLLAERY:** Mr Speaker, one of the problems of the aged is memory loss and, of course, that is an issue that has to be addressed. I think Mr Berry would be well-advised to address that topic earlier than some of the rest of us because, as Hansard reveals, he did advise the house yesterday that he had not read from a document, and the words "I read" appear in today's proof Hansard. I suggest that Mr Berry has a little problem today, and if he thinks we do not have any work on hand he would be well-advised to avoid a little censure motion.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order. Please proceed with the debate, Mr Collaery.

**MR COLLAERY:** I was referring to comments made by my colleague Mr Stefaniak in relation to the physical security of the aged. Perhaps I should put that in the context of the report of the National Committee on Violence. Under the heading "Aged" on page 35 it reports that the 1989 Australian crime survey which was based on interviews with respondents 16 years of age and older, reinforced some of the findings coming from earlier surveys. It said that the risk of becoming a victim of violent crime, including sexual assault and threatened or attempted assault, decreases significantly after the age of 40. The NSW homicide study also reported that risk of homicide victimisation for both men and women declined with age. The report goes on to state - and this is a learned report - that notwithstanding the recent spate of serial murders in Sydney, elderly Australians who tend to express considerable fear of becoming a victim of violence tend to be least at risk.

I think, and I am sure Mr Stefaniak would appreciate my comments, that part of the security that we need to build up for our aged is the feeling of not being under threat. We need to be quite careful in our comments about their general security in society. Mr Stefaniak is right about the perception, but I suggest that another way of treating that perception is not so much to build walls but to deal with comforting mechanisms, such as the program to which I have asked the Housing Trust to give urgent attention and which involves putting security screen doors on the appropriate dwellings in our inventory. I made that request a couple of weeks ago, in response to a re-reading

of the comments in this report of the committee chaired by Mr Wood.

Finally, on pages 48 and 49, the report refers to the aged persons' units policy. I entirely support the views of the committee that questioned the appropriateness and the need for review of our policies in this area. Perhaps Mr Wood may say something more on that subject. I have been a close witness to a somewhat bizarre use of that policy recently. In a particular area of Canberra I note there is a sign up now saying, "Units now selling. Starting at \$137,500". The advertising blurb that has been issued refers to the use of a warden or something and, of course, a major issue was whether this was really an honest development that involved real care facilities for the aged. Mr Speaker, those who live near that particular development and see the Volvos and Peugeots cruising around on the weekends possibly looking at putting up that sum of money will realise that we should support the views of the committee in indicating that when we approve some of our planning policies we need to look at access, and equity of access also. That was free land for those people. At least one of the occupants is selling in Forrest, I believe, to occupy that unit which was allowed to be developed in that context. Mr Speaker, I do not wish to press that issue. I have been very discreet in my time in the Assembly on that subject.

**MR WOOD** (12.08): Mr Speaker, I thank those who have spoken in this debate for the support of the report that we have brought down. There is no question that the subject of the ageing is one where it is not at all difficult to obtain bipartisan support. I hope that when the committee brings down its next report, that on fluoride, we may be able to achieve the same measure of support in this chamber.

I am pleased the report was successful and I am confident that we will be able to measure the success of the report as years go past. I appreciate the Chief Minister's comments and his remarks about the realistic aims of the report. Committee members were careful throughout to bring down a report that, to use the Chief Minister's terms, "had no wish lists that could never be achieved". We have a far-sighted report, I believe, but a practical report. I want again to thank my committee members who contributed so much to that and to Dr Ann Scott whose work is invaluable. I believe that the report of the committee does set some pattern that we can follow in the future in other committees in the ways that we relate to the community and the ways the committees work in this Assembly and their relationship to the Government.

In particular today I want to expand on the matter of accommodation. It was one we referred to in the report, but there are some aspects of that that we could not pursue in full because the information we sought was not available when the report was published. I want to refer to the problem that too many people in our community have in

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moving from where they have their homes to accommodation more suited to their age. Perhaps, by way of example, you could take a person who lives in a house worth \$100,000 or less, and there are still many in this situation in Canberra, even in the time of rising prices. If they want to sell that they can certainly do so, but then there is almost inevitably a gap to move into suitable accommodation, especially if that accommodation is in the older areas where they most commonly live. The price of \$137,500 that Mr Collaery mentioned gives evidence of what I say. There are people out there who have a gap of \$37,500 that they cannot in any circumstance meet and they face the problem then of staying in their accommodation which is no longer appropriate for them.

The problem is added to in some respect by Commonwealth Government policy in that no longer are there moneys readily available for the traditional self-help units that were once commonly built. Those are the type of units that we see, for example, in Goodwin where many people live in homes that are by now a little ancient. They are not the most modern, but they are homes where they can live on their own or with a partner and look after themselves. It is a highly desirable form of accommodation because they are close to other people of their age; they are close to the facilities of the aged persons' establishment and they like that. But these are not being built any more because there are no funds to finance them. The voluntary bodies, principally the churches, that are active in this area of aged housing do not take those on now so much. They are flat strapped, I suppose, to raise funds for the nursing home ventures or hostel accommodation they undertake. They do not have any access to money to build these self-care units. There is a quite serious problem there. It is one that I have no answer to. I do not know how it can be overcome.

That takes me to the point of the increasing interest by the private sector in retirement villages. This is a move that is to be supported. Our report was not a welfare report. We were not simply looking at the aged who lacked adequate means. We are looking at all the aged, and that includes the well-off aged. So there is no question but that retirement villages have a place in our community. But there are problems some of which I wish to explore. I have to use a name to give evidence. The Grange at Deakin is an excellent example of a retirement village, well-designed by a very reputable group and providing accommodation highly suited to the aged in our community. The first thing to note, of course, is that it is not for people who have no assets. I think the starting price there is something like \$170,000, so it is for the wealthy in our community. It enables people to sell out their property or to use their superannuation and to live in more appropriate circumstances, and that is fine.

But the point I raise is: Is there an element of subsidy in the development of that and other places?  
The land for



The Grange was sold or was transferred for a fee of \$500,000. It was by direct sale at market value, that market value being determined by the Australian Valuation Office. It was not auctioned, it was a direct sale. The condition of sale was that there were 85 self-care units on that site. My mathematics tells me that for \$500,000, that is about \$6,000 for each unit. At Ridgecrest, on the other side of town there is a larger number of units. The price per unit for the land component alone was \$7,000. I do not know the commercial market at all. I do not know whether that is a fair price for a unit. If I went out into the suburbs somewhere and bought a unit, I do not know what the land component would be. Between \$6,000 and \$7,000 does not seem an enormous amount to me. I am making no judgment but I ask: is there an element of subsidy for those wealthier aged people. It is something we need to explore.

Let us look at Rocky Knoll. Here we have a whole host of different circumstances and we have to be most careful because I am now moving into the area not of private development but of development by mostly church groups. My understanding is that at Rocky Knoll there was no fee imposed. It was simple for the church group there to build units that are selling for the price indicated. Wealthy people may well be moving into those units. I do not think \$137,000 is necessarily only for wealthy people, given today's level of incomes. Is there an element of subsidy for people there? That land was acquired at no cost. The land was long held by the church group. I am not making a criticism in this but I am pointing to a fact and it is one that I believe this Assembly needs to consider. There is the potential for some subsidy in what happens there.

I want to be very careful to point out that the religious groups that move in this area are very often active in their fundraising. There is an Italian community building an aged persons' home and I know the very extensive fundraising activities they have undertaken. They are putting in a substantial contribution. I know the Anglican community at Brindabella Gardens is raising a further half million dollars to add to, I think, the million or more that they have already spent. There is no simple answer to this. They are putting money, I suppose, where their mouth is. So, I do not say that in every circumstance there is necessarily some subsidy because these groups are doing a good job.

Then again, there is a variety of means by which people can enter these places. There is one that I will not mention, that will, I believe, charge a very large sum of money for a wealthy person to take up a room. If a person has no means, they make no charge. I think that is excellent. (Extension of time granted) When I make my remarks, please understand that there is a wide range of avenues into these places. So that means, very quickly, there is going to be no simple answer. I would suggest to the Government that they probably need to set up some working party to look at this matter. It is a complex one. It needs careful and

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sensitive handling, but I believe that we do need some response to the problems that I have identified. I believe that this is one matter additional to those in the recommendations that ought to come out of this report. Again, I thank members for their consideration.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Sitting suspended from 12.20 pm to 2.30 pm**

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

### **Hospital Redevelopment**

**MS FOLLETT:** Mr Speaker, my question is to Mr Humphries, the Minister for Health, and it relates to his hospital redevelopment announcement. Does the Government intend to retain the podium and Sylvia Curley House on the Acton Peninsula?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** At this stage, Mr Speaker, my expectation is that yes, we would retain both of those things; although I have to say that if the process of redevelopment entails considerations which give rise to a different outcome, well, the Government will not argue with that. Of course, the imperative is not to incur significant cost, but if that can be sustained within those limits then we will certainly retain Sylvia Curley House and the Podium.

**MS FOLLETT:** I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Mr Humphries has said that they do intend to retain the Podium and Sylvia Curley House. What is the cost of refurbishing those buildings?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, I think I can answer that question if I explain to Ms Follett exactly what the Government is going to do with those buildings in a general sense. Obviously, as Ms Follett is indicating or alluding to, it will cost money to refurbish those buildings; there is no doubt about that at all. But the point is that if the Government relocates on to that site activities that are conducted elsewhere in Canberra, then naturally other things come into train. In this case some of those activities will no longer be carried on on other sites and those sites might, for example, be sold to generate certain capital moneys which can then be used to refurbish alternative accommodation on those other sites.

For example, if the ACT were to relocate the Queen Elizabeth Home for mothers and babies on to that site - and I should say I do not know that it would necessarily go in either of those two buildings, but just say for argument's sake that it did - naturally, the Government could consider the option of selling the site on which the QE II home presently stands. The money generated from that sale would be used, in part or wholly, to refurbishing alternative

accommodation or building alternative accommodation on the Acton Peninsula. That, I think, is entirely appropriate. The same goes for the Jindalee Nursing Home; the same goes for, for example, the possible resiting of accommodation for departmental officials on that site.

**MS FOLLETT:** But what is the cost of refurbishing the buildings?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I do not know.

**MS FOLLETT:** You do not know.

### **Health Service Access**

**DR KINLOCH:** Mr Speaker, my question is to Mr Humphries in his role as Minister for Health. There was a letter in the Canberra Times this morning from a very worried mother, who was worried about going from Belconnen across the city to Woden, especially perhaps in winter. I understand she has an asthmatic son and this tends to be an urgent problem. Could the Minister indicate how the new circumstances would relate to that and what impact the redevelopment decision would have on the access of north Canberra and Belconnen residents to health services?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, I thank Dr Kinloch for his question. I did note the concern in Mrs Marion Le's letter. She expressed deep concern about the Government's proposal to relocate or reorganise hospitals in the ACT. I think that is a well-expressed concern and needs to be addressed quite fairly.

**Mr Moore:** She stood with the Residents Rally.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Well, she may be a member of the Residents Rally, Mr Moore, but the fact is that she raised concerns that were legitimate and deserve to be addressed. The fact is that access is a vital issue to delivery of health services and there is little point in having the best services in Canberra if people do not have access to them.

I have no doubt that the redevelopment I outlined earlier this week will significantly improve access to health services for all Canberrans and provide a better quality of health service to the people of Canberra. The closure of Royal Canberra and the development of Woden Valley as the principal hospital will not be done in isolation. A vital element is the upgrading of Calvary Hospital. Calvary will be upgraded as a fully public, 300 bed hospital with expanded obstetric services and the early establishment - and when I say "early", I mean probably before the end of this year - of a 24 hour accident emergency service replacing the existing part-time one servicing the people of north Canberra and Belconnen.

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That means is that people in the position of Mrs Le need not take their families all the way out to Woden because emergency facilities will be nearer to them at all hours of the day or night than they are at the present time. This redevelopment will also improve access to the vast majority of North Canberra residents. Contrary to popular conception, in terms of travelling time, most people in north Canberra are closer to Calvary than they are to Royal Canberra. With roads such as Belconnen Way and Ginninderra Drive providing ready access to Calvary from north Canberra I understand that most north Canberra residents will experience a decrease in travelling time being serviced by Calvary rather than by Royal Canberra.

The suburbs clustered around Royal Canberra will still be subject to substantially lower travelling times to Calvary than most Canberrans are, and will be subject to and benefit from the establishment of a principal hospital with the higher level of health services that represents. These facts, Mr Speaker, highlight how short-sighted in many ways the Labor Government's redevelopment plan was. The fact is Labor was willing to condemn Canberra to less than the best health service so that it could keep a single hospital open.

### **Non-government Schools**

**MR WOOD:** Mr Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister for Education, and I direct Mr Humphries' attention to an answer to a dorothy dixer on 22 March when he quoted the Chairman of the Association of Independent Schools, Father O'Kelly, to assert that the Federal Government's funding policies for non-government schools were sectarian in nature. Is the Minister aware that the 15,000 member Independent Teachers Association has accused Father O'Kelly of representing elite enclaves in the education community; and further, that they have said that Father O'Kelly's attitude was denial of social justice principles and deserves to be roundly condemned by all those committed to the principle of equity in Australian education? Will the Minister now withdraw his charges of sectarianism on the part of the Federal Government and agree that its funding policies are based on assessments of need?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** No, Mr Speaker, I will not. The fact is that Father O'Kelly spoke for a large number of people in independent schools in Australia. The fact is that he expressed a view, a concern which is not isolated, which is widespread and which I believe deserved airing and which I think still stands, notwithstanding anything that has happened between now and then. The fact that some elements or some sectors of the independent school body - - -

**MR WOOD:** Yes, 15,000 of them.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Well, their organisation need not necessarily be 15,000 people who would actually vote on an issue such as that. We all know how the leadership of some organisations can be very different from the grass roots, Mr Wood.

**MR WOOD:** Yes, and I think Father O'Kelly exemplifies that.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, please address your comments through the Chair!

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I will not enter into debate with Mr Wood on this subject across the floor of the Assembly, Mr Speaker. The fact remains that the concerns raised were fair ones; they are not isolated. Other parents and people in the ACT have expressed those concerns to me. I think they are good concerns, well-expressed.

**MR WOOD:** I ask a supplementary, Mr Speaker. Would the Minister deny then the principle that he should look at schools in the ACT on a needs basis, and accommodate them in those same sorts of principles that the Federal Government applies?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I indicated a few weeks ago that the Government is looking at the question of funding across the board, and it will be looking in particular at the appropriate way of funding non-government education as government education in the ACT. When that review process is concluded, I will be happy to come back and tell Mr Wood what the outcome is and what the Government has decided to do. Until then it would be inappropriate for me to either agree to or rule out particular options at this stage.

#### **Gowrie Hostel Site**

**MRS NOLAN:** My question is to the Chief Minister in his role as Minister for Planning. Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government has now advertised the Gowrie Hostel site for sale by auction?

**MR KAINE:** Yes, Mr Speaker. I understand that the Commonwealth advertised the Gowrie Hostel site in the newspapers the day before yesterday for sale by auction some time early in May. This is a matter of some concern to the Government because we have made our opinion on that matter quite well known publicly. I am sure that in this case the Opposition would agree with the Government that it is totally inappropriate for the Commonwealth to sell off a property which was inappropriately identified as national land and the property of the Commonwealth in the first place.

I think that members of this Assembly and members of the public may well question why the site was gazetted as national land in the first instance when in only a matter

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of months the Commonwealth has decided that it really does not need it and it is now going to see that site as a capital revenue generating mechanism. It is worth noting that section 27 of the Land Management Act says that the Commonwealth Minister:

... shall not declare an area to be national land unless the land is or is intended to be used by the Commonwealth.

I believe that there is a real question as to whether that was ever the Commonwealth Government's intent. Members will remember that only last week I tabled in the house a letter from Mr West replying to my representations to him on this matter. The Gowrie Hostel is a centre for accommodating young people who are visiting our national capital and could have a Territory use for the same purpose. It could be well used by the Housing Trust for low cost accommodation within easy reach of Civic for a lot of young people who need that kind of accommodation.

On the other hand, if it is auctioned off to the private sector I would guess that in the end the hostel is likely to increase its tariffs beyond the reach of the types of people to whom I have referred. Indeed, it would be putting itself in the market of adding further competition to the motels on Northbourne Avenue which are currently catering for that sector of the market of people coming to Canberra.

All in all, Mr Speaker, this is a matter of great concern. It ought to be regarded as a matter of great concern by every member of this Assembly and by the ACT community. Now that we know that the auction is to take place, the Government has to seriously consider what action, if any, it should take to circumvent that.

### **ACT Rugby League - Northbourne Oval**

**MR MOORE:** My question is also to the Chief Minister as Minister for Planning. Considering the transfer of the lease on Northbourne Oval was unauthorised and consequently a simple case of preparation for blatant profiteering, which is totally inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the leasehold system, will you terminate the lease immediately and take responsibility for protecting the birthright, not only of Canberrans but of all Australians?

**MR KAINE:** I think that Mr Moore is going quite overboard on this issue. I heard what he had to say on ABC radio this morning, and I can understand that he has to appeal to the small electorate that supports him in that particular geographic area, but there are issues that go way beyond the purely local issue.

The future of the Northbourne Oval is not only of concern to Mr Moore, it is also of concern to a lot of people - that includes the members of the Government and, certainly, it includes me. But it cannot be shrugged off as lightly as Mr Moore would have it so. There are many interests involved, and there are the interests of the lessee, whoever the lessee is, and that is a matter that has to be decided. That is why the ACT registrar has issued a caveat, because at the moment it is unclear just who the lessee is.

Certainly the transfer of the lease had no approval from me and it would have to have approval from me or my predecessor before it could take effect. I cannot speak for my predecessor as to whether he approved it or not and, unfortunately, he is not here to speak for himself. The question is just who does own the lease. Once that is determined that lessee has rights too, and they cannot be shrugged off quite as lightly as Mr Moore would have them.

I was interested in his proposition that the land belongs to the people and when the land is sold the people should take all the profit. When Mr Moore sells his house, I just wonder whether he is going to turn in all the profit on the land for the community. I suspect not. So it is very easy to take a position on the high ground when it is somebody else's lease you are talking about.

The Government is well aware of the problem. It is under review. The first question is to determine who the lessee is. The question of the future of that land and whether that lessee is entitled to take any profit from it if the lease purpose is changed, is a matter again for the Government to consider in light of all the circumstances.

That proposition has not yet been put to me. I know that a variation to the plan has been put out for public comment. As I understand it, there was comment made by all of those who had a concern and an interest in that matter. I can assure Mr Moore that everybody's interests will be taken into account and this Government will attempt to ensure that everybody is treated fairly.

**MR MOORE:** I ask a supplementary question. I hear Mr Collaery speaking about the Braddon Residents Association - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, supplementary question please - - -

**MR MOORE:** I am leading into the supplementary question. Mr Collaery is wrong. I attended a Braddon Residents Association meeting and its highest priority is the retention of an oval, a sports area, a green space there. Considering that this sort of maladministration of the leasehold system formed the basis of Mr Collaery's corruption allegations, prior to the election for self-government, will you now act to stop the maladministration of the leasehold system or face the wrath of Mr Collaery's corruption allegations?

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**MR KAINE:** I do not believe that there has been any maladministration of the leasehold system. An error has apparently been made - and I say apparently because I have not had a report on the matter yet - on the part of a registrar; not by the lease managers, not by the Territory planning authority, but by the registrar. When I know the full facts I will answer the question if somebody pursues the matter. But let us set aside this proposition that there has been maladministration. I know of none, and I do not accept the premise of your question.

### **Obstetric Beds**

**MR BERRY:** My question is to the besieged Minister for Health, Mr Humphries. Does the Minister agree with the bed planning projection based on the most recent census data which indicates that no extra obstetric beds will be needed in the ACT by the year 2000?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** In answer to the question from the failed former Minister for Health I can say that I do not have figures on projected obstetric bed use or demand at my fingertips to his surprise and - - -

**Ms Follett:** Why not? You should have.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Because I just do not have them here sitting in front of me. They are on the file, you can have a look at them if you want - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Mr Humphries please proceed.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I withdraw that; you cannot have a look. If Mr Berry is concerned about obstetric projections, I will get the figures for him and supply an answer on that matter.

**MR BERRY:** I ask a supplementary question. Does this mean that Mr Humphries has not consulted the projected bed planning data before coming out in support of transferring obstetric beds to the private sector? Does this mean that opening beds at the John James Private Hospital will mean the closure of beds in the public sector and the abandonment of support for a major centre of excellence in obstetrics in the Territory?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** First of all, it is not true to say that I have not consulted those figures - - -

**MR BERRY:** But you do not know the answer.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** It does not mean that I carry them around in my head. The fact is that there was careful consideration of all the relevant figures before this decision was announced.



**MR BERRY:** Relevant, but you do not know what they are.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, Mr Berry!

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Berry knows full well that the same sources, the same firm of quantity surveyors, the same advisers in many respects who developed figures for me developed them for him as well, so I do not know why he casts aspersions on those people and those figures. In terms of not having a centre of excellence in obstetrics let me point out that at present there are three centres in Canberra where obstetric services are provided: Calvary, Woden Valley and Royal Canberra.

**Ms Follett:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, this is not relevant to the question.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, Mr Berry asked me about a centre of excellence in obstetrics. I am answering the question.

**MR SPEAKER:** Point of order overruled. You have been supported, Mr Humphries; please get on with the answer.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** As I was pointing out, there are three centres presently in Canberra where obstetric services are provided. After the Government has proceeded with this development and the development is in place, there will still be three centres. How there can be any diminution of that principle of a centre of excellence, how there can be any downgrading of obstetric services in those circumstances is quite beyond me.

### **Kaleen North Playing Fields**

**MR STEFANIAK:** My question is to Mr DUBY, the Minister for Urban Services. Mr DUBY a sports pavilion at Kaleen North playing fields was promised to the rugby league clubs of north Canberra for the start of the 1990 season. It has still not been built. When will it be?

**A member:** Who made the promise?

**MR DUBY:** I thank Mr Stefaniak for that interesting question. I heard that interjection, "Who made the promise?". Undoubtedly it was the previous Labor Government. Mr Stefaniak is quite correct. I understand that the original program, in liaison with the sport and recreation area, nominated a project completion date for those pavilions of June 1990. I believe that there is quite a problem there because those facilities are constantly used over the weekend by rugby league organisations and junior rugby league players - under sixes through to under 18s - who, at the end of their games, have nowhere to shower because there are no ablution blocks. I believe that they are currently using the Kaleen Primary

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School for calls of nature and matters of that kind. I recently became aware of the problem and I am aware that it is desirable for a pavilion to be available earlier than June 1990 for the start of the season, so I have asked that the project be speeded up. I am advised that this facility will be completed in May, which should ensure its availability for most of the winter season.

### **Calvary Hospital**

**MRS GRASSBY:** My question is to Mr Humphries. In view of the fact that Calvary Hospital required extra funding in the last financial year by the Follett Government, can the Minister assure this Assembly that his Government can contain the public expenditure at Calvary to its current budget?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** The answer to the question is no, I cannot, any more than I can guarantee that expenditure in the other public hospitals in the ACT will be contained within present budgets. As Mrs Grassby well knows, her Government experienced a \$7m cost blowout in its administration of the Woden Valley and Royal Canberra Hospitals. A Minister who stood up in here and said that there would be no variation of or departure from the budget would be extremely brave. However, I will do my best to ensure that Calvary comes in on budget. There have been problems with the Calvary budget and I have addressed those already to see whether they cannot be headed off before any serious developments occur. I undertake to ensure to the best of my ability that that is the case. However, to give a guarantee of that kind is quite simply impossible.

### **Lake Tuggeranong**

**MR JENSEN:** My question is to Mr DUBY in his capacity as the Minister responsible for lakes and parks. I refer the Minister to a recent statement by Mr Paul Whalan in the Tuggeranong Valley View about parkland and development at Tuggeranong. It is unfortunate that Mr Whalan is not present in the house to hear this question about the alleged wasting of hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars on Lake Tuggeranong. Can the Minister comment on the truth or otherwise of this assertion?

**MR DUBY:** I thank Mr Jensen for the question. Yes, I am aware of the article quoting Mr Whalan in the newspaper mentioned. It was headlined: "Lake Park 'Waste'" and it went on to accuse the ACT Government of wasting hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars on Lake Tuggeranong. Frankly, I reject that assertion completely. There is no question that Mr Whalan had a great deal to say about park development on the shores of Lake Tuggeranong in that paper and, as usual, he got the story wrong again.

I would like to assure the Assembly that the staged development of the parkland at Lake Tuggeranong is proceeding. Tenders will be called shortly for the development of the section of the park fronting the fast food village and the work will proceed as quickly as possible. Studies by hydraulic engineers indicate that there is indeed adequate water in the lake for irrigation - even in times of severe drought - contrary to the allegations made by Mr Whalan in the article.

Use of lake water or second class water, as it is known, for park irrigation has been carried out successfully at Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Ginninderra and recently at Lake Tuggeranong. Indeed, the previous Labor Government issued a document entitled Environment ACT. I am amazed to see that section 3.21 of that document, headed "How water quality will be improved in the medium term", says quite categorically that the previous Government was committed to investigate expanding the use of lake water for the irrigation of parklands - something which Mr Whalan criticised vehemently in his article.

Using second class water saves taxpayers' money. It can cut water bills by up to 30 per cent. Even more importantly, the use of this water can delay the need for further and very expensive town water storages. We are all aware of the problems associated with the water needs of the ACT. Problems with siltation and algae are being overcome by using equipment of improved design. Finally, Mr Jensen, I would be very happy to arrange a briefing on the Lake Tuggeranong developments for Mr Whalan. At least then he could base his remarks on facts and not spread unnecessary concern in the community.

#### **Griffin Centre Site**

**MS FOLLETT:** My question is to Mr Kaine in his capacity as Minister for Planning. I would like to congratulate him on the fulsome nature of his previous two replies; I hope he will do me the same courtesy. Mr Kaine, has your Government established or is it establishing a working group of officials to examine proposals for the redevelopment of the Griffin Centre site? Has your Government refused to grant a lease to the Griffin Centre management committee because of these redevelopment proposals?

**MR KAINE:** I am not certain how I would be involved in this, but there may be something happening at the official level of which I am not aware. I certainly have not appointed a committee of officials for any such matter.

### **Preschool Task Force**

**MR MOORE:** I address my question to Mr Humphries as Minister for Education - just to give him a breather really! First of all, I thank the Minister for providing me with the names of the members of the preschool task force and the organisations they represent, which he did promptly yesterday. Considering the significance of this task force for the future of the preschool education community, will you ensure that the minutes of the meetings are made publicly available and that you start by giving them to me?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** That is a difficult question. I cannot see any reason why they should not be made publicly available. It ought to be the case that task forces and other bodies appointed by the Government to handle sensitive issues, should be able to deal frankly with the issues that they have been appointed to address. In those circumstances, sometimes a case could be made out for minutes remaining confidential, particularly when deliberation or debate is occurring on, for example, the relative merits of particular submissions put to that task force by particular groups or individuals. I give Mr Moore a guarded "yes". I will attempt to make available those minutes. Unless the committee itself believes that there are very strong reasons why I should not, I will attempt to do that.

### **Royal Canberra Hospital**

**MR WOOD:** I direct a question to the Minister for Health. Mr Humphries, on ABC radio on Monday you said that if 5 per cent of ACT people indicated their opposition to the closure of Royal Canberra Hospital, you would reconsider your position. Do you stand by that statement and is that the Government's position?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Speaker, that was not what I said.

**MR WOOD:** It was.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** No. I was talking in the context of budget constraints and budget imposed cuts and I said that in respect of some of the issues that I had addressed - and I was considering a whole range of issues at the time - I would reconsider my approach if 5 per cent of the ACT's population came to me and said that they would directly trade-off increases in fees and charges against the closure of the Royal Canberra Hospital. In other words, if, rather than close these facilities, people were prepared to pay for them through additional taxes and charges, I would reconsider the position that I had taken on that. However, that does not mean that people simply need to sign a petition saying, "I want the Royal Canberra Hospital to stay open". That was not what I said and it was not what I intended to say. If people want to trade those two matters

off directly and I get a clear indication that that is what the community wants to do, then I will consider it.

**MR WOOD:** I ask a supplementary, Mr Speaker. Is that the Government's position as well? Are we to take it that "5 per cent" means 5 per cent of the voting population?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I am not going to be drawn into what the trigger is to develop this kind of proposal. I was speaking for myself as Minister for Health. If Mr Wood wishes to ask other members of the Government their views on that matter then he is perfectly free to do so.

**MR WOOD:** And the 5 per cent?

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I have not considered that point.

### **Taxi Industry**

**MRS NOLAN:** My question is to Mr DUBY as Minister for Finance and Urban Services. Mr DUBY, what action is the Government taking to ensure that the taxi industry is meeting the needs of the Canberra community.

**MR DUBY:** I thank Mrs Nolan for the question. Before outlining my answer, let me make clear that I recognise the importance of the taxi industry in providing transport for a wide range of users throughout the ACT community. In response to the industry desire to provide input to the Government on a wide range of issues affecting the efficiency and smooth operation of the industry, I have established the taxi industry advisory committee.

The Government has done this as quickly as possible in order to gain advice from all interested parties pertaining to this vital segment of Canberra's industry. This committee consists of representatives from the taxi and tourist industries, the Transport Workers Union, consumers, people with disabilities and the Department of Urban Services. It is chaired by Mr Jim Warren, of Price Waterhouse. I have asked the committee to address two important issues as soon as possible. These are a review of taxi fares, including advice on the existing fare structure, and the issuing of additional taxi licences to further improve the service to Canberra's taxi users.

I feel that my prompt action demonstrates the Government's concern that the needs of both consumers and the taxi industry are being addressed - something which, of course, did not happen in the previous seven months.

### **Hill Station Homestead**

**MR KAINE:** Mr Speaker, I would like to provide the answer to a question from Mr Wood about the Hill Station Homestead and his concern that that should not be demolished upon change of ownership. I would like to inform Mr Wood that the arrangements in place to protect heritage sites were implemented in February 1989 by amendment of the Buildings (Design and Siting) Act. These amendments require the Chief Territory Planner, in granting design and siting approval, to take account of the heritage significance of a place. To implement this requirement, the Interim Territory Planning Authority and the Heritage Unit of my department have compiled a schedule of heritage sensitive places in the ACT. Hill Station is on that schedule.

Building applications, including demolition, for places in the schedule are referred by the Chief Territory Planner to the ACT Heritage Committee for advice. The Chief Territory Planner is required to consider this advice in making his decisions. Where the Chief Territory Planning Officer refuses all or part of an application, the applicant has recourse to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

### **Dickson - Redevelopment**

**MR KAINE:** Another question to me was from Ms Follett regarding the delays in the proposed redevelopment of the Dickson Tradesmen's Union Club. She asked the supplementary question about the old Dickson Hotel site. I was a little confused as to how the second question could be supplementary to the first, but I will provide answers to both.

In connection with the proposed Dickson redevelopment, Mr Speaker, officers of the ACT Government Service have had protracted discussions with the Canberra Tradesmen's Union Club in order to advance its proposal of redevelopment in Dickson. In order for the proposal to progress, a variation to the existing land use policy in Dickson is required. The Dickson group centre draft variation to policy was released for public comment in April 1989 with a closing date of 26 May 1989.

Because many of the comments received raised serious questions concerning the fundamental premises behind the plan, the Interim Territory Planning Authority is reviewing the most important elements, particularly the extent of retail and commercial development and the consequent parking and transport issues. The ITPA expects to complete this review in April. Until the proposed variations to the policy plan have been finalised, consideration of redevelopment proposals cannot proceed.

In connection with the old Dickson Hotel site, the situation is that the lessee for the site is currently in

receivership. Until such time as the intentions of the liquidator are established and/or a transfer of the lease achieved, all current plans for redevelopment of the site have been suspended.

### **Downer Community Association**

**MR KAINE:** I also have the answer to another question from Ms Follett about the Downer Community Association's concerns with the Downer Centre. The two leases for the Downer Community Centre expired on 17 March this year and to accommodate the needs for the previous lessees, arrangements have been put in place so that they can continue their activities by using the current premises for another year.

The lease for the shops expires in December 1990 and is not expected to be renewed. A decision will need to be made on the leasing arrangements and the Office of Industry and Development is assessing the various options which may affect the best use of the land. Included in these considerations is an assessment of the viability of retaining the existing building.

The final decision on the leasing arrangements for this centre will take into consideration the interests of the Canberra community as a whole, as well as the direct interest of the Downer residents. In the context of this information, the Interim Territory Planning Authority is preparing planning parameters for the whole of the Downer Centre. To this end, both the ITPA and the Office of Industry and Development are in continuous consultation with the Downer Community Association and the shopkeepers.

### **BUDGET STRATEGY STATEMENT Ministerial Statement and Paper**

**MR KAINE** (Chief Minister), by leave: As I undertook to do when I became Chief Minister, I present the Alliance Government's budget strategy statement - the economic and financial directions for our future.

The Alliance Government, since coming to office in December last year, has focused on examining the needs of the Canberra community. We are still in our first year of self-government. There is much to achieve to bring the ACT to a financial and economic maturity that will compare with that of the long established States. This strategy points the way for us to go.

To solve our financial problems is no small task, perhaps underestimated by some. It is a fact long known to all members of the Assembly that the ACT Government would have to make major financial decisions arising from the

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circumstances under which responsibility was transferred by the Commonwealth. It is a fact equally as long known that the financial changes that are occurring and which are the root cause of our concerns would have taken place even without self-government. Commonwealth financial support in the ACT was reducing in the years before self-government and this would have continued. At least with self-government, we make our own priorities and our own decisions, difficult though they may be.

We have known that the Commonwealth was handing us a potential major shortfall in revenue; that it was providing a three-year transition period; and that it would, over that transition period, maintain its funding in 1987-88 dollars. We know that the Commonwealth Finance Minister has put a value of \$100m on the current annual overspend or, expressed in another way, the potential annual revenue shortfall.

We know that the transition period was in fact reduced to only two years, because one year had already elapsed before self-government day. We know that the Commonwealth has already partially reneged on its real terms guarantee by retaining some \$21m of our money last year. And we know that the Follett Labor Government did not look beyond its 1989-90 budget to develop a strategy to deal with the transition to State-like funding.

In considering our strategic budget options, two fundamental questions have presented themselves to the Government. The first question is: what assets does the ACT own, and how much debt do we owe in relation to those assets? The second question is: what choices are available to the Government in addressing our financial problems? As members of the Assembly will be aware, we took action, even while in Opposition, to get answers to the first question and this led to the inquiry being conducted by Mr Justice Rae Else-Mitchell. To address the second question, we have set up the Priorities Review Board, chaired by Mr Bob White, to augment the normal budget development process. The two inquiries are timed to report so that their recommendations can be taken up in the 1990-91 budget considerations.

Several issues have already emerged from our initial examination of the choices available to us. These have been drawn into my statement today. The Alliance Government has approached its responsibilities in a serious, businesslike and fair manner. We have set ourselves four clear goals.

The first is to promote the development of the private sector in the ACT and regional economy. This is the way to greater job growth, greater stability, greater household income and reduced reliance on Commonwealth employment and finance.



The second goal is to produce a balanced recurrent budget, not only in our first or second years, but in the longer term when the Commonwealth withdraws its current level of financial support and instead provides the ACT with financial assistance on a basis comparable with the States. We will not lose sight of the needs of the community in achieving this balance.

Our third goal is to minimise the Territory's borrowings. While they have their place, particularly where the assets acquired generate sufficient income to repay the loans, servicing borrowings will place further pressure on future budgets.

The fourth goal is to make full use of the capital assets that have been transferred to us. The Commonwealth has spent large sums on facilities, roads, parks and the like, leaving the ACT with the financial burden of operating and maintaining them.

We aim to use these assets to the fullest possible extent, both to minimise the need for new capital expenditure and to avoid closing existing facilities wherever a feasible alternative can be found. Our budget strategy is built around these goals, and I shall be elaborating on each of them later.

### **The Economic Environment**

Our strategy demonstrates a clear understanding of the ACT economic outlook. As well as feeling the national impact of tight fiscal and monetary policies, business activity and employment levels in Canberra are directly affected by the budgetary restraint of the Commonwealth Government. As long as Commonwealth expenditure is restrained, it will affect employment in Canberra. This is particularly so given the large number of Canberra firms which provide services to the government sector.

In 1990-91, the ACT economy will continue to reflect the effects of these national policy settings. Short term employment growth is expected to remain subdued. While there is some improvement in the outlook for the following two years, it will require an improvement in the fundamentals of the national economy.

We are facing a difficult period: one in which it will be vital to help generate new jobs for young people leaving school. We estimate that there are about 5,000 new entrants to the ACT work force each year. Many of these people take part time jobs while studying. There are about 2,000 retirements from the workforce, resulting in a requirement for around 3,000 new full time and part time jobs each year. There is little prospect of the Commonwealth providing many of these new jobs and our goal must therefore be private sector growth. To achieve this, we must ensure that the local investment climate is right.

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We could attempt to spend to stimulate the local economy. But the impact would be limited and short term in effect. The consequences of such band-aid measures would only flow to future ACT budgets. More importantly, the effect on business confidence of an irresponsible fiscal policy, along with fears about future punitive taxes to service past extravagances, would be likely to cause a private sector contraction that would more than offset the direct impact of the Government's action.

We will be putting in place policies that will allow industries to develop and establish here. Industries which are sustainable, in an economic and environmental sense, and industries which are competitive in national and international markets. Government services to business will be tailored to those ends, and I made a statement on this subject only yesterday. We have to build on Canberra's many competitive advantages for business and address weaknesses which constrain investment and job creation.

Our efforts will be directed towards creating the right environment for business, whether large or small. I have already announced initiatives to review the ACT business environment to reduce unnecessary regulation. Small businesses, in particular, are often overwhelmed by government red tape and bureaucracy. We will cut that red tape and ensure that government agencies simplify regulatory requirements. This is a particular issue which I have referred to the Priorities Review Board for advice.

We will make Canberra an effective and attractive place in which to do business. We are actively responding to calls for more specific legislation dealing with taxation. It is our desire that taxation policies be clear and consistent and that they do not penalise investors in the ACT compared with other locations. In particular, we need to ensure that payroll tax legislation can be easily understood and complied with.

Our policies on planning and land supply will be responsive to market needs while protecting the environment and lifestyle of ACT residents. Appeal and approval procedures will be streamlined, while protecting the rights of interested parties. The necessary interaction between lease administration and planning authorities will be ensured.

We will encourage investment projects, both large and small, which help the ACT to develop new competitive strengths. We will focus particularly on the industries of the future, those which serve growing international and domestic markets, such as information intensive industries, in finance and business services, in research, in education, in tourism and in entertainment. We will encourage development in light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution and will ensure that our infrastructure programs are attuned to the needs of these industries.

And, of course, we shall be encouraging national bodies to locate in Canberra.

The Government will seek to ensure that a good industrial relations climate exists in the ACT. A safe and stable working environment, where demand and supply for labour are in relative balance is an essential element for improving the business climate.

Another critical element of creating the right environment for business growth is improving the ACT's transport links. Road access from Sydney and Melbourne has been substantially upgraded, increasing opportunities for firms which rely on quick road access to the major cities. Deregulation of bus transport has made low cost individual travel much more accessible. The Government is working with NSW to ensure that further improvements are made in relation to regional roads. And, of course, airline deregulation later this year should bring far more responsive services to Canberra.

The other major economic infrastructure sector I want to refer to is energy. The success of the NSW Government's efforts to commercialise the generation and transmission of electricity will provide greater opportunities for the ACT to set its own energy policies. Similar commercial improvements in relation to natural gas, now being reviewed by a ministerial working party, responding to me, will add to these opportunities.

Major projects such as the very fast train and the Civic Square development are being actively pursued by this Government. Such projects create new opportunities well beyond their immediate impacts and should be seen as levers to shift the ACT economy to higher ground.

In our efforts to stimulate development we must recognise that the problems which must be addressed are not confined or constrained by our political boundaries. We must look outward, not inward.

We must recognise the important links which exist between us and our region. We must develop the contacts and structures so vital for a genuine partnership with the key participants in our region's economy. Finally, we must move together to exploit aggressively those opportunities which are to our mutual benefit.

The ACT and NSW governments have decided to produce a regional economic development strategy for the ACT and south-east region of NSW. This is the first time a study of this magnitude has been undertaken and marks the beginning of a new era in NSW-ACT relationships. It also recognises the importance of the south-east region to the future economic development of the ACT.

The Government is currently preparing an economic development policy paper that will set out, in some detail,

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the basis for our approach to the many issues that impact on economic development. I will be seeking input from both business and the broader community on specific issues and policies.

### **The Budget Strategy**

I have described how this Government intends to advance the ACT economy and I have highlighted the limitations on how much effect this Government, and indeed any State government, can have on local economic conditions.

Now I want to discuss how my Government will approach the budget tasks in coming years. As I have already said, responsible ACT budgeting is essential to business and community confidence and to the long term health of the ACT economy. We cannot afford to grab at apparently easy solutions to the long term problems facing us.

The Government is committed to a strategy which will address the transition to State-like funding. Our two key targets in this area are to achieve balanced recurrent budgets and to limit our level of borrowings to responsible levels.

I shall outline shortly the magnitude of this task and the approach I have already made to the Commonwealth Government asking that it extend the transition period and assist us to meet some of the responsibilities passed to us at self-government.

Our strategy is a long term one, not just a patch up to meet this year's and next year's budget problems. I am identifying the strategies now so that the community can see where we are going, what must be changed and, just as important, what we need to preserve and improve.

### **Forward Estimates**

The Forward Estimates report for 1990-91 through to 1992-93, which I am tabling concurrently with this statement, indicates the magnitude of the task facing the ACT in the next few years.

The estimates are forecasts of likely expenditure and receipts based on the policies and priorities set in place in this year, 1989-90. Let me emphasise that the estimates are projections of this year's figures. They reflect no political judgments of the Alliance Government because those judgments have yet to be made for inclusion in the 1990-91 Budget. The estimates reflect the impact of forecast levels of population, employment and urban development on expenditure and receipts.

One key assumption in the Forward Estimates is that the Commonwealth will maintain its financial assistance to the ACT in real terms. In fact, we cannot proceed on any other basis. The Commonwealth promised to maintain funding at

real 1987-88 levels for three years when it established self-government. Despite the Federal Labor Government's guarantee to the ACT community, its assistance in 1989-90 falls some \$14m short of its guarantee, even after allowing for the \$7m of transitional assistance finally offered by the Prime Minister in December 1989, and I note that that still has not been received.

The Alliance Government expects that the Commonwealth will not, again, ignore this commitment to maintain ACT grants in real terms. At the very least, 1990-91 grants should be at real 1989-90 levels.

The 1989-90 recurrent budget dealt with \$10m of the overfunding situation passed to the ACT by the Commonwealth. Given that the gap is of the order of \$100m, this contribution does not significantly close the gap. The Forward Estimates assume this initial provision will be maintained. The contribution must progressively increase if the ACT is to operate on a financial basis comparable with the States. We are currently examining the consequences of doubling this provision to \$20m for 1990-91.

Overall, the Forward Estimates indicate that an adjustment of almost \$24m is required to achieve a balanced recurrent budget for the next fiscal year. The gap decreases to \$18m in the later years as a result of the expected growth in revenue flowing from the increasing population and economic activity of the ACT.

The large adjustment of \$24m for 1990-91 arises because of the expectation that pressure on services will be greater because of population growth and other increasing demands.

When the likely effect of inflation during the budget year is allowed for, the shortfall in recurrent funds available for 1990-91 widens by a further \$3m. This brings our task of achieving a balanced recurrent budget in 1990-91 to \$27m. If we increase the contribution to overfunding, to which I referred earlier, to \$20m, the total task for next year becomes \$37m. Any cut in the real level of Commonwealth grants will add to this already extremely difficult situation.

It is against that background, Mr Speaker, that Ministers were asked to examine strategic options for a 4 per cent recurrent expenditure cut. I shall come back to this matter later.

The contribution to the overfunding position is, in effect, a contingency provision, at this stage, against the drop in Commonwealth funding after 1991-92. In the meantime, these funds will be available to assist in our restructuring process to achieve future recurrent savings.

The major assumption made in arriving at the outlook on the 1990-91 capital budget is that the Commonwealth will

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continue to provide capital grants and advances at the 1989-90 levels. Expenditure on the capital budget is forecast at a lower level because of a decline in receipts available from the sale of land in the current economic circumstances. The Forward Estimates show construction expenditure is projected to be \$19m lower in 1990-91 than it is in 1989-90.

Various States have been caught up by policies which have allowed for high borrowing regimes which are now coming back to haunt them. A significant proportion of some States' recurrent budgets is tied up in just paying interest on the debts that have accumulated. We will not allow this to happen in the ACT.

The scenario that I have just described requires firm action. The Forward Estimates show that we have a major task to restructure our finances. We cannot just retreat into a corner and hope that the problems will fix themselves. We have to approach each expenditure area systematically and not just seek savings at the edges. We will and we have to face up to the hard decisions.

The Alliance Government has been addressing this problem. I shall now outline our actions directed towards setting the ACT on the right track.

### **Approaches to the Commonwealth**

It is clear that the Commonwealth must establish a realistic framework in which a transition to parity with Commonwealth-State finances for the ACT is achievable.

The Commonwealth had previously undertaken to provide for a three-year guarantee period. The guarantee commenced in 1988-89, a year prior to self-government. Funds generated by the guarantee in that year were not used by the Commonwealth for restructuring. They merely propped up an inflated budget. The operation of the guarantee in that year therefore acted to exacerbate, rather than reduce, our overfunding. This left the ACT Government with only two years to implement major changes. The budget year that we are now considering, Mr Speaker, is the second and last of those years.

It is also crucial to the ACT that we resolve the many other outstanding financial issues which remain between us and the Commonwealth. These include the establishment assistance foreshadowed by the Commonwealth, assistance to cover liabilities passed to the ACT upon self-government and the unique position of Canberra as the national capital.

I have written to the Prime Minister seeking his agreement to an extension of the guarantee period to include the year 1991-92 - that is, an extension of a further year - and asking for an early resolution of the unresolved financial issues that I talked about before. As yet I have had no

response, but will continue to press for satisfactory outcomes on those matters.

The fourth review of ACT finances about to be undertaken by the Commonwealth Grants Commission will be most important. It will be the basis for determining further transitional funding arrangements before consideration is given including the ACT in the pool of general revenue assistance for the States and Territories. The Commission is being asked to report by March 1991. The ACT Government will ensure that the Commission receives all the information it requires and is fully aware of the ACT's special circumstances. It is in our long term interest to assist so that the inquiry is comprehensive, based on sound and verifiable data and sympathetic to our particular problems.

### **Government Decisions**

The task before the whole ACT community is large. We have sought more time to meet it and we have sought Commonwealth help in meeting it. We have said that the ACT residents must not subsidise Canberra in its national capital role, but there can be no denial of the ultimate position that we have to face. The rest of Australia will not support Canberra having more expensive State government services than they have while they subsidise us. They will not support local decisions for Canberra to have lower rates or taxes than they bear. The ACT will have to adjust to the same Commonwealth support arrangements as other Australians.

This can only be done by restructuring our services to preserve and improve the high quality we have in many areas, by increasing our efficiency and our cost effectiveness and by making specific decisions on whether rates, taxes and charges should be brought into line with the States, whenever they are not currently of that order.

It does not mean that we have to abandon our role as the administrative and service centre of a major Australian region. The Grants Commission has ensured that the ACT receives full recognition for services it provides to New South Wales residents - in our schools, our hospitals and in further education. The Government accepts its responsibility and its ability to act as the hub of the region. We have a sound working relationship with the New South Wales Government and local councils, and will maximise the opportunities that our regional centre role provides to us.

### **The Priorities Review Board**

In early February, I established the Priorities Review Board to provide independent advice to the Government on the fundamental changes required to streamline and improve the way we provide services to the people of Canberra, and to ensure that we live within our means.

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The aims of that review are twofold. Firstly, it is to recommend directions for the development of the ACT Government Service through the 1990s so that the service is best placed to meet the needs of the ACT community.

Secondly, the Board has been asked to identify for government consideration, specific measures to close the budget gap which exists between the current cost of providing ACT government services and the longer term revenue available to fund those services.

I believe these objectives are complementary as they emphasise the need for long term strategies as well as immediate economies.

I expect the Board's report will recommend structures that will allow improved management in the ACT public sector. I understand it is placing a high priority on finding ways for managers to pursue the goals of higher productivity and vigorous control of costs in the provision of services of an appropriate standard.

I am confident that the report of the Board will make a significant contribution to the future of the ACT. Already it has given some general indications of its direction and this has assisted the Government to identify specific avenues to pursue. We also have the benefit of material developed in response to my request for Ministers to put forward strategic proposals aimed at reducing current levels of recurrent expenditure by 4 per cent.

I can now provide some indication of the restructuring task ahead. Mr Speaker, this is not comprehensive, it is not a mini budget; I am talking about actions that will be set in place in the next financial year, 1990-91, to have an increasing effect in subsequent years as Commonwealth funding declines.

### **Restructuring Directions**

In health, we aim to establish a high quality public hospital system that will meet all the requirements for people in the Canberra region. The Minister for Health has already indicated the Government's intentions in this area. Briefly, the Canberra Hospitals Board will operate a top quality facility at Woden Valley, with most high level specialty services for both adults and children. It will have some 700 beds.

Calvary Hospital will finally fulfil the role for which it was designed - a high quality general hospital, with 300 beds. It will retain the valuable link with the Order of the Little Company of Mary.

To achieve this essential program of hospital restructuring and upgrading quickly, and with minimal disruption, we will press the Commonwealth to provide significant capital funding. The Commonwealth has let our hospitals fall into



disrepair. It built three public hospitals and has raised public expectations about services for the region. It has a responsibility to assist us to move to a high quality, cost effective service.

The changes outlined alone will save the community at least \$8.5m a year.

The Commonwealth also built a hospital services complex at Mitchell. This complex has the capacity to provide laundry and other services for 2,000 hospital beds, twice as much as is required by the ACT hospital system. As a result, the current arrangements under which it is run will never achieve the order of efficiency required to reduce the significant excess cost of running the facility. The Alliance Government is acting quickly to establish the centre as a commercially operating business so that it can provide cost effective services to other public sector operators, as well as to the private sector.

Mr Speaker, this is not the end of our examination of the health function. We are also closely scrutinising administrative arrangements so that overlap between the hospitals and the department is eliminated. Hospital support services will be reviewed to ensure maximum efficiency and other health services will be examined to ensure that they are as effective and cost efficient as possible.

The strategy for resolving the health delivery dilemma should not come as a surprise to anyone. In September last year, when criticising the Follett budget for failure to address the real problem in our hospitals, I outlined a sketchy scenario as a potential solution. What we now propose to do, after considerable expert input, is remarkably similar to the proposition that I put forward then.

Turning to education, the Commonwealth Government created the ACT public school system in response to this community's desire to have its own school and preschool system. The system was developed with a high level of local involvement and in line with the overall planning of the city of Canberra. This led on the one hand to high quality education provision and a reputation for leadership in many areas. On the other hand, it became apparent that the system had developed a number of underlying cost structure problems. One of the main difficulties was the distribution of schools in terms of size and number of sites. This school density problem became very apparent as student number started to decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Successive Commonwealth governments took action by attempting to reduce the number of non-viable schools. The major program of this sort was carried out in 1987 and 1989, which saw nine schools closed, replaced by four new ones. Unfortunately, the legacy of oversupply of places

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still remains and it has now reached a level of 13,000 vacant places in existing schools or 20 per cent more places than the number of students. At the same time, the Government has been bound by new suburban development to build new schools in Tuggeranong. This overall burden of rising costs has been felt by schools, parents and teachers and has been recognised by the Grants Commission as contributing to over standard expenditure in education. It is clear that a major restructuring of the delivery of schooling and preschooling services is necessary if education quality is to be maintained, just as a major restructuring is necessary in health delivery.

Options such as the previous Government's attempts to trim at the edges have achieved some savings. However, such an approach, if pursued too far, must damage the quality of service. This Government will not raise maximum class sizes, as this is likely to damage the quality of the education service. Accordingly, we must consider school consolidations as part of the Government's restructuring process. This will not be done in a haphazard way. It will be done on a planned basis, it will involve every part of the system, and it will be done with full community consultation.

I should add that, just as with the expansion of services at Calvary Hospital, success in using existing education infrastructure more intensively can have a direct impact on the necessity to achieve consolidations. If the demographic situation can be changed within a school's catchment area, we can keep that school viable and avoid the need to build a new one somewhere else. For example, the development at Bruce has ensured that the Aranda Primary School has been able to keep up its enrolments.

We are committed to the provision of a genuine choice in education by making sure that non-government schools are able to offer a high standard of service. The provision of funding to this sector will be reviewed and one area which will receive particular scrutiny is the cost of providing bus services to these schools.

The Government believes that the ACT has the best education system in the country and we are committed to maintaining the high level of service currently offering, but we must reduce its cost.

The recently released National Capital Plan provides scope for ACT Government action to make better use of the existing infrastructure. A significant area of land in West Belconnen has been earmarked for urban development. My Government will be acting quickly to address planning and other issues involved so that we can have access to this land, which is close to existing schools, roads and other infrastructure. This will lessen the pace of investment in Gungahlin, where infrastructure will have to be fully developed from raw earth.

The National Capital Planning Authority has also indicated its intention to do further work in 1990-91 on possible urban uses for the Symonston-Jerrabomberra area. I welcome these actions of the authority as practical recognition of Canberra's needs and financial capacity to pay.

However, my Government will be seeking review of other positions adopted in the National Capital Plan, particularly the refusal, so far, to countenance urban use of the CSIRO land in Belconnen.

Technical and further education is another area where we will need to consider a more appropriate strategy. The Government recognises that an effective and responsive vocational education system is critical to economic development in the ACT. Technological change and award restructuring accentuate the need for a dynamic and innovative TAFE system. Notwithstanding the major restructuring of ACT TAFE in the last three years, further savings are needed to eliminate the over standard funding identified by the Grants Commission.

As with schools, there are limits to the saving that can be achieved by trimming at the edges of the current TAFE arrangements without affecting quality. Of course, efficiency improvements need to be vigorously pursued. But substantial savings will require more strategic approaches.

These will include rationalisation of TAFE's school structure and campus consolidation. Course offerings will be reviewed in line with demand, as occurred in 1990. And TAFE will be reviewing its relationship with other training and education entities, particularly in light of the now very high retention rates in years 11 and 12 in our colleges.

There is one other important option for TAFE. That is to increase the emphasis on TAFE as an industry, as well as a public vocational training provider. TAFE has capacity to sell educational courses and services to industry and to students from beyond the ACT and the south-east region, possibly including some from overseas. TAFE will also be actively seeking contributions from industry, either in direct funding or in kind.

We are also looking very closely at the contribution that ACT off-budget statutory authorities make to the overall budget. Such authorities' assets need to provide a commercially acceptable rate of return, both to finance their expansion and to provide dividends to their owners, the people of the ACT.

ACTEW, as a statutory authority providing electricity, water and sewerage services to the ACT community, is contributing \$5m by way of dividend to the 1989-90 ACT budget. This is assumed to increase marginally over the years to which the Forward Estimates relate. The appropriateness of this level of dividend will be

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considered to ensure that the people of the ACT are getting value for their investment in ACTEW. As well, current assistance provided to ACTEW to carry out some of its capital works needs to be reviewed, in line with arrangements in other parts of Australia.

The public bus service provided by ACTION is currently costing the ACT community over \$20m a year to operate, by way of subsidy. Other States have similar problems and are tackling them in an integrated manner. The ACT must do likewise, by making the most productive use of employees, buses and facilities in ACTION. This, together with reviewing the organisational structure, funding arrangements, regulatory framework and other opportunities for improving the cost effectiveness of the service, will have a positive impact on the budget. Any evaluation of the operations of the public bus service will take account of the Government's overall transport objectives and their implications for planning, development and the environment.

I have concentrated so far entirely on our Territorial or State-type budget. But we must not lose sight of the fact that municipal services cost the ACT community close to \$105m in this current year 1989-90. We have one of the largest municipal budgets in Australia. While our rates are on average lower than other local government areas, we are concerned that some municipal services have been incorrectly included in the Territorial budget. We are currently reviewing this matter to ensure that all municipal services provide value for money, and are met from within the municipal budget.

The city-State nature of the ACT is unique within Australia. It provides us with opportunities not available to other States. In restructuring ACT services, we will be looking closely at areas where we can gain advantages from this unique combination. In particular, the administrative superstructure will be comprehensively examined by the Priorities Review Board. Any problems of duplication, demarcation and service overlap will be eliminated.

There is a particular need to examine our internal services and procedures within the ACT Administration, including publicly owned vehicles, tendering, computing, personnel and accounting arrangements, to ensure that they are appropriate and cost effective. A review of vehicle fleet management arrangements is virtually complete, and I expect this to lead to significant cost reductions. I have asked the Priorities Review Board to report specifically on the other matters that I have mentioned.

My emphasis so far has necessarily been on reducing expenditure in order to achieve the balanced outcome we require. If at the end of the day our goal has not been achieved we will have no choice but to examine options to increase our revenue. However, the Alliance Government will ensure that any revenue options we put forward are balanced and are not contrary to our underlying objectives for the development and well-being of the ACT community.

In this respect, I should make some specific comment on the notion floated recently by some that the ACT people would be prepared to pay more taxes to maintain present standards in health and education.

The major part of the Commonwealth overspend, identified by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, relates to these two functions. To cover the shortfall identified by the Grants Commission would require a tax on every ACT citizen - not just on wage earners - of about \$300 a year. It is worth thinking about whether the assertion can be sustained in the light of this figure. It certainly puts the proposal into perspective and I doubt that even the most avid proponents would pursue this after the facts were on the table.

As I have already mentioned, the capital side of the budget will be constrained by our expected lower level of land revenues and the Government's commitment to a manageable level of borrowings. This has required the Government to scrutinise most carefully the projects submitted for 1990-91 new works program, as well as plant and equipment proposals. We are well down the track in this process and are confident that a program will be developed which covers our essential needs while improving our use of our existing capital base and ensuring that we do not overinvest in capital infrastructure in the future.

We are also taking into consideration the recurrent budget impacts of construction proposals. Every new public facility, whether a school, a fire station or public toilets, increases operational and maintenance costs to the budget. Each such demand on the recurrent budget makes our adjustment task that much more difficult.

These are the directions that the Government is taking to achieve its goals of a balanced recurrent budget, of reduced borrowings and of maximising the use of our infrastructure. No sector of government operations is being spared the intensive examination that is required to achieve our goals in this area. The Alliance Government has the strength and the will to achieve this, while committing itself to the provision of quality services directed to the needs of the community.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I re-emphasise the main factors which influence this budget strategy.

Firstly, there are the linkages between the economic conditions of the ACT and the budgetary imperatives. Presently this community is significantly influenced by the Commonwealth Government. When the Commonwealth sneezes, the ACT catches pneumonia.

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The Alliance Government is committed to a less dependent ACT with a diversified economic base and a stronger private sector which will be more immune to the ailments of the Commonwealth.

Hand in hand with this, is our need to position ourselves to be able to operate in the longer term within the constraints of Commonwealth-State financial arrangements. This needs to be done in a way that optimises the opportunities we have in the transitional period to restructure our services to meet the needs of the community in a more cost-effective way. We have inherited our problems from the Commonwealth and it has a responsibility to assist in an orderly transition. We will continue to press the Federal Government on this issue.

The Alliance Government has clear goals for the future direction of the Territory. Our goals are to promote the development of the private sector, to produce a balanced recurrent budget, to minimise the Territory's reliance on borrowings and, finally, to make better use of our existing capital base.

To implement our strategy will require the cooperation of all sections of the community. We recognise and will take into account the particular role of the trade union movement to protect the overall interests of its members. As well, this statement emphasises the role of the private sector and the surrounding region in our future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that this is the first attempt ever to set a coherent economic and budgetary strategy in place for the ACT. I commend it to the Assembly. I table the statement and the accompanying Forward Estimates report. I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

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

## **PESTICIDES ACT**

### **Papers**

**MR COLLAERY** (Attorney-General) (3.50): In accordance with section 83 of the Pesticides Act 1989 I table for the information of members the following papers:

Pesticides Act -

Breakdown of costs and projected revenue for 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Determination of fees - Determination No. 1 of 1990.

These fees have been formulated to ensure that the administration of the legislation is self-supporting. Accordingly, these fees offset the administration costs

associated with the Act and apply the user-pays principle, thereby reducing the burden on the taxpayer.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**  
**Tuesday, 24 April 1990**

**MR STEVENSON**, by leave: I move:

That private Members' business be given precedence for the first two hours following resumption of business, after the dinner adjournment, on Tuesday, 24 April 1990.

As we know, under standing order 77 the Wednesday morning is normally held for private members' business. The next Wednesday when we should be sitting falls on April 25, Anzac Day. As such it is a public holiday and we will not be sitting on that day. Private members' business is an important opportunity for members on this side of the house and people in Canberra to have, perhaps, another viewpoint presented in this Assembly.

I note that yesterday the Chief Minister was kind enough to agree that he would be prepared to allow private members' business to go ahead during that sitting week. Tuesday evening, 24 April, would be an ideal time to have private members' business. This would allow members of the public to come along and hear members present matters directly concerning them in this house. Anything that makes this Assembly or its members more accessible to the public is a good thing. I commend the motion to the house.

**MR BERRY** (3.54): Mr Speaker, I move the following amendment:

That all words after "private Members' business" be omitted and the following words substituted "be given precedence during the two and a half hours normally allocated for a meal break on Tuesday, 24 April 1990."

Mr Deputy Speaker, the reason I move this amendment is that the Opposition does not wish to intrude upon the normal business of this Assembly on Tuesday, 24 April and wishes to ensure that the private members' business proposed does not diminish the effectiveness of the Assembly on that day. I do not have a lot to say about it. My motives are fairly clear. We wish to get on with the job of the Assembly and we do not want to see this amendment interfering with that process.

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I will just wait for that to be circulated. After that is circulated I will see if there is a speaker against that amendment. Basically, they want to go through the meal break and take private members' business during that two and a half hour period.

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**MR HUMPHRIES** (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (3.59): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to support Mr Stevenson's motion but to oppose Mr Berry's amendment. The fact is, we are working at the present time to the sitting pattern that was laid out by the previous Government before it left office.

**Mr Wood:** Previous parliament.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** All right, the previous parliament - whatever. The parliament under the previous Government agreed to a certain sitting pattern. That pattern required that we would not sit on Anzac Day. That was the proposal put up by Mr Whalan; we would not sit on Anzac Day.

**Mrs Grassby:** Nobody sits on Anzac Day.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Fair enough. We are not going to sit on Anzac Day. It was agreed we would not be doing that. Now, effectively, members of the Opposition are asking us to make up for that day by sitting for extra hours on other days.

**Mr Moore:** Just for private members' business.

**Mrs Grassby:** No, we are not. We are saying let us sit through the two hours.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Yes, you are. You are asking for - - -

**Mr Berry:** Mr Stevenson wants the private members' sittings.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I think that is reasonable but you are asking to make extra time available. We are going to be flogging ourselves silly on the Tuesday of that week in order to achieve - - -

**Mrs Grassby:** You are joking. You have not been working.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Look, Mrs Grassby - - -

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! Let him have a go.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Mr Deputy Speaker, it is quite obvious that members opposite want to completely clog up the Tuesday before Anzac Day by putting on two hours of extra sittings which would not normally be agreed to, despite the fact that they agreed themselves that they would lose that day when they were in Government. Now, Anzac Day has gone. The only issue is what we use the other agreed hours on the other days for. That is the issue. Mr Stevenson has proposed that we use part of that time for private members' business. That is a reasonable proposal - - -

**Mrs Grassby:** Gary, just say you do not want to work; that is all you have got to say.



**MR HUMPHRIES:** I work very hard, Mrs Grassby. My car is often here on the weekends; I have been working very hard. I think this is a ridiculous proposal. I intend to support Mr Stevenson's motion, but not the amendment put up by Mr Berry.

**Mr Stevenson:** I rise on a point of clarification. The motion talks about a meal break. Is this the lunchtime meal break or the evening meal break?

**Mrs Grassby:** No, the dinner one; we do not need it, Mr Stevenson, it is Lent anyway.

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, Mr Stevenson, it is the dinner break because we do not sit till 2.30 on Tuesdays.

**MR MOORE (4.01):** I rise to support Mr Stevenson's motion and to join Mr Humphries in opposing the Wayne Berry Labor motion here. It seems to me that if we were really overlaid with government business and we then had to squeeze this business in, then there might be a reason for what Mr Berry is suggesting but, by and large, I think this is not the case. It seems quite appropriate to me to use that evening for private members' business. Hopefully Mr Stevenson will be able to bring on the Bill that he has been so enthusiastic to bring on and I will be just as enthusiastic to oppose it.

**MR STEVENSON (4.02):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I oppose the amendment to my motion: firstly, the suggestion that when members are not sitting they are not doing anything is an absolute absurdity.

The opportunities of meal breaks while we are sitting give us the chance to get a great deal of work done in meetings with people, discussions and in catching up on other vital work. As a general rule that is not something that should be forgone. As far as the amendment goes, unfortunately I feel that, like so many things that are done, it has a political motivation rather than a sensible or a logical motivation. I think it is unfortunate that more and more people are becoming aware that so many decisions are made, not for valid reasons, but for reasons of point scoring. I speak against the amendment.

**MR DUBY (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (4.03):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak against the amendment moved by Mr Berry and in support of Mr Stevenson's original motion that the evening session on the Tuesday before Anzac Day be allocated to private members' business. Under the way the standing orders have been put up we are all well aware that unless a provision of this nature is made there would be no private members' business at all that particular week of sittings, because the standing orders lock the private members' business into the Wednesday of the week.

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Throughout many debates in this house I have heard the calls of many people saying that private members' business is of great value to the running of this Assembly. Of course, it would be a terrible shame if private members could not continue in that week. So, as I have said, I support the motion of Mr Stevenson in that regard. However, this proposal of Mr Berry's, that there be no adjournment for dinner, or there be a very limited adjournment for dinner - - -

**Mr Berry:** None.

**MR DUBY:** None, no adjournment - that settles that - there will be no adjournment for a dinner break and we could theoretically go through from 2.00 pm until 10.30 pm. I am afraid I cannot support that. The reason for that is as Mr Stevenson said, there well may be political motives in this. I also understand the political motives of Mr Stevenson in opposing this amendment, for, of course, if there was not a dinner break on that particular day Mr Stevenson could not address his rally, which I am sure he is planning to organise before he introduces his private members' business on that Tuesday night. I am sure we can all guess what that private members' business will be. It most certainly will be his private members' Bill to abolish X-rated movies.

Mr Stevenson, I think, may be protesting too much that there are political motives in Mr Berry's amendment and he had the pure ideals of opposing it because, of course, it would break his heart if he could not address his rally throughout the tea break. Nevertheless, I think he is entitled to it. I mean, let us face it, it is the one and only issue that Mr Stevenson ever runs with. I think we will be big-hearted on this side of the house and give him his opportunity to get his face in front of the TV cameras. Therefore I do not support not having a break on that Tuesday evening.

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Do you want to speak to close your substantive amendment?

**MR BERRY (4.07):** I have already spoken on the amendment and I seek leave to speak on the motion. I will be very brief.

Leave granted.

**MR BERRY:** The motion is, as has been well argued by Mr Duby, a matter which Mr Stevenson wishes to pursue. Nobody would like to lose private members' business for any reason, but in relation to the motion itself I can see why the Government would support it and would oppose the amendment because the motion gets them off the hook again. I can see the reason that they would do that.

It is a matter of politics that one talks about motions and amendments and it is particularly important in this case

because the Government has a pretty poor record in these last few sets of sittings because it has not been able to provide business for this house. Mr Stevenson's motion assists the Government to get off the hook again. I can see why it is supporting his motion.

**MR STEVENSON** (4.08): Mr Speaker, normally I would stand and claim to have been misrepresented, but I have got the opportunity to close the debate, so I will handle the matter here and now.

When I asked the Chief Minister yesterday about private members' business, it had nothing to do with any attempt to have my Bill proceed during Tuesday night. It was just that I feel private members' business is important and it should go on in any week, should we happen to miss out on a Wednesday morning. I would fight for that no matter who was bringing up what. Secondly, as far as the protest that will be held at 5.30 - - -

**Mr Berry:** You will not deny that.

**MR STEVENSON:** The point is I cannot deny it now. Mr Duby gave me the idea, and I was quite prepared to take it up. How can I deny it? Actually, it had not occurred to me before.

**Mr Duby:** Oh, come on.

**MR STEVENSON:** That is the truth of the matter. But I think it is a good idea and I could well take it on board. If so, I will thank Mr Duby for the suggestion.

Something else that Mrs Grassby mentioned was that she did not want private members' business during that week.

**Mrs Grassby:** I did not say that.

**MR STEVENSON:** You said that in your seat about five minutes ago.

**Mrs Grassby:** I did not.

**MR STEVENSON:** You said, "We don't want it", meaning the Labor Party.

**Mrs Grassby:** I did not say that. I said we wanted it over the dinner break. We do not want to waste the time of the house.

**Members** interjected.

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let us not get pedantic. Continue, Mr Stevenson.

**MR STEVENSON:** I think it is important that private members' business is held, and I would expect that to be solidly supported by members of the Labor party. It was

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unusual that such a comment was made. I thank the members of the Alliance for supporting the right of private members' business to go ahead.

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr Stevenson. I am sure we will all come to your spontaneous demonstration at 5.30 on the 24th.

**MRS GRASSBY:** Mr Speaker, I claim to have been misrepresented.

**MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thought you might say that, Mrs Grassby. How do you claim to have been misrepresented?

**MRS GRASSBY:** That is not what I said. When we get a copy of the Hansard I am sure that Mr Stevenson will have to apologise for it because that is not what I said. I said that we want to work over the dinner break and give the Government some work to do. They have done nothing all this week.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

#### **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES - SELECT COMMITTEE Membership**

**MR STEVENSON,** by leave: I move:

That Mr Stevenson be discharged from attending the Select Committee on Cultural Activities and Facilities.

Mr Speaker, there are a number of reasons for this. The cultural activities committee was formed in August last year; its members included Mr DUBY, Mr Moore and a couple of others. Because of the change of the committee structure in this Assembly Mr Moore was taken off that committee and I was put on. It was unfortunate that I was not actually asked if I wanted to - - -

**Mr DUBY:** You are in favour of the draft.

**Dr Kinloch:** It is the people's will.

**MR STEVENSON:** That is right; it is the will of the people. I think that the will of the people of Canberra is to have me use my time on other matters of even greater importance to them. That is not putting down the importance of cultural activities and facilities but I think most people in Canberra agree there are matters that have an even greater importance. Notwithstanding the fact that I was not asked on to the committee, apparently Mr Moore was not asked off the committee. It sounds like some of the public service facilities in New South Wales when I was a member

of the force. At one time I was transferred when there was someone else at the station that would have loved to go to where I was being transferred. Indeed, I had not been asked and nor had he. Luckily, we were able to arrange a swap.

**Mr Jensen:** They do it in the services all the time, Dennis.

**MR STEVENSON:** Yes, that is right. I suggest that I should be discharged from those activities. I would welcome the opportunity to serve with Mr Wood and Mr Stefaniak. I am sure it would be a delightful time and most beneficial. However, there are other things I feel - - -

**Mrs Nolan:** What about Dr Kinloch?

**Mr Moore:** He is on it as well.

**MR STEVENSON:** Indeed, I did not know that. It would be an extra pleasure to be with someone with the experience in cultural activities that Dr Kinloch has, but perhaps not this time. I believe Mr Moore is going to move a motion or an amendment that he be allowed on to the committee. I think logic would have it that as he was a member of the committee - and I see someone shaking their head - he should be allowed to serve. Once again, I make the point of politics as against what would make sense. If Mr Moore feels he has something to contribute to that committee - he has already been on it; it is a select committee - then he well should be allowed to do so.

**MR MOORE (4.14):** Mr Deputy Speaker, I move the following amendment:

That after the word "Facilities", add "and that Mr Moore be appointed to the Committee".

Mr Stevenson has already explained that he was invited on to the committee without consultation and I was invited off the committee without consultation. That is correct. What I am now proposing is the same logic that Mr Stevenson has used, namely that I be taken back on to that committee. I certainly consider it to be an area of interest of mine. I have a background in arts councils, not just in Canberra but on several occasions in South Australia in particular. I believe that I have a special contribution to make to this committee and I would appreciate the support of the members of the Assembly in including me on the committee.

**MR HUMPHRIES (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (4.16):** Mr Speaker, I have to say that I support Mr Stevenson's motion; if he does not wish to be on the committee, so be it. That is his prerogative. I do not support Mr Moore's amendment to put himself on it. It seems to have been forgotten in all this debate that there are standing orders - to which we all agreed, unanimously, as I recall - which require certain things to happen in

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respect of committees. They include the provision that the membership of committees should be proportional to people's representation in the Assembly. Mr Moore is a - - -

**Mr Moore:** That is a very dangerous precedent you are setting.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Well, it is not an unfortunate precedent; it is a precedent that we have tried to live with. As far as I am aware, the Liberal Party, at least, has always tried to provide for that provision in the Assembly. That was in the days before the Alliance Government. The Alliance Government is now attempting to do the same thing. The fact is, Mr Deputy Speaker, that at the present time Mr Moore is a member of other committees. He is the chairman of the HIV, Illegal Drugs and Prostitution Committee. What else is he on?

**Mr Moore:** I am on the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment, as of yesterday.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** And he is on the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment - three committees. Clearly, he would have a greater proportion of membership than should be enjoyed by a party of one person. Mr Stevenson, for example, has not that same entitlement. I do not see why Mr Moore should have it. Under the circumstances, I really think we should abide by standing orders.

**DR KINLOCH (4.17):** Mr Speaker, Mr Stefaniak and I are deeply grieved that we will not have the pleasure of Mr Stevenson's company, but he well realises that when we have meetings of that committee he would be welcome to attend. All members would be welcome to attend; Mr Moore would be welcome to attend. Similarly, all committees do urge members to attend their meetings, except for the final stages of consideration of conclusions.

**MR MOORE (4.18):** I seek leave to say just a minute's worth of words to the Assembly, Mr Speaker.

Leave granted.

**MR MOORE:** Mr Humphries' point about membership of the committees is certainly quite valid, but I think it is reasonable to say that it is impossible, with the number of people here, to get an exact balance as to - - -

**Mr Humphries:** We can approximate.

**MR MOORE:** The best we can do is approximate, and the approximation at the moment is that I am underutilised from a committee perspective. I think it would be appropriate, since I am prepared to offer my services, that we get a proportion that instead of being a little under, is a little over. I thought I would just mention that. I thank the house for the leave.

Question put:

That the amendment (**Mr Moore's**) be agreed to.

The Assembly voted -

AYES, 6

Mr Berry  
Ms Follett  
Mrs Grassby  
Mr Moore  
Mr Stevenson  
Mr Wood

NOES, 10

Mr Collaery  
Mr Duby  
Mr Humphries  
Mr Jensen  
Mr Kaine  
Dr Kinloch  
Ms Maher  
Mrs Nolan  
Mr Prowse  
Mr Stefaniak

Question resolved in the negative.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBERS

**MR MOORE** (4.23): Mr Speaker, I move:

That leave of absence from 2 April until 14 April 1990 be given to Mr Moore on the grounds of Assembly committee business overseas.

Mr Speaker, the HIV, Illegal Drugs and Prostitution Committee agreed that an important conference overseas should be attended by one of our members and agreed that that member should be me. That then went to your own committee, the Administrative Procedures Committee; it was approved and arrangements are in place. I draw your attention to the fact that Mrs Grassby was granted a similar leave for private business in - if I remember correctly - July last year. I seek the leave of the Assembly to be excused from both committee business and Assembly business should it arise in the interim.

**MR KAINE** (Chief Minister) (4.24): Mr Speaker, in the absence of any other speaker on this subject I must say that I have grave reservations about the proposition being put forward by Mr Moore. Of course, I do not control the Assembly or its budget, but I was most disturbed to discover only yesterday that this trip had been arranged. In the light of the economies that I am imposing on the entire ACT Administration - and, I must say, that same reduction will be applied to the Assembly budget next year - I have real reservations about the expenditure of funds involved in sending somebody on a trip of this kind when I believe the information could be obtained in other

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ways. I simply express my concern at the proposition and as to whether or not the decision should be reconsidered.

**MR DUBY** (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (4.25): Mr Speaker, I, too, rise to speak against this motion. First of all, I have grave doubts as to whether leave is required at all when the house, per se, is not sitting through that period of time. That may be a technical point, but I cannot see why leave of absence should be granted to a member by this Assembly for absence during a period of time when the house is clearly not scheduled to sit. It is just as if I was planning to go down to the coast tomorrow and I got up and stood and sought leave of the Assembly that I should have leave on the off-chance that the house may be called tomorrow.

**Mr Moore:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I think Mr Duby does not understand standing order 22, that "leave of absence may be given by the Assembly to any Member on motion without notice". This is to be read in conjunction with standing order 23 where, "A Member shall be excused from service in the Assembly, or any committee". I just want to clarify it.

**MR DUBY:** Well, I am going to answer that point of order for you, Mr Speaker. Standing order 23, from my understanding, says:

A member shall be excused from service in the Assembly ...

**Mr Berry:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; that is fairly presumptuous.

**MR SPEAKER:** I believe it was frivolous comment, Mr Berry. Please proceed, Mr Duby.

**Mr Berry:** Well, it was only frivolous on that side.

**MR DUBY:** There was certainly no intent of presumption on my part, Mr Speaker, and if it was taken I apologise. It says quite categorically that "a member shall be excused from service in the Assembly". Clearly, "service in the Assembly" refers to periods of time when the Assembly is sitting.

**Mr Berry:** Or any committee.

**MR DUBY:** My understanding is that the committee itself has already given leave of absence to Mr Moore on this matter. If the committee has not given leave of absence to Mr Moore for this matter I think it is rather presumptuous of him to be going on a trip without having sought permission from the committee involved in the first place.

That brings us back to the main point. The main point of objection to this proposed granting of leave, on my part, follows upon the line of argument that was developed by the



Chief Minister. There is no question in my mind that in stringent times we in the Assembly should be the people who are giving a - - -

**Mr Berry:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; the member has strayed off the path. This is about relevance and it is whether or not he will be given leave to deal with this Assembly business, not whether or not the trip is appropriate.

**Mr Moore:** It is already approved.

**Mr Berry:** It is already approved.

**MR SPEAKER:** Relevance is an issue here, I must admit.

**MR DUBY:** I certainly agree. As I said, in stringent times when the community as a whole is being asked to undergo quite hard times and when matters of public importance and matters relating to the well-being of the ACT community are being stringently looked at and quite reluctantly, I might add, Mr Speaker, by the Executive members of this Government - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, Mr Duby. I really believe you are debating the cost of the trip rather than that leave be granted. I believe that under the motion moved by Mr Moore that is improper. If you wish, a motion to that effect could be moved when this motion has been dealt with.

**MR DUBY:** Mr Speaker, with respect, I will accept that ruling. I was simply once again raising the fact that the leave has been asked for to attend, on my understanding, a conference of some kind. I am raising the relevance of attendance at the conference at all.

**Mr Moore:** Not at all, Mr Speaker. That is not the motion.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr Moore. I have ruled on it.

**MR DUBY:** As I was going to say, it is my view that any information which will be gained by the member opposite could easily be obtained from minutes and copies of the conference itself. Nevertheless, I think I have outlined the basic reason why I am opposing this motion, Mr Speaker. Apart from anything else I, personally, just want the record to show that I, as a member of the Executive of this Alliance Government, am completely opposed to the granting of leave whilst attending an overseas trip. That really is the crux of the matter.

**MR STEVENSON (4.30):** The Chief Minister said that he had a reservation about the trip. I think it is Mr Moore who has the reservation. As far as seeking leave, standing order 23 does state - and it was not read out in full by Mr Duby:

A Member shall be excused from service in the Assembly, or any committee, as long as the Member has leave of absence.

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I think it is perfectly in order that Mr Moore should seek that leave and I would agree that he should receive it.

As for the point made by the Chief Minister, that he only found out about the expenditure yesterday, that was the case as to myself too. I thought at the time that perhaps as a general rule we should know sooner than that that such a situation is occurring.

**DR KINLOCH** (4.31): Mr Speaker, I find myself in very much of three minds, if not four minds on this - - -

Debate interrupted.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! It being slightly past 4.30, I propose the question:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

**Mr Collaery:** I require the question be put forthwith without debate.

Question resolved in the negative.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBERS**

Debate resumed.

**DR KINLOCH:** Perhaps, Mr Speaker, I even have five minds on this matter. Let us take several things here. There is a conference in London, I understand, which pertains to a matter before the committee of which Mr Moore is chairman. I can see that he would wish to go to that conference if the committee members so wished. That is one issue. Then there is the issue of payment or financial support for that. I would like to talk about a similar situation. I propose to go to a conference in Sydney in June-July. I was not planning to ask for permission - but I will if need be - and I was not proposing to ask for any money to go to that conference; it is a conference I wish to go to. Similarly, there is a conference in Zimbabwe in September and I understand that members of the Assembly do not wish to - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, Dr Kinloch! Really, it is not relevant.

**DR KINLOCH:** It is very relevant, Mr Speaker; if you will allow me, I will continue.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! It is not relevant to the motion. It is not relevant to the question of Mr Moore's travel. You are talking about other issues.

**DR KINLOCH:** No, I wish to support the right of Mr Moore to seek leave. What I want to make very clear, however, is that the question of whether there should be any financial support for that is another question altogether. Perhaps we could come to that another time.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you, Dr Kinloch. I take that observation.

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (4.33): Mr Speaker, I have to say that I cannot understand the reason Mr Moore seeks leave in this situation. I have heard Mr Stevenson and Mr Moore quote from standing order 23 and I quote from standing order 23 as well. The first part refers to being excused from service in the Assembly. The Assembly is not sitting in that period. There is no requirement for - - -

**Ms Follett:** Yes, it is. This is phenomenal.

**Mr Moore:** The Leader of the Opposition has been approached to sit on Tuesday.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I thought that the Leader of the Opposition rejected the proposal by the Chief Minister to speak - - -

**Ms Follett:** No. That is not so.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** It is so. He proposed a certain proposal which you rejected, so the Assembly, to my knowledge, will not be sitting next Tuesday. There is no application to the first part of that standing order. The second says, in effect, that a member shall be excused from service in any committee. What committee, I wonder, does Mr Moore refer to. Are there other committees other than the committee for which he is making his trip that will be meeting or having a hearing?

**Mr Moore:** There is a meeting of the Conservation, Heritage and Environment Committee, I understand.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Well, I am sure that that committee would be able to rearrange its timetable so that you will not be inconvenienced, Mr Moore. If he is referring to the committee that he is going to serve on, then clearly he is not being excused from service on that committee because he is actually on the service of that committee if he makes that trip. I cannot understand that. I find it strange to hear members opposite, particularly in the Labor Party, complaining about our reluctance to give leave in this situation. Yesterday they made claims about a certain trip to Zimbabwe and back. They thought it was outrageous to make a trip of that kind.

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**Mrs Grassby:** It is not Assembly business.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I think the distinction is a very fine one indeed.

**Mr Moore:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker; this is not relevant.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Yes, I will be relevant, Mr Speaker. I cannot understand the position of members opposite. I do not see that there is any reason for leave in these circumstances and I certainly will not support it.

**MR BERRY (4.35):** Mr Speaker, I would just like to have a few words on this. Everybody has reservations about the expenditure of funds on things which are commonly held to be junkets - in my view, commonly held for the wrong reasons. This issue is not about that. This issue is about somebody being given leave of absence to attend a function which is purely Assembly business and which has the approval of an Assembly committee.

**Mr Collaery:** It is not Assembly business.

**MR BERRY:** People are seeking to confuse the issue. Please pull that person up over there, Mr Speaker. The fact of the matter is that approval has been given for somebody to go on a trip. The relevance of the trip is another matter for the Assembly to decide. If somebody over there later on wants to move a motion that he does not go, or that it is not funded, that is entirely up to them. The issue is, and it is a plain issue, that if members of this Assembly have business which is approved in any way, shape or form, then it seems to me that this Assembly is obligated to give approval for that leave.

This issue about Assembly sittings not occurring in the next couple of weeks and so on, is - to use Mr Humphries' oft used word - a furphy, because in the games that these people opposite play I would not be surprised to see an Assembly sitting called, particularly for political reasons, to embarrass Mr Moore.

These sorts of games need to be shoved aside. The people opposite need to search their consciences about whether it is proper for this Assembly to grant to a member leave of absence which was quite properly asked for - no more than that.

Mr Humphries raised the issue of a matter which was reported in the paper today in relation to a trip to Zimbabwe to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference. If this branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association had approved that trip, then it would have been Assembly business. It is quite inappropriate to bring it up in this debate because it is not an issue. If that Commonwealth Parliamentary Association had given approval for whoever to attend the

Zimbabwe conference, then on the basis of that being Assembly business, I would have stood up and argued the matter the same way, even though I have questions about the expenditure of money. I would have argued that way because the matter would then have been Assembly business.

**Mr Humphries:** That is rubbish.

**MR BERRY:** The position adopted by the people opposite is a scandalous, penny-pinching, mean and, dare I say, vindictive approach to Mr Moore because - - -

**Mr Moore:** We have actually found a compromise.

**MR BERRY:** He now tells me he has a compromise, but the real point at issue is when something is decided to be Assembly business whether this house should give approval for members to take leave to attend it. That is the point at issue, nothing else. It would be scandalous for this house to deny leave to members who wish to go on leave.

Mr Speaker, I think it is an embarrassment for this place that this matter was even raised in the first place. The issue should have gone through very quickly because it is just a matter of people getting leave to attend to business, no more than that. The other issues are side issues and should be dealt with in a different way.

**MR SPEAKER,** by leave: I believe it is most proper for any member intending overseas travel, be it for private purposes or Assembly business, to seek leave to do so.

**MR WOOD (4.39):** This is a surprisingly sensitive issue and I believe Mr Moore should be granted his leave. Let me tell you the background because I have been involved, by chance, in the two committees in which this matter was raised and which gave approval to Mr Moore to do this.

First of all, Mr Moore raised the matter with the Select Committee on HIV, Illegal Drugs and Prostitution. The committee considered it, looked in some detail at the proposal and then said yes. We thought it very sensible that someone should go. We did not send a public servant. There are probably many public servants - I would not know exactly how many, but let me make a mad guess - say 100 public servants - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** Order, Mr Wood! That is not relevant. We are debating the separate issue.

**MR WOOD:** Okay. Probably 100 public servants will take an overseas trip out of this city this year, funded from our budget. But the point I was making was that the committee approved the trip. The matter then went to the Administration and Procedures Committee which again assessed it. By chance, I was on that committee also and that committee agreed.

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The matter has been through the processes, but here is the sensitive part. In general, the committees are bodies where members go and they are not necessarily held to consultation with their parties. We all know that. Indeed, on a couple of occasions, members - and I have been one of them - have sought the permission of that committee to go back and consult with the party. There is no requirement for members of that committee to go back to their respective parties and tell them what is happening. Indeed, in some circumstances it is improper for committee members to do that. The problem has arisen because it has caught people by surprise. But the matter has been through the proper processes. This is the last step in that process before Mr Moore takes off next week.

**MR COLLAERY** (Attorney-General) (4.41): Mr Speaker, with this type of standard motion, it is not the practice of the House of Representatives, I am informed, to give a reason. The motion simply seeks leave of absence for a period from one date to another, and either names a member or names all sitting members. Mr Moore's motion is designed to embarrass the Government in my view because clearly he knows that the Executive Government was shocked to find out about this matter at mid afternoon yesterday. I will say no more at this stage on grounds of relevance, but we are profoundly shocked and I am currently seeking advice from my law office about certain matters relating to the payment of allowances.

The Government will support granting leave of absence in the normal form to Mr Moore for that period. Accordingly, Mr Speaker, I will move an amendment to the motion. I move:

That all words after "Mr Moore" be omitted.

**Mr Wood:** I do not believe that I have acted improperly.

**MR COLLAERY:** I have not suggested that.

**Mr Wood:** Well, you are querying something.

**MR SPEAKER:** I am not sure what it is that we are deleting. Is there a copy of that amendment in writing anywhere? I do not think I have it.

**MR COLLAERY:** It is a motion without notice.

**Mrs Grassby:** They really are petty! I just don't believe this - I have never known such pettiness.

**MR COLLAERY:** Mr Speaker, I would ask you to call Mrs Grassby to order. She constantly keeps imputing motives to us; she keeps saying we are "so petty". As my amendment has now been circulated, I will continue my comments - - -

**MR SPEAKER:** Yes, please continue Mr Collaery.

**MR COLLAERY:** Perhaps Mrs Grassby will come to realise the significance of the amendment and the need for this Government to act correctly, with propriety and with the benefit of reflection and advice. Mr Speaker, simply because of your earlier rulings on relevance, I am not able to address that issue but I have alluded to some matters. First, I want to clarify one of the questions raised and that was whether leave is required even though we are not sitting. It appears to me that section 14 of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act clearly indicates that members need to seek leave from sittings, from meetings of the Assembly. Section 14 says:

(1) A member vacates office if the member: -

That is, he loses his place in the house -

- (a) at any time after the beginning of the first meeting of the Assembly after a general election, is not qualified to take a seat as a member; or
- (b) is absent without the permission of the Assembly from
- (i) such number of consecutive meetings as is specified ...

Mr Speaker, clearly the Act anticipates consecutive meetings. It has not been the practice of this Assembly for members to seek leave from committee meetings. They have simply not been able to attend and the chairpersons of those committees have noted that. We have extended those courtesies to each other in the past.

I want to put clearly on the record the Government's view on this point, and that is that leave of absence should be sought in the form that has been adopted in the other House across the lake - that is, that a member is granted leave. There is not an arguable issue introduced into that motion. I direct members' attention to the House of Representatives Practice, second edition. You will note in the index a series of references to this issue, beginning on page 188.

Bearing in mind the extreme penalties that may apply, I, as Attorney-General, am within my rights in trying to find time, in the few hours we have had since the Executive learnt of this matter, to determine a number of issues relating to Mr Moore's proposed trip to England, Amsterdam and Hong Kong. To my knowledge, no member of the Executive Government has any idea of the itinerary. I believe that the trip is to do with the committee's purposes. The Government has no wish to cross the very delicate boundary on the separation of power doctrine between the Executive and the legislature. All I say at this stage, Mr Speaker, is that we grant Mr Moore leave, but we do not agree to the words afterwards.

**MR MOORE (4.48):** I rise to speak to the amendment. Mr Speaker, the reason for the form of words was - and as a

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lawyer, Mr Collaery would probably recognise this - that I was working on precedent and the precedent is set within our own practices. We establish our own practices by our own precedent and the precedent was set in July when Mrs Grassby sought leave and gave the grounds.

**A member** interjected.

**MR MOORE:** Mr Collaery, if you stop talking and pay attention you will understand this point. When Mrs Grassby sought leave she gave the reasons - and you can check with the minutes. All I did was look back at that precedent and include the grounds. I had no great motive, apart from that.

I accept Mr Collaery's amendment because that will achieve what I set out to do. There was no particular motive behind my wording. I am glad Mr Collaery has drawn attention to section 14 of the Self-Government Act. The arguments we have heard from Mr DUBY and Mr HUMPHRIES refer to that Act and say, "Look, we are not going to sit. Don't worry. Don't bother to apply for leave".

The effect of this is that when I leave it is possible - and Mr Collaery's own motion has made it possible - for the Assembly to be recalled. There is even talk of it being recalled on Tuesday as a start; but it could be recalled while I am away. If I were not contacted or could not get back in time and there were four consecutive sitting days, the effect would be that I would be disqualified from the Assembly and that a member of the Residents Rally could then be appointed to the Assembly in my place.

**Mr HUMPHRIES:** That is paranoia par excellence.

**MR MOORE:** I am just telling you what the effect is. Anybody in my position would be sensible to seek the leave of the Assembly, and that is all I have done. I have set out to seek the leave of the Assembly. I have followed precedent and, in fact, our precedent overrides parliamentary practice. However, rather than get bogged down in that debate, I am quite happy to accept the amendment to the motion and change our own practice.

**MR DUBY** (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (4.51): I rise to support Mr Collaery's amendment to this motion and also to clarify a point or two. The original motion that was moved by Mr Moore clearly asked this house to give approval to him to go overseas. That was the effect of the wording of the motion - that he was granted leave from this house for an overseas trip. I once again want it on the record that I do not support Mr Moore's departing these shores. However, I am prepared, of course, as in any normal circumstance, to grant leave to anyone who has the good manners to ask for it. The normal practice is to ask for leave for a certain period and not, by implication of the original motion, ask for endorsement of the reason for that leave. Mr Moore knows perfectly well that that was



the purpose of his original motion, and for him to pretend that he did not put that wording in that way deliberately is clearly an indication to me that he is not being fully honest with this Assembly. I support the motion - - -

**Mr Moore:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker - imputation.

**MR SPEAKER:** I would ask you to withdraw that, Mr Duby.

**Mr Moore:** It is definitely not true. I deny it.

**MR DUBY:** I accept that, Mr Speaker. I do withdraw that he was not fully honest.

**Mr Moore:** Can I have an unqualified withdrawal? An unqualified withdrawal is what I want.

**MR DUBY:** It is. I used the very same words in the withdrawal, Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** I believe he withdrew the very words he used.

**MR DUBY:** As I was saying, the clear wording of the original motion moved by Mr Moore was there for one purpose and one purpose only - so that he could hold a copy of the Hansard in his hand and say, "The Assembly has approved my overseas trip. I am just a servant of the Assembly". This amendment moved by the Attorney-General clearly clarifies the case. We are granting Mr Moore leave to cover the period that he asks for, on the clear understanding that we are not necessarily in any way endorsing the reasons for that leave.

**MR MOORE (4.53):** I just wish to close the debate. I read from the Minutes of Proceedings, No. 14, of Tuesday, 25 July 1989, from which I copied the last motion for leave of absence to a member. Ms Follett, as Chief Minister moved:

That leave of absence until 6 August 1989 be given to Mrs Grassby on the grounds of private business overseas.

Basically, I do not remember any debate about whether we approved her private business overseas or not. All I am saying to members opposite - and specifically to Mr Duby - is that all I have done is to copy that motion by giving the grounds. There was no intention whatsoever to embarrass the Government and I am quite happy with the amendment that Mr Collaery has moved. I appreciate that members of the Government have seen fit to grant me leave from the Assembly for that period.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

**DR KINLOCH (4.55):** Mr Speaker, I hope that this will be a short matter, but it necessarily follows on from what we

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have just been discussing. I now find it obviously necessary to seek leave to be absent from Australia from about 4 May to 20 May 1990. I move:

That Dr Kinloch be granted leave of absence for the period 4 May to 20 May 1990.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND TEMPORARY ORDERS**

**MR BERRY** (4.55): I move:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Mr Berry from moving a motion relating to the Assembly sitting on Tuesday, 3 April 1990.

The reason that I have moved this motion, Mr Speaker, is that the Chief Minister this evening gave his budget strategy statement, and it is a matter of custom that the Leader of the Opposition be given the opportunity to respond to the strategy statement at an early moment. My motion seeks to ensure that this house sits again next Tuesday, 3 April, at the usual time and that the first item of business is the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement, no more than that.

**Mr Kaine:** Make it the only item of business and you will get approval - that was the proposition that was put to your leader.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order!

**MR BERRY:** Mr Speaker, in response to that interjection, which was that we should make it the only item of business, I am sure that the Government, if it wished to, could muster the numbers to ensure that it was. It is the intention of the Labor Opposition to ensure that the Leader of the Opposition is able to respond to the Chief Minister's budget statement at the normal commencing time - that is, 2.30 pm, the time at which question time normally begins. The issue of whether there should be any other business seems to me to be a matter for the Government and the numbers on the day.

Whilst we have indicated in writing to the Chief Minister that we would prefer to have more sitting days, and that we would prefer to have question time next Tuesday, the Government has made it very clear that it does not want to proceed in that way. From the Opposition's point of view, and from that of the community also, it is important that the Leader of the Opposition has the opportunity to respond and give an alternative view of the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement.

It is extremely disappointing to stand here today in the face of opposition to what is really, I suspect, a long-standing custom that governments do not walk away from responses to such significant statements, as the one that has been delivered this evening by the Chief Minister. I do not think I am using too strong a word when I say that I think it would be rather cowardly to walk away from the opportunity to give the Leader of the Opposition the chance to respond to that strategy statement.

I am quite confident, Mr Speaker, that the community at large will be interested in the Opposition's response. The people are entitled to hear the Leader of the Opposition's response to this budget strategy statement because of the impact that the decisions of the Government will have on the ACT community generally.

At the risk of being accused of being repetitive, I stress that this is an important issue for the community. It is a matter of plain courtesy that the Leader of the Opposition be allowed to respond to the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement or similar types of statements. It is unfortunate that there are no sittings programmed. We would like to be sitting next week and we have made that very clear. We would like to have question time next week, but we would not die in a ditch to have question time and normal sittings. If the Government will not allow us to respond to the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement, it should at least allow the Leader of the Opposition to respond.

**MR COLLAERY** (Deputy Chief Minister) (5.01): Mr Speaker, I think there is a very easy answer to this. If the Leader of the Opposition would rise to her feet and give, in unequivocal terms, the assurances sought by the Chief Minister in his letter, then certainly we will agree to the house adjourning to Tuesday, 3 April. If amending the motion that is already on the notice paper is necessary to achieve that, I will get one of my colleagues to do that. Let us make this point clear: it was my colleague the Chief Minister who decided to make this offer. He consulted me and said to me, "I believe I should give Ms Follett the chance to respond, sooner rather than later".

I might add, Mr Speaker, that some of us have other engagements for that day. I certainly intended to be in Melbourne, but I agreed with the Chief Minister that this was a proper courtesy to offer. He communicated with the Leader of the Opposition. I do not propose to table this correspondence - - -

**Ms Follett:** I do, I do.

**MR COLLAERY:** You do?

**Ms Follett:** Yes, I do.

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**Mr Moore:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I do not mean to be churlish, but I think Mr Collaery is discussing the substance of the matter, not the suspension of standing orders. The reason I raise this - - -

**Mr Kaine:** So did Mr Berry - at great length.

**Mr Moore:** I realise that. I raise this point now because we will run out of time on the suspension motion and not enough of us will have a chance to speak to the substantive motion.

**MR COLLAERY:** Those are my comments, Mr Speaker. I will be able to speak later, if necessary. I think the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Minister could put this matter easily to rest.

**MS FOLLETT (Leader of the Opposition) (5.03):** Mr Speaker, I would like to support the motion to suspend standing orders because I really do think there has been a misunderstanding here. The Chief Minister did write to me - his letter is not dated, but I received it on 27 March - offering me an opportunity to respond. I would just like to read the part of my response to the Chief Minister that I think puts this matter to rest once and for all. After the opening salutation in which I thanked him for his letter, I said:

I am quite happy to accept your offer to recall the Assembly on the morning of Tuesday, 3 April, so as to allow me to respond to your statement.

**Mr Collaery:** Read the rest!

**MS FOLLETT:** I will read the rest of it - members clearly require that I do so. It goes on:

May I also offer the Labor Party's support if you wish to recall the Assembly for a full week's sitting that week.

My words were "support if you wish". The letter continued:

We believe that it would be quite productive for the Assembly to carry on its business next week. No matter what you decide about a full sitting week, I would encourage the Government -

not require the Government -

to allow question time to be held on Tuesday, 3 April 1990. It is my view that whenever the Assembly sits, private members should be given the opportunity to question the Executive.

Mr Kaine subsequently wrote to me requiring that I give an unequivocal response, although I would have thought my sentence, "I am quite happy to accept your offer" was

pretty unequivocal. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, Mr Kaine did write back to me. I got this letter from Mr Kaine as I walked into the Assembly for question time. Upon receiving it, I went up to Mr Kaine, I said, "Are we clear on sitting next Tuesday?". He said, "If it's an unequivocal reply". I said three times, "The answer is 'yes'".

**Mr Kaine:** You referred me to your earlier letter.

**MS FOLLETT:** I said three times, "The answer is 'yes'", Mr Kaine. I really do fail to understand the Chief Minister's sensitivity on this matter. I have stated, as a matter of principle, that when this Assembly sits we would prefer to have question time. I have in no way qualified my acceptance of the Chief Minister's offer to respond to his statement next Tuesday, and I very much resent his attempt to misinterpret my remarks.

**MR Kaine (Chief Minister) (5.06):** The Leader of the Opposition wonders why I am sensitive to her remarks. But when Mr Berry gets up and talks about being cowardly and trying to avoid the issue, I do not quite know how I am to respond to that. The fact is, Mr Speaker, that I wrote a letter as a matter of courtesy and offered the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to reconvene the Assembly so that she could respond to my strategy statement.

**Ms Follett:** And I accepted.

**MR Kaine:** You did not come back and say "I accept with pleasure your invitation". You started talking about sitting for a whole week, which was never in question, and is not possible because, as I said in my later letter, most of us have commitments next week. We could not sit for the whole week. It was never in question anyway. You also said, "We would like question time". My offer to you was an unequivocal offer out of courtesy to give you the chance to reply. You have chosen to play games. If I operate on that basis, I will find that when you finish speaking next Tuesday, Labor members will be jumping up and down demanding question time, demanding a continuation of the sitting. You lot will not respond in the sense in which I, out of courtesy, offered you the right of reply. You are darned right, I am sensitive, because I know that you are playing games. You would not simply come back and say, "Yes, I accept the offer"; you had to hedge it round so that you could play your games next week.

If you are prepared to give the Assembly, here and now, an unequivocal undertaking that when you finish your reply on Tuesday, the Assembly will adjourn, you have your meeting. It is as simple as that. We will sit at 10.30 am on Tuesday, as I offered it to you, for the period of time necessary for you to respond to the strategy statement. If you give an unequivocal response to that, the meeting will take place.

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**MR MOORE** (5.08): Mr Speaker, it seems to me that the conflict here is really out of all proportion to the particular conditions.

**Mr Collaery:** It is your motion.

**MR MOORE:** The motion has got nothing to do with me. I did not even know it was coming up. In order to avoid this situation in the future, the Chief Minister should look to delivering budget statements in weeks when we still have a sitting week following. Then we would not run into these problems.

**Mr Kaine:** I undertook to do it in the last week in March. The sitting schedule worked out - - -

**MR MOORE:** I accept that that was the case in this instance, Chief Minister. I am just saying that for future planning that might be a way of doing it. But, really, we have almost reached a compromise and the suspension of standing orders ought not be necessary. The decision is now in the Chief Minister's hands.

**MR BERRY** (5.09), in reply: Mr Speaker, I have been asked to make a statement which might assist the Assembly getting on with the business of the day. In pursuit of the Government's support for this suspension of standing orders, I am able to give the commitment, on behalf of the Labor Opposition, that we will support a motion of adjournment on the day as it is moved by the Government at the conclusion of the Leader of the Opposition's response. My motion to suspend standing and temporary orders is now pointless so we can vote against it.

**MR SPEAKER:** Do you seek leave to withdraw the motion, Mr Berry?

**MR BERRY:** I do not know. Is there an alternative?

**MR SPEAKER:** I believe that it has been agreed that the Government would move a motion relating to Tuesday's sitting. There is a concern that there is no motion before the house about the Tuesday morning sitting. Does the Government propose to move that?

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (5.11), by leave: Perhaps I could foreshadow an alternative motion, assuming that Mr Berry does not wish to proceed with his. The motion is in the following words: "That the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until 10.30 am on Tuesday, 3 April 1990, and that: (a) the first and only item of business be the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement; and (b) at the conclusion of the reply, the debate shall be adjourned until the next normal day of sitting and the Speaker shall then forthwith propose and put the question that the Assembly do now adjourn".

**MR SPEAKER:** I draw attention to the fact that there is a motion before the chamber. Based on Mr Humphries' statement, Mr Berry may wish to withdraw his motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

### **AMBULANCE SERVICE LEVY BILL 1990**

**MR DUBY** (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (5.14): I present the Ambulance Service Levy Bill 1990. I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

This Bill will establish a levy on health funds operating in the ACT for the provision of an ambulance service in the Territory. The levy scheme in New South Wales has been adopted for the ACT. Currently, the ACT Ambulance Service does not pay for itself. It is funded half through appropriations and half through its own revenue-raising activities. There is little scope for extra revenue through increasing transportation charges for non-subscribers and increasing voluntary subscription fees. Broadening the revenue base of the Ambulance Service is the most effective way of reducing subsidisation of the service.

The proposed levy arrangement on health funds will broaden the revenue base of the service through the larger number of subscribers to these funds. The imposition of the levy will automatically entitle persons with hospital insurance cover to use the ambulance service without further charge. Persons without current hospital insurance who are not intending to join a fund will be able to obtain ambulance cover through an agency arrangement with one of the health funds.

Mr Speaker, to minimise the administrative impact of the levy on the health fund organisations, the provisions of the proposed Bill have been closely modelled on the New South Wales health fund levy approach. Basically this will mean that the health funds will be required to submit the levy on a monthly basis and the New South Wales exemptions for certain recipients of social security and veterans' payments will apply in the ACT.

The levy scheme is expected to raise \$1.8m in 1990-91, \$2.5m in a full year, and to save approximately \$100,000 in administration costs. The current voluntary subscription scheme will cease operation on 30 June 1990. Subscribers to this scheme will be refunded the balance of their subscription as at the date the levy legislation takes effect - that is 1 July 1990.

In conclusion, the proposed Bill will increase public participation in ambulance insurance and thereby increase the revenue base available to fund the ambulance service. I present the explanatory memorandum for the Bill.

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

**LONG SERVICE LEAVE (BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY)  
(AMENDMENT) BILL 1990**

**MR DUBY** (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (5.18): I present the Long Service Leave (Building and Construction Industry) (Amendment) Bill 1990. I move:

That this Bill be agreed to in principle.

The Long Service Leave (Building and Construction Industry) Act 1981 established a scheme which enables workers in the ACT building and construction industry to accrue long service credits for work in that industry. Credits continue to accumulate if a worker moves between employers and may accumulate across States if the State concerned is a party to a long service leave credit portability agreement. The scheme is funded by a levy, currently 2.5 per cent of ordinary wages on employers in the industry.

The levy is paid into a fund, administered by the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Leave Board. The three-member board is appointed by the Minister - myself - and comprises one employer and one employee representative and an independent chair. Similar schemes exist in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia.

The amendments to the Act have been prepared, following consultation between the board and the relevant employee and employer organisations. The amendments cover three distinct areas. The first area involves the calculation of the long service leave entitlement and payment of that entitlement to employees. For several years the Australian Audit Office has been critical of the Act for providing the board with the discretionary power in calculating a worker's entitlement; and of the board, for failing to process payments exactly in accordance with the Act.

At present, where a worker's weekly average wage is less than normal, owing to unpaid sick leave or some other circumstance, then the board may apply the normal weekly average wage for the purpose of calculating the worker's long service leave entitlement.

The Bill removes this discretion and requires the board to pay the greater of two calculations of the entitlement. The first calculation is based on the worker's average weekly wage for the four months prior to taking leave, and the second calculation extends this period to 12 months.

The Audit Office has also criticised the board for, firstly, calculating an entitlement before it is due and before the board has received an employer's return; and,



secondly, for paying an entitlement before it is due. In these instances, the board has calculated an entitlement based on oral advice from the employer and made an early payment to enable an employee to coordinate bank transfers, holiday arrangements and matters like that. The Bill allows the board to calculate a worker's entitlement up to 14 days before leave is due and to prepay the entitlement up to seven days before the worker commences leave. These amendments will permit the board to calculate long service leave payments in a manner which is equitable to workers, will permit workers to make suitable banking arrangements before commencing leave, and will avoid future Audit Office criticism.

Mr Speaker, the second aspect of the Bill concerns the levy on employers imposed by the board to cover payments of long service leave and the board's administrative costs. The Australian Government Actuary is required, under section 24(1) of the Act, to investigate each three years the state and sufficiency of moneys held to meet potential liabilities for long service leave payments and report on whether any increase or reduction in the levy is necessary. In its report of 29 September 1988, the Australian Government Actuary recommended a reduction in the levy from 2.5 per cent to 2.25 per cent.

The board consulted with the ACT Trades and Labour Council and the various ACT building and construction industry employer bodies on this recommendation. All organisations agreed that the 2.5 per cent levy should continue to be collected and invested by the board and that an amount equal to the 0.25 per cent reduction should be allocated to industry training.

The amount collected would vary between \$250,000 and \$300,000 each year and, subject to ministerial approval, would be available for training purposes identified by the ACT Regional Building and Construction Industry Training Council and for other industry training projects, nominated by bodies such as the Vocational Training Authority, employers and union groups.

This redirection of industry resources to training will enable some immediate gaps in the industry's training requirements to be filled. The Government recognises that in the longer term, this approach may not be the most appropriate. It will review the arrangement in the light of developments in industry financed training as they emerge across all industry sectors.

The Vocational Training Authority has recommended to me that within the framework of the Commonwealth Government's training guarantee proposal, each industry examine the most suitable funding model for that industry and I am currently considering this recommendation.

The building and construction industry has proposed a model for the long term involving a levy, based on the contract

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price, to be collected through the building permit process. This proposal will also need to be considered in the context of the Government's overall attitude to future industry funding of training.

I believe, however, that pending decisions regarding the funding of training by all Territory employers, conversion of part of the long service leave levy for training is a useful start.

The Bill provides for a 10 per cent portion of the levy to be set aside with effect from 1 July 1989. It also extends the functions and powers of the board to allow it to administer the training and projects fund. This makes use of the existing infrastructure, can be undertaken at little cost and has the support of both employee and employer organisations.

The Bill provides the Minister with a discretionary power over the disbursement of the training funds and the reference to "the Australian Government Actuary" is replaced by the words "an actuary appointed by the (ACT) Treasurer".

The third aspect covered by the Bill concerns the investment of board moneys. Under section 23 of the Act all contracts over \$100,000 must be approved by the Minister. Up until mid-1988 the board operated under legal advice that this provision did not apply to investments of board funds. However, in the 1988 report on the board's operations, the Australian Auditor-General drew attention to a new interpretation from the Australian Attorney-General's Department which stated that an investment was considered to be a contract and, as such, each investment over \$100,000 must be approved by the Minister.

All current board investments exceed that amount, Mr Speaker, and the necessity to obtain the Minister's approval each time an investment is made is considered to be cumbersome and unnecessary. The Government accepts the advice of the ACT Treasury that, given the short time frame in which the money market operates, that such investments occur regularly and that the form of investment is both safe and liquid, then ministerial approval is not required.

The Bill allows the board to invest moneys in excess of \$100,000 without requiring ministerial approval, provided such investments are made in accordance with section 90 of the Audit Act 1989. I commend the Bill to the Assembly and present the explanatory memorandum for the Bill.

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

**TAXATION (ADMINISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. 2) 1990**

**MR DUBY** (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (4.27), by leave: I present the Taxation (Administration) (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 1990. I move:

That this Bill be now agreed to in principle.

This Bill amends the Taxation (Administration) Act of 1987. The Act provides a consolidated system for the administration of laws dealing with taxation in the Territory. Amendment of the Act is required to make the Ambulance Service Levy Bill a tax law and to facilitate the administration of the Ambulance Service Levy Bill 1990, which I introduced earlier. I present the explanatory memorandum for the Bill.

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

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND TEMPORARY ORDERS**

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

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Mr Humphries moving a motion altering the hour of next meeting and altering the routine of business of that meeting.

**HOUR OF SITTING AND ROUTINE OF BUSINESS - TUESDAY, 3 APRIL 1990**

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

- That the Assembly at its rising adjourn until 10.30 am on Tuesday, 3 April 1990 and that:
- (a) the first item of business be the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Chief Minister's Budget Strategy Statement; and
  - (b) at the conclusion of the reply, the debate shall be adjourned until the next day of sitting and the Speaker shall then forthwith propose and put the question that the Assembly do now adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

### Assembly Business

**MS FOLLETT** (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity of the adjournment debate to put on record a couple of my concerns about the operation of this Government. The first concern that I have - and I think it is a concern that is shared by all members of the Opposition - is the incredible lack of government business that is being brought into this Assembly.

On 13 February, the Chief Minister provided me with the Government's legislation program. In his letter he said that that program was the program "for the first half of 1990". The program that he provided to me included 111 items of legislation - 111 of them, ranging across a broad number of topics. However, we have not seen even a tiny proportion of them yet in this Assembly. In fact, I think it has been verging on scandalous the amount of time that has been wasted in this Assembly by Government members in trying to fill in time and trying to make up for their lack of legislation.

I have said any number of times that I believe that legislation is required urgently - in the antidiscrimination area, in the consumer affairs area, and particularly, of course, on the full package of planning, environment, land, leasing and inquiries. We have not yet seen that full package, nor have we had much indication as to when we might do so. Instead, we have had endless debates from Government members on matters that were never in controversy. It is absolutely scandalous.

We have also had a great abuse of question time by the Government members. Time and time again questions from members of the Opposition have been dealt with in the most incredibly cursory and derisory way. I think that I have counted about 10 "I don't know" to my last few questions. I think that is shameful. There has been very little attempt, particularly by the Chief Minister, to actually supply answers to questions without notice. By contrast, we have had a shameful series of dorothea dixers from Government backbenchers, although they call themselves Executive Deputies, and long, boring and tedious statements from the Minister who has been so questioned - clearly an abuse of question time.

The final point I would like to make is the abandonment by Government members of the policies for which they were elected to this Assembly. The Residents Rally has offended particularly in this regard. I do not know what its members think their erstwhile supporters might be making of their current performance, but certainly they would never have expected Mr Collaery and his colleagues to be approving the closure of Royal Canberra Hospital and the kinds of development proposals that this Government is now putting forward. Residents Rally members have abandoned their policies and their principles. In fact, Mr Speaker,

when challenged they have not even put up a particularly spirited defence of them.

The No Self Government people, of course, Mr Speaker, are an aberration in themselves. They have, on their own admission, abandoned the policies upon which they stood for election to this Assembly. They disbanded their party and I have no idea what their erstwhile supporters might be making of their current stance.

That brings me to a further point in relation to both the Residents Rally and the No Self Government Party. I would like to place it on record that as an ardent follower of the Marion Frith column, I was extremely disturbed to note that there had been a telephone box reporting missing from a private house. On the Tuesday it was reported missing and we were told on the Wednesday that the Residents Rally had a meeting. I leave it to the Assembly to draw their conclusions on these shameful facts.

**MR STEFANIAK (5.36):** In fact, I would ask Mr Collaery to take the telephone box out of my back yard because it clutters up the place with the scrum machine as well!

I would like to take Ms Follett to task on some of the points she has raised. The Opposition this week has made great play of the lack of government business, but I cannot think of any day in the last two weeks when we have got through the entire daily program - this little green sheet that is issued - not once, Mr Speaker.

**Ms Follett:** Because of your tedious speeches.

**Mrs Grassby:** Yes, tedious speeches on nothing - even on reports that you did not write.

**MR STEFANIAK:** Oh, tedious speeches, is it? Are you saying that you people did not make tedious speeches in the seven months that you were in Government, either! I think it is a complete hypocrisy by the Opposition to say that the Government has been wasting time and that there has been no business. We have not finished the daily program any day. There is stuff on the notice paper that we have not completed. Indeed, in these last two weeks a number of Bills have been introduced. My colleague Mr Duby just introduced three.

**Mrs Grassby:** Three today, that is all.

**MR STEFANIAK:** We have passed a few, Mrs Grassby, during the course of the two weeks. Let me also point out that two incredibly significant events occurred in these sittings which will have great bearing on the citizens of Canberra for the next decade plus - the health statement by Mr Humphries and the Chief Minister's budget strategy, brought down today. Both of those statements have been brought down in the last week. If that is not putting productive, relevant business before the house I really do

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not know what is. I think it is a nonsense to say that this Government has not put matters before the house. In fact, we sat until about 11.40 pm on the Tuesday night - the latest we have ever sat. We have more than used up all the time in these two weeks' sittings, yet we still have matters left on the notice paper and each day we have had matters left on the daily program, so the allegation is a complete nonsense. In fact, I think that members of the Opposition might start complaining soon about too much work when the vast numbers of Bills which are in the pipeline - - -

**Mr Kaine:** If they ever start work on any of the committees, they will know what work is.

**MR STEFANIAK:** Well, it will be good to see that when it happens, Chief Minister. It is really pleasing to see that at last - in fact, it is probably a high water mark of this year that the Opposition at last has nominated people for committees. At least the committee system can get up off the ground and start working. It will be interesting to see what Opposition members say when the vast numbers of Bills in the pipeline come flooding through into this Assembly. I can see this Assembly working very hard indeed when that happens.

**Mrs Grassby:** We are waiting.

**MR STEFANIAK:** You might be waiting. You will be flooded. Indeed, during the last two weeks the Opposition spent a lot of time nitpicking, raising spurious points of order and raising censure motions. Indeed, in the last two weeks one of their number not only was sin-binned, but he turned up again and you sent him off, Mr Speaker. I think a lot of time has been wasted.

The former Chief Minister and now Leader of the Opposition complains about dorothy dix questions. Fortunately, when she was in government she only had poor old Bill Wood to do that - and did he not give a lot of dorothy dixers? Again, that is hypocrisy to complain about dorothy dixers from the now Government. As a Government backbencher I have been very pleased to note the brevity of reply by the Government Ministers. I can recall Mr Whalan especially, and several other former Ministers of the now Opposition, giving lengthy answers to questions from the then Opposition. Some of them clearly exceeded five minutes.

**Mr Duby:** I can recall one word answers. I can recall "Yes" and "No".

**MR STEFANIAK:** That is right; there have been a few of those now though, Mr Duby, have there not? The answers given by the Government Ministers have been quite brief - - -

**Mr Kaine:** And they give tender advice to the dorothy dixers.

**MR STEFANIAK:** Yes, indeed. We have got through quite a number of questions and I think the Opposition is certainly being given a fair go now. I think the comments raised by Ms Follett are quite spurious and really quite hypocritical.

### **Assembly Legislation**

**MR STEVENSON (5.39):** Much has been said in this Assembly last year and this year to the effect "where is all the legislation?". It has become the ideal, I think, for a government - and when I say government I mean all the people in the Assembly - to feel that if they are not introducing new legislation they are not doing anything. Can I suggest that in discussions with the people that hire us, they often feel that we are doing far too much when we are introducing this never-ending stream of legislation. Indeed, Canberrans face a number of problems, one of which is that they do not have enough money, or certainly not after the Government gets its hands on it.

**Mr Kaine:** Not this Government, the other Government.

**MR STEVENSON:** You know what I mean when I talk about the Government, I mean the whole Assembly. I will discuss that one day.

Secondly, they feel that their rights are being slowly eroded and their time is being spent on filling in our forms. They also have to spend more time on complying with regulations. Perhaps the solution is not necessarily that more legislation is needed. I think an excellent argument could be raised that for every Bill that is introduced or every Act that is passed, a requirement is that one be repealed.

**Mr Kaine:** Or two.

**MR STEVENSON:** Two, okay. I think that we would certainly have enough to repeal because 3,000,000 rules and regulations have been introduced since Federation. So when next someone says, "Where is all the legislation?", perhaps a note of caution could be sounded that we should not really rush in. Let us have a look that what we are going to do is going to benefit the people of Canberra, not necessarily just cost them more money, take them more time, or reduce their freedoms.

**MR JENSEN (5.42):** Mr Speaker, it was interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition make some comments before about broken promises in relation to the Government opposite. I would be happy for the next speaker from the

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other side to list those so-called broken promises and we will have a good, hard look at them. What I want to say in relation to the provision of legislation for this Assembly and for the people of the ACT is that that is a very good question, Ms Follett. There is possibly not the sort of legislation that one may have expected but let us just think about why that may be the case.

We have had eight years of a Federal Labor Government's complete and utter mismanagement. There has been mismanagement on the part of that particular Government in its concerns about the affairs of the people of the ACT. It was all too difficult for those sorts of issues that affected the people of the ACT very strongly to be put through the Federal Parliament. The problem was that it was all too difficult. Most of the time we have had one Minister who has had other things to do. The people of the ACT have been bottom of the list, except in the case of someone like Mr Punch who, against all the best advice of the community said, "Let's kick out the NCDC and let's have two planning authorities". We are still having some problems with that.

This is the sort of legislation that was pushed onto the people of the ACT, and that gave us self-government. The voting system was agreed to at 11 in the evening. These sorts of things were put on the people of the ACT. What is now necessary is for this Government to examine the legislation which we have in the ACT very carefully, to make sure that we do not have some of the sorts of cock-ups that we used to have in the past in relation to the legislation that was being presented by the Federal Parliament about the ACT. This is important. As Mr Stevenson said, if we are going to have legislation, let us have good legislation, not just legislation for the hell of it.

### **Forum on Canberra**

**DR KINLOCH** (5.44): Mr Speaker, it is my very great pleasure to draw the attention of members of the Assembly to an event that will take place all day Saturday, from nine to five, in the National Convention Centre. It is a free public forum but you will need to bring your own lunch. The purpose of the forum is to provide community input to Canberra's planning process. The forum will be especially concerned to present views which receive little public notice from people with a vital interest in Canberra's future; that is not us, of course, but other people. It is hoped that ideas generated by the forum will prove useful to Canberra's decision makers.

The forum chairman will be Dr Robert Jackson of the ANU. The panel includes Malcolm Smith of the National Capital Planning Authority and Geoff Campbell of the Interim Territory Planning Authority. There are four sessions, two in the morning, two in the afternoon.



The forum is sponsored by a range of people and I have modestly to say it does include the Residents Rally, but there are also other groups. When you hear the names of the people involved you will see it is not a narrow political group. There is Jack Waterford, the editor of the Canberra Times, Charles MacDonald of the Trades and Labour Council, Ossie Kleinig of CARD, Judy Butt on planning and design, Martin Attridge of ACTCOSS, and Mike Wadsworth of the Department of Urban Services. There are people from all over the community. I do very strongly commend this forum, nine to five on Saturday. I hope many people will be able to get there.

### **Open Government**

**MR MOORE** (5.46): Just very briefly, Mr Speaker, I draw attention to the concern that a number of people in Canberra have presented to me. They believe - and I must say I agree with them - that decisions are being carried on totally by the Executive and not by the Assembly as such. I think that that may contribute to some of the frustration that members of the Opposition feel.

I draw the attention of Mr Jensen, since he requested that I do that, to some of the broken promises. A basic and fundamental broken promise is called open government. It is not open government to make joint party decisions that are then carried through the Assembly in a closed fashion by a united group that will not allow any opposition. That is a certain frustration. Since Mr Jensen invited me to go open on broken promises I will just provide that one, although I will be quite happy to present a list of others at any other time.

### **Assembly - Refreshments**

**MR SPEAKER:** I would like to make a brief statement. I would like to draw members' attention to the House of Representatives Practice, page 193. On the fifth or sixth line it says:

Refreshments may not be brought into or consumed in the Chamber.

Let no-one be in doubt that I was miffed by not being offered the nuts or lollies that were being handed around by Mrs Grassby to most other members; I was.

**Mr Berry:** Medication, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Jensen:** I did not get one.

**Mrs Grassby:** Norm, you are just not in the club.

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**MR SPEAKER:** However, I withdraw that. I mean I was not.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND TEMPORARY ORDERS**  
**Hour of Sitting and Routine of Business**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (5.48): This is unusual, but I move:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Mr Humphries moving a motion to rescind the order of the Assembly earlier this day fixing the next day of meeting and moving a further motion on the same matter.

If I might explain my motion, there is a flaw in the earlier motion I moved. Unfortunately, the effect of the earlier motion I moved would be that after sitting on that Tuesday, the Assembly would then have to sit again the following day, Wednesday, in the normal sitting pattern when, of course, it is understood that we will be sitting on 24 April.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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

That the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until 10.30 am on Tuesday, 3 April 1990 and that:

- (a) the first item of business be the Leader of the Opposition's response to the Chief Minister's Budget Strategy Statement; and
- (b) at the conclusion of the reply, the debate shall be adjourned until the next day of sitting and then a Minister shall move a motion to fix the next day of sitting after which the Speaker shall then forthwith propose and put the question that the Assembly do now adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Debate resumed.

**Assembly Business**

**MR HUMPHRIES** (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (5.49): I wish to respond to a few points raised by Ms Follett. I see that she has left the chamber, but I will make them anyway. I always sit back open-mouthed and gape in amazement when Ms Follett says that she is concerned about the fact that we ask dorothy dixers.

This is quite an extraordinary claim because I could have sworn that the questions asked of Ms Follett and her fellow Ministers while she was in Government were often dorothy dixers too. I cannot discern any significant difference between practice under her Government and the practice under ours except, of course, that there are more of us than there were of her and her party.

**Mr Stefaniak:** We ask better questions too, Gary.

**Mr Jensen:** Shorter answers.

**Mrs Grassby:** You have got to be joking.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** Yes, it is true that there are many changes in the way in which answers are provided. She complains about the length and the quality of answers. I cannot discern any difference between those offered by us and those offered by her Ministers. I do know, however, that very few questions have been taken on notice so far by this ministry. I think a far higher proportion of questions was taken on notice by the previous ministry.

Ms Follett also raised the question of lack of business. She said that the Government has an obvious lack of business and this is a terrible affront to the Assembly et cetera. I have collected some figures on the volume of legislation and the rapidity of legislation tendered by this Government compared with that by the previous Government. I see that the first Bill passed by the Follett Government was passed on the seventh sitting day of the Follett Government. How does that compare with the Kaine Government?

It happens that the first Bill passed by the Kaine Government was passed on the sixth sitting day. Similarly, the second Bill was passed on the sixth sitting day.

**Mrs Grassby:** It was our Bill.

**MR HUMPHRIES:** I am glad you raised that point, Mrs Grassby; I will come back to that in a moment. The third Bill of the Kaine Government was passed on its sixth sitting day. The third Bill of the Follett Government was passed on its eighth sitting day - and so on. We have not had all the figures in yet, but when they come in they will be interesting. So much for the argument that the Kaine Government is somehow slow in producing legislation.

Mrs Grassby says "This was our Bill". I wonder whose the first, second and third Bills of the Follett Government were. They were certainly not drafted in full by the Follett Government; they were obviously Bills prepared by her predecessors and that is obviously the case here too. I think that we had better be consistent about this and accept that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

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I have one final comment, Mr Speaker. When members opposite say that there is a lack of business and there is nothing the Government has to do, that it is just sort of dragging things out, I notice how infrequently members opposite are actually in the chamber to take part in that business and how infrequently they have a contribution to make. That, undoubtedly, adds to the lack of business being transacted by the Assembly because those members do not have any interest in it. They seem to want to put it to one side. Perhaps if they were here fully debating the issues that were being raised by this Government they would appreciate how important these issues are and that we all have important business to transact here. I hope we get a little less hypocrisy and a little more consistency in the approach taken by both sides.

### **National Wheelchair Games**

**MR DUBY** (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (5.54): Mr Speaker, I rise to make a couple of comments on what the Leader of the Opposition stated about how parties can be true to their principles, about the Rally losing theirs and about the No Self Government opposing theirs. These days when I sit and look at the Australian Labor Party opposite me I often wonder when was the last time the Labor Party represented the working man and woman of Australia.

We have the ludicrous situation of a government which has been returned federally - the running mates of these chums over here - and which delights in the fact that its economic strategy is working and that people are being thrown out of jobs. "Don't you worry, we're right on target, pretty soon we'll have more people out of work than we currently have now. We'll have a recession". I ask you, is that sticking to the principles of that great party that was founded in Queensland in the last century? The answer is "No".

Apart from that, Mr Speaker, there is the matter that I wish to raise in this adjournment debate about an event that is occurring in the ACT this coming weekend. It is the sixteenth national wheelchair games. They are going to be held over quite a long period of time at a number of venues throughout the ACT, most particularly though at the Bruce athletics stadium. On behalf of everyone here I would like to welcome the 600 competitors in these wheelchair games and hope that their strivings and their achievements do not go unnoticed.

I know that I will have the support of the members opposite in this - or I should say the member opposite from the Labor Party and Mr Stevenson, the only two people who are non-Government members in this Assembly at the moment. I know that this proposal originally received support from Ms Follett and her Government. Of course, it has received

support from the Alliance Government. We have provided transport and certain administrative arrangements to the organisers of these games.

I also noted with great interest an item that appeared in the magazine or newspaper Public Eye, which was published on 27 March - I refer to one that came out not two days ago. It is published by the Public Service unions and publishes matters of public service news which presumably are of interest to their members. It is always pushing the line that the Labor members of this Assembly are doing a fabulous job, et cetera. I notice on the back page that there is an article about the wheelchair games and it goes through the details of them. The only photograph that it has in relation to the wheelchair games is a photograph of Ms Follett presenting a cheque to two members of the Disabled Games Association. I presume that this was done back in the days when she was Chief Minister, which shows you how out of date the media machine of the Opposition is.

Frankly, I was going to ask Ms Follett if she could update her apparatchiks within the organisation who supply these photographs around and about, because this photograph is a good five to six months old. As a matter of fact it is in very poor taste, because the photograph shows Ms Follett presenting a cheque to a number of disabled wheelchair competitors, one of whom was unfortunately killed in a motor vehicle accident in the early months of January this year. I would like to bring that to the attention of Ms Follett and the Labor Party, and perhaps to the editor of this newspaper, Mr Cassidy. Perhaps they could get their media machine in order so that at least the photographs that get published in relation to every article that appears around the media traps are, at least, up-to-date.

### **Residents Rally**

**MR COLLAERY** (Attorney-General) (5.58): I will close the debate. Mr Speaker, I heard Mrs Grassby saying, "It was our Bill. It was our Bill". In seven months the only genuine Bill that the Labor Party brought to this Assembly was Bill Wood and, of course, we all know he had to be drafted to work with them. That answers Mrs Grassby's petulant claims.

The other point I wanted to make in this debate was to respond to an empty suggestion from the Leader of the Opposition about the Rally deserting its claims. She talked about the Rally breaching its policies. She did not enumerate any of the alleged breaches, except the Royal Canberra Hospital site.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about development approvals given. Well, since she is so well versed in the public service, perhaps she could tell me, because I do not know of any. Those empty words required me to go out

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and immediately deny them to a journalist who was listening. This is the type of gamesmanship we see from a rather juvenile, immature party here. Their Federal colleagues, some of whom are known to me and respected by me, are quite frankly ashamed of them and we know it.

More to the point, Mr Speaker, as for suggestions by Mr Moore and members of the Labor Party that the Rally has done its dash, I can assure you that in 1992, the people of Canberra will recognise us for the solid, courageous performance we are putting in. The suggestion that we are ratting on our causes is absolutely absurd. One of the suggestions one of the acolytes made to the press in recent days was that we had ratted on big bins. That sort of suggestion is nonsensical. This Government has not taken a decision on big bins.

Christopher Donohue has asked me to respond to something. There was a suggestion made in the debate on 28 March 1990 by Mr Moore that Mr Donohue had resigned because of decisions taken by the parliamentary wing of the Rally. I received a fax that afternoon from Chris Donohue, who remains a good friend of mine, and will continue to remain so over many years. In it he makes a number of comments about Mr Moore which, for the sake of peace, I will not repeat, but they are not very complimentary. They refer to election expenses which are yet to materialise to the Rally. He goes on to say, "I have not resigned my membership and will continue as an adviser to the Rally Executive on planning, environment and small business, on which matters I will now concentrate, instead of spreading my efforts over the whole field, including the administrative work and as President. Rah, rah, Chris Donohue". That was a happy note, a personal note, to me from Chris when he heard what divisive comments Michael Moore had made.

Mr Donohue also said in that note, "I will not be returning phone calls from Mr Moore". I suggest to the Assembly that we will, by 1992, gain a mature bunch in this Assembly, who will assist as a viable Opposition. Mind you, Mr Speaker, Mrs Grassby and Mr Whalan are part of our best assets, and I hope they survive pre-selection - I understand they are going to have problems. I trust that those good assets for us will come back to the Assembly, because they show up much of the Labor Party in the ACT for what it is, as my colleague Mr Duby said. It is a reflection of the bankruptcy of much of its Federal Party's politicking, which, clearly, the people of Australia are now recognising. They are deserting that party in droves. They will continue to do that and the only Labor Party people who will win will be those who have strong personal followings and who are respected by the people.

I suggest that the Alliance Government is going on to make Australian political history. We are a government of correct and proper balances. We are going to work ahead. As the Chief Minister indicated in his strategy statement

today, there were no ideological cuts to welfare and housing. I challenge those rumour mongers in the Labor Party who went about disturbing people in the community service area - I challenge them to identify now where the projected cuts are across the estimates and the budget strategy of this Government throughout its term until the next election. I challenge them to make those revelations, because they are not in a position to do it. It is empty rhetoric.

**Mr Jensen:** They are not here.

**MR COLLAERY:** None of them are here in the house to hear this. I trust they are in their rooms cringing in a corner, listening to the truth of the matter.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**Assembly adjourned at 6.03 pm until Tuesday, 3 April 1990, at 10.30 am**