



DEBATES

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

1 May 1990

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Tuesday, 1 May 1990

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

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

MR SPEAKER: I wish to inform the Assembly that I have received a letter from Mr Whalan, dated 30 April 1990, resigning his office as a member of the Assembly. Pursuant to subsection 13(3) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act, 1988 I table the letter.

NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBER

MR SPEAKER: I have received a letter from Mr David Wedgwood, secretary of the ACT branch of the Australian Labor Party, nominating Mr Terry Connolly to fill the office vacated by Mr Whalan and certifying that he is a member of the Australian Labor Party, ACT branch. I have also received a statutory declaration from Mr Connolly stating that he satisfies the requirements of section 67 of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988 regarding qualifications of persons to be elected and take a seat as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory.

MS FOLLETT (Leader of the Opposition) (2.31), by leave: Mr Speaker, I move:

That Mr Terry Connolly, a person who is qualified to be elected and take a seat as a member, be chosen to fill the vacant office caused by the resignation of Mr Paul Whalan for the rest of Mr Whalan's term of office.

Mr Speaker, this is an historic moment in the life of the ACT Legislative Assembly. There have, of course, been many firsts in this new Assembly. It would not be unreasonable, I believe, to say that precedents have been set almost every week, but the choosing of a new member of the Assembly to fill a casual vacancy is a particularly significant matter. It is a reminder to us as legislators that we too are subject to the rule of law, and in particular the law which provides for the election of members of this Assembly.

I believe that foremost in our minds today should be the fact that the process for selecting a new member is designed to reflect the will of the people who voted in the

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last election. If there is to be public confidence in the political process and in our system of government, then it is very important that the community should know that the views they expressed at the ballot-box are represented, and continue to be represented, in the legislature.

It had long been a convention in appointments to casual vacancies arising in the Australian Senate that a member of the same political party would replace the outgoing senator. Quite clearly, this is the only appropriate way to proceed with the replacement of representatives chosen in multimember electorates. It ensures that the range and balance of views expressed by the people at the ballot-box are preserved until the next expression of that opinion at an election for all of the positions.

Of course, it is a matter of record that that convention, that important principle, was thrown into turmoil by the conservative New South Wales and Queensland governments who replaced Labor senators with non-Labor senators in 1975, thereby precipitating a constitutional crisis. It is also a matter of record that that convention has now been enshrined in the Australian Constitution. The ACT (Self-Government) Act follows that convention, which now seems to be accepted by all major political parties. For our part, Mr Speaker, the Labor Party believes that this process today is a demonstration of integrity in politics. We believe that members of this Assembly should implement the promises they make to the electors and that those electors are entitled to expect the views they supported at the election will continue to be represented in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, the Labor Party has always taken that important constitutional convention seriously and continues to support it. Our commitment to integrity in politics is also reflected by the choice of Mr Terry Connolly to fill the vacancy created by Mr Whalan's resignation. The selection of Terry Connolly shows that the Labor Party takes this Assembly and the business of representing the ACT people very seriously indeed. In Mr Connolly the party has selected a person of high calibre, of experience and with qualifications.

Our party has taken very seriously the task of finding a person who will contribute to our team and to this Assembly and who has the interests of the Canberra community at heart. It is significant that Terry should join us on 1 May. May Day is traditionally a day of celebration by the broad Labor movement of its achievements and victories in all of its struggles. I am sure that the significance of this day does not escape Terry Connolly, who grew up in Port Adelaide in a working-class family and with strong union principles.

Members will come to realise in the months ahead that Terry is very committed to the role of the law as a servant of the interests of ordinary people. It was a natural progression for Terry to join the Labor Party in 1976 and

to play an active role in Young Labor while he was a student. His qualifications as a lawyer will contribute to our team and to this Assembly. Terry's distinguished career started in 1981 when he became an associate to Justice Gallop in the Federal Court. He has since been a lawyer in the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Veterans' Affairs and also served the Federal Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Electoral Reform in 1985.

Terry has had an outstanding career with the Attorney-General's Department since he joined it in 1987. As many might recall from the recent article in the Canberra Times, Terry is highly regarded by his colleagues in the Attorney-General's Department and has performed with distinction as assistant counsel to the Solicitor-General. I believe the quality of our legal debates will benefit from having somebody who is held in high standing amongst senior members of the legal community. The Labor members are ready to welcome Terry. I commend this motion to the Assembly and I commend Mr Terry Connolly to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE BY MEMBER

Mr Terence Connolly was introduced, and made and subscribed the oath of allegiance required by law.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Connolly, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, I bid you a warm welcome.

PETITION

The Clerk: The following petition has been lodged for presentation, and a copy will be referred to the appropriate Minister:

Ainslie Transfer Station

To the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory.

The petition of certain residents of the ACT draws to the attention of the Assembly:

That the Ainslie Transfer Station is an important service to the people of north Canberra, who have not been consulted about its closure.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to:

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Ensure that the Ainslie Transfer Station continues to operate.

by **Ms Follett** (from 830 citizens).

Petition received.

PAPER

MS FOLLETT: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to present an out-of-order petition.

MR SPEAKER: In what manner is it out of order, Ms Follett?

MS FOLLETT: It is not prepared in compliance with the normal wording of petitions for the Assembly.

Leave granted.

MS FOLLETT: Mr Speaker, I present an out-of-order petition from 1,220 residents concerning the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ainslie Transfer Station

MS FOLLETT: My question is to Mr DUBY, the Minister for Finance and Urban Services. Can the Minister inform the Assembly whether he has ever been to the Ainslie Transfer Station?

MR DUBY: I thank Ms Follett for the question. The short answer to the question is yes, I have on many occasions. As I said in a radio interview last week, I regard the unpleasant duty of going to a tip as being made especially pleasant by the arrangements which were in place, as of yesterday, at the Ainslie Transfer Station. As most people are aware - and I am going to beat them to the punch - it was bitumenised and it was virtually an all-weather tip where people could go and dump their rubbish and garden cuttings into bins to be taken away for further disposal. But the brief answer is yes, I have.

Preschools

MRS NOLAN: Mr Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health, Education and the Arts in his role as Minister for Education. I refer the Minister to comments by Dr John Thompson on the Pru Goward show on ABC radio on 24 April 1990. Does the Government intend to close 51 preschools, as alleged by Dr Thompson?

MR HUMPHRIES: Mr Speaker, I thank Mrs Nolan for her question. Let me say at the outset that the Government does not intend to close 51 preschools, as alleged by Dr Thompson, nor does it have any intention to close 51 per cent of preschools, as another reporter put to me later that week.

As the Assembly is aware, the Government is determined to rationalise education services to ensure the best possible value for education expenditure. In this context, the Government is concerned that there are some 2,000 excess preschool places in the ACT. The system with our commitment to community consultation is that the preschool task force is currently examining a wide range of options for the future provision of preschool services in the ACT. The task force consists of representatives of community organisations involved with preschool services and officers of my department.

A number of options are being considered. They include: consolidation of preschool services into single or multiple unit preschools; decreased linkages with primary schools; alternative preschool operating hours; increased linkages with other child-care services; a regional cluster model whereby the preschool priority enrolment areas will be modelled on a high school enrolment area and preschool places will be offered within that area; and a possible combination of the above.

Of course, the task force will present its final report to the Government when it is concluded. Dr Thompson is involved in the Page preschool parents association, which is represented directly on the task force and which will therefore have an input into these recommendations. I am confident that his speculation, however, about the closure of 51 preschools is idle. Since the ACT has only 78 preschools in total, I would think that a recommendation to close 51 of them would constitute a wholesale destruction of the preschool system, and that certainly is not what this Government is about.

Ainslie Transfer Station

MRS GRASSBY: Can the Minister for Finance and Urban Services tell the Assembly the amount of waste delivered to the Ainslie Transfer Station; the proportion of recycling carried out there compared to the tips; the number of individual visits to the transfer station per week; and the number of trips from the transfer station required to remove waste per week?

MR DUBY: I thank Mrs Grassby for the question. There were a number of specific questions in it. I am not sure whether I wrote them all down. The first question, I believe, was about the amount of waste that was disposed of at the Ainslie Transfer Station; is that correct?

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Mrs Grassby: The waste delivered.

MR DUBY: The waste delivered to the Ainslie Transfer Station. Mr Speaker, the actual answer to that is that approximately 240 tonnes of waste disposal is carted from the Ainslie tip per week, which I should point out amounts to a considerable cost to the ACT ratepayers. Also it might be worth pointing out, Mr Speaker, that well over half of that 240 tonnes of material which is deposited into the transfer bins to be carted away from Ainslie is in the nature of garden rubbish and generally compostable materials. Frankly, it is contrary to the Government's policy of encouraging people to compost their materials and thus participate in recycling.

As I said, 240 tonnes per week is carted away from the Ainslie Transfer Station. With regard to the amount of actual recyclable material which is recovered from the Ainslie Transfer Station, Mr Speaker, I do not have that information at hand. If you are talking about the number of kilos of aluminium, glass, et cetera, which may be deposited there, I just cannot give you that information off the top of my head. However, I can undertake to obtain that information for Mrs Grassby. It was a complicated and long question.

Mrs Grassby: The number of individual visits to the transfer station per week and the number of trips from the transfer station required to remove the waste per week?

MR DUBY: With regard to the number of individual visits per week, once again, Mr Speaker, to my knowledge, records are not kept of the number of personal trips that are made to the tip. What is interesting, of course, is the amount of actual waste that is carted away. I was quite amused to hear that last Thursday and Friday nights there was a traffic jam at the Ainslie tip as a number of people took advantage of the notification of the closure to rid themselves of unwanted material from around their properties.

With regard to the number of trips taken to move the stuff away, I am under the impression that it varies from day to day, depending on the amount of usage that the transfer station is receiving, but I believe it is in the order of 10 to 11 truckloads per day. That is my understanding, as I said. I would need to actually confirm those figures and I can perhaps get those for Mrs Grassby in full detail but I cannot give them off the top of my head.

Mrs Grassby: There is another part to the question - the proportion of recycling carried out there compared to the tips.

MR DUBY: Of course, Mr Speaker, the proportion of recycling that is carried on there at the Ainslie Transfer Station is significantly less than that which occurs, for

example, at the Mugga Way tip, where we have the operations of the organisation known as Revolve, which is engaged in quite deliberate recycling of a whole range of things which are deposited on that side of town. The recycling station at Ainslie, to my understanding, did not have facilities for the recycling of oil, which facilities are available at Belconnen and also at Mugga Lane. So, in comparison to the other two remaining tips in town, the level of recycling which was occurring at the Ainslie Transfer Station was way below standard.

Human Rights

MR MOORE: Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Chief Minister. Could the Chief Minister please inform the Assembly why the Government, especially in this economic climate, feels it is necessary to set up its own human rights office, at substantial cost, when the joint office prepared by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission could have done the same job at a much reduced cost, as is evidenced by a letter from the Federal Human Rights Commissioner, Brian Burdekin, to the Canberra Times on 22 April, in which he states that he has written to you pointing out the cost-effectiveness of the Federal commission.

MR KAINE: Mr Speaker, I did receive a letter from Mr Burdekin two or three days after his letter appeared in the Canberra Times. It seems incredible that people find it necessary to communicate with me through the Canberra Times instead of directly. But as for the rest of the question, Mr Speaker, the matter is within the jurisdiction and portfolio of the Attorney-General and I suggest he ask the Attorney-General to answer it.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, it is a financial question that I asked - about value.

MR KAINE: It is not.

Ainslie Transfer Station

MR WOOD: Under standing order 116, I direct a question on processes to the chairman of the Conservation, Heritage and Environment Committee, Dr Kinloch. Can he advise the Assembly of any resolution passed by his committee dealing with the Government's decision to close the Ainslie Transfer Station?

DR KINLOCH: I am happy to answer that question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Please proceed.

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DR KINLOCH: Mr Speaker, at very short notice, Mr Moore requested a meeting of the committee at the rising last week, on the last day last week. We went into the room next-door. Unfortunately, one member of the committee was not there so there was no resolution carried.

Mr Moore: Oh, that is misleading the Assembly.

MR WOOD: Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Would Dr Kinloch table the minutes of that meeting in due course when they become available to him?

DR KINLOCH: Mr Speaker, I would certainly be glad to consult with the secretariat. I should note that three people, as I understand it, are necessary for a decision. I had put forward a motion and it was not carried either.

Ainslie Transfer Station

MR STEVENSON: Mr Speaker, my question is concerning the Ainslie Transfer Station. It is directed to Craig Duby. I have been contacted by a number of people who were concerned about the closure and also about what they felt was a lack of consultation. Would Mr Duby be kind enough to inform the house what consultation he had with citizens who are affected by the closure?

MR DUBY: I thank Mr Stevenson for the question. Mr Speaker, the matter of consultation on this issue is a vexed one. The questioner obviously wishes to raise the issue of where consultation stops and where the decision making process starts. In coming to the conclusion that the Ainslie Transfer Station could not economically be continued, the Government considered a whole range of options and had a whole range of advice proffered to it.

I must admit that with regard to the consultation - presumably not just with the residents of Ainslie and those of the inner north, because this is a matter which affects the whole of the ACT - the Government really was at a loss as to what sort of consultation should be entered into. The situation was, of course, Mr Speaker, that the decision that was made in relation to the Ainslie Transfer Station was made after prolonged thought and discussion amongst Government members on the basis of economics and - - -

Mr Wood: Not with Dr Kinloch, though.

MR DUBY: It was, as I said, made on the basis of discussion with Government members and on the basis that a decision was being forced upon the Government due to the fact that the contract for the renewal of the Ainslie station was due to expire as of close of business yesterday. Consultation was held with the contractor. Indeed, I have copies of correspondence here, which I may bring to people's attention later in the afternoon, which

clearly indicates that the matter was raised with the contractor and the contractor was unwilling to continue the contract under the terms of that contract.

Accordingly, whilst it was an important decision, something which does affect the lives of people in the inner north of Canberra, in commercial-in-confidence matters like this it was felt that the decision could be made. Frankly, that is what this Government is here for - to make decisions and to take the hard decisions.

Ainslie Transfer Station

MS FOLLETT: My question also is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Urban Services. It relates again to the Ainslie Transfer Station - in particular, to Mr DUBY's answer to a question asked in the Assembly on 26 April. Did Mr DUBY intentionally mislead the Assembly when he said that the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station is not contrary to the recommendations of the report of the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment? I particularly draw to Mr DUBY's attention recommendation 7, which calls for the upgrading of and improved access to the Ainslie Transfer Station recycling facilities, and recommendations 15 and 26, which both relate to improved facilities at the Ainslie Transfer Station.

MR DUBY: I thank Ms Follett for the question. The simple fact, Mr Speaker, is that there was no intention to mislead the Assembly and, indeed, the Assembly has not been misled. The answers to those questions related to the fact that the recommendations and the general thrust of recommendations of that committee's report specified that the Government - I do not have a copy of the report in front of me, but I am trying to think of the actual words - should upgrade and improve recycling facilities - - -

Ms Follett: At the Ainslie Transfer Station.

MR DUBY: Not only at the Ainslie Transfer Station but at other sites throughout the ACT, Mr Speaker - at the other tips and at the Ainslie Transfer Station. That recommendation to which I was referring mentions specifically the other tips. Needless to say, when the committee was making its recommendations it was working on the assumption that the Ainslie Transfer Station would continue operating.

The recommendations say that recycling facilities should be upgraded and improved at tips and throughout Canberra. Mr Speaker, that is exactly what this Government is doing. We are upgrading the facilities at the tips. We are improving recycling facilities at Mitchell. We are establishing a full, comprehensive recycling facility at Mitchell to cater for the needs of those residents of the inner north who

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wish to recycle. In addition to that, as of today, we have in place recycling facilities at Dickson and Hackett to cater for those environmentally conscious citizens who use the Ainslie Transfer Station as a recycling depot, not apparently those environmentally unconscious citizens who use the Ainslie Transfer Station as a place to dump their organically biodegradable stuff from their gardens - - -

Mr Wood: Their big branches and the like.

MR DUBY: The whole 240 tonnes of it, Mr Speaker - at least half of that every week. As I said, we are committed to upgrading recycling facilities, and we are doing so.

Tuggeranong Parkway - Telephones

MR STEFANIAK: I think it is about time we left Ainslie. My question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Urban Services.

Mr Wood: That is your whole attitude; that is the trouble.

MR STEFANIAK: Come on, Mr Wood. Let us go down to Tuggeranong. I refer the Minister to a letter that was published recently in the Canberra Times about the lack of telephones on the Tuggeranong Parkway. What does the Government intend doing about installing telephones on the Tuggeranong Parkway to improve emergency communications for motorists?

MR DUBY: Thank you, Mr Stefaniak. The Government has been concerned about the lack of telephone facilities on the Tuggeranong Parkway. I am pleased to announce that it has recently let a contract for the provision of those facilities on that parkway to cater for citizens from the south side who, for whatever reason, may have need to contact repair facilities or make calls to the police or the emergency services. That contract has recently been let. I believe that the first telephones will be installed on that parkway in a matter of months. There will be an appropriate, short walking distance between telephones; I believe it will be less than one kilometre.

Schools - Vacancy Rate

MR WOOD: Mr Speaker, as a resident of the northern suburbs and a co-writer of that report to which Mr DUBY has been referring, I could draw some honest conclusions. But I will direct a question instead to the Minister for Health, Education and the Arts. According to the Canberra Times today, he is now quoted as saying that perhaps the vacancy rate in schools could be around 10,000. Why has it changed from 13,000? Does he concede that it was as a result of the figures argued by Dr Kinloch and the difficulty with those numbers, the concept and data?

MR HUMPHRIES: I can see, Mr Speaker, that there is considerable need for the Government to address problems of literacy in our community, since Mr Wood has obviously failed to carefully read and understand the article that appeared on the front page of the Canberra Times today. Mr Speaker, I did not say that the vacancy rate may be as low as 10,000. What I did say was that, even if the vacancy rate - the surplus places in our school system - were as low as 10,000, the Government - - -

Mr Wood: You were saying 13,000 in that context before.

MR HUMPHRIES: Mr Wood, if you listen patiently you will hear the answer.

Mr Wood: Why the change from one to the other?

MR HUMPHRIES: You will hear, Mr Wood. Mr Speaker, Mr Wood is obviously confused, and I will attempt to explain it very calmly and clearly to him. The figures available to the Government are from the school census that was conducted in March of this year. They are only two or so months old. Those figures point to some 13,500 empty or surplus school places in the ACT education system.

Mr Berry: Which schools?

MR HUMPHRIES: The schools range from preschools to secondary colleges - every level of schooling in our system in the ACT. That figure is current as of March this year. Of course, all the time those figures fluctuate. As the year goes on, students tend to leave the system and, as a result, in some ways there is the potential for that figure to increase beyond 13,000. However, the point that I was making, as reported in this morning's paper, was not that the figure has to be 13,000, 8,000, 12,000 or whatever before the Government will act.

Mr Wood: Yes, but you have changed the argued figure.

MR HUMPHRIES: No. The point, Mr Speaker, is simply that with such a large number of surplus school places within our system the Government cannot fail to act. We cannot sit by and let that large level of redundancy in our system continue to divert resources away from where they are most needed, and that is providing direct services to the students of the ACT. That is the point, Mr Speaker, and that is what this Government is going to do, irrespective of whether the figure is 10,000 or 20,000, and I am confident that it is somewhere in that range. The Government will be acting to ensure that the school system is responsive to the needs of the students within it, and that is what it is all about.

MR WOOD: Mr Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question. It is all very vague and becoming more and more vague. Will Mr Humphries agree that the figure -

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originally 13,000, then 10,000, then 9,000 from another source, and up to 20,000 - was chosen purely because it was a dramatic figure and read so much better for his circumstances than a certain number of classrooms, which is the figure that has been used in this community for 13 or more years? He picked a dramatic figure to bolster his weak arguments.

MR HUMPHRIES: The figure is dramatic because it is a large figure; 13,000 empty places in our school system is a dramatic figure, and I had no hesitation in coming forward to the people of the ACT and telling them that we had 13,500 empty places in our school system. Yes, it is a dramatic figure, and because of that I decided to put it before the people of the Territory for their consideration. That is a fair position, and I make no apology for that.

The figure is not changing, Mr Wood. It stands at 13,500, although if subsequent censuses of our school system reduce or increase that figure, both of which possibilities present themselves, of course I will come back to this house and say what the new figure might be.

Domestic Violence Crisis Refuge

MRS NOLAN: My question is directed to Ms Follett as chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I refer her to a report in last Friday's Canberra Times, criticising the Alliance Government for not advancing the funds of \$142,000 to build a second women's domestic violence crisis refuge in the ACT.

In view of the comments made by the Attorney-General in the Assembly on 26 April 1990, will Ms Follett undertake to have her committee investigate whether a sum of \$142,000 was set aside in the budget, as she has claimed? Will she confirm that this was for a part year only and has a full-year effect of \$238,000? If so, will she investigate why those funds were not separately appropriated in the Appropriation Bill and advise how the former Government's budget process allowed nearly the entire additional SAAP funding, which is required for urgent ongoing grants in the area of youth homelessness and other support, to be allocated to a domestic violence crisis refuge under the guise of a separate appropriation?

MS FOLLETT: The answer is yes.

Preschools

MR WOOD: I direct to the Minister for Health, Education and the Arts a question concerning preschools. Does his consideration of clustering of preschools, lumping them in one big heap, now mean that he expects families with young

children, on single incomes and with mortgages, also to have a second car to get their children to preschool?

MR HUMPHRIES: The answer is no, I do not have any expectations or announce any anticipated result of the task force which is currently reviewing preschool education in the ACT. I will wait for that report to come forward. If it recommends the cluster model to which I referred in my answer earlier today, the Government as a whole will have to consider the implications of that and decide whether that is an appropriate model. Of course, the things that Mr Wood has raised will be pertinent in considerations and we will not ignore those considerations. But I would feel more confident that Mr Wood had a positive contribution to make if he came forward with suggestions as to how the ACT might address the very clear problem of finding more dollars for the education system when clearly there are fewer overall.

MR WOOD: I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Will the Minister place on record his view? Does he agree with the need for preschools to be located so that parents can walk their children to a neighbourhood preschool? Does he have a view about that?

MR HUMPHRIES: Mr Speaker, I have a view, which is that, generally speaking, the quality of education provided by our system is not contingent on the distance that a child has to travel to reach school in the morning. Naturally, of course, an access question arises if students are so far away as to be unable to reach their schools at all, but that is hardly very likely to be the case. I am yet to be convinced that any such scenario presents itself in the ACT.

I propose to make no further comment on the report of this task force. It is a courtesy, I think, to the members of that task force, if nobody else, to wait until the report is on the table and cease public speculation on what that report might produce.

Asbestos Removal

MRS GRASSBY: My question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Urban Services. I refer him to the following statements that he has made on the recleaning of houses found to have residual asbestos. The first statement was:

Recleans would not simply be slotted into the removal program.

The second was:

Asbestos will be removed within four years and we'll look at recleans as they come along in the program.

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The third was:

... only commonsense that people who currently have acres of the stuff in their roof have priority over people who have already had 99 per cent of it removed.

Which, if any, of these statements is correct? Why has the Minister made a number of false and misleading statements on this matter?

MR DUBY: I thank Mrs Grassby for the question. Mr Speaker, there is nothing inconsistent in those statements whatsoever. The situation is that when this Government took the reins of office we had an absolute shambles in place in regard to the asbestos removal program with which the Labor Government had lumbered the ACT taxpayer. It had no intention, I am sure, of ever having a day-to-day program set aside to remove the scourge of asbestos from the place within a reasonable time.

Mr Speaker, the final statement to which Mrs Grassby referred was made when I announced, on behalf of the Government, a comprehensive program to remove asbestos from the homes of ACT citizens over a specified period of four years, giving a timetable to which people could adhere. I said that those people who had asbestos in large quantities in their roofs would naturally be entitled to expect to have the substance removed at the same rate as, if not ahead of, those folk who had already, by their own volition, had a cleaning job done on their properties and were left with perhaps 1 per cent or 2 per cent of asbestos fibres in their roofs.

Mrs Grassby is quoting from today's newspaper article which refers to the Government's program of asbestos removal and in particular to the Government's program and timetable for the removal of the remaining asbestos from those homes which have already had an unsatisfactory cleaning job done. Mr Speaker, I am very concerned about those press reports that were in the paper today because they may cause unnecessary worry for those unfortunate Canberrans with asbestos in their homes - something which it would appear was never in the minds of members of the previous Government.

This Government is firmly committed to completing domestic asbestos removal within four years, and we made that commitment within a short time of taking the reins of office, something which we could not get out of the previous Minister, something to which the previous Government was not committed at all. We have acted promptly in dealing with the mess that we inherited from the Commonwealth and the previous Government. When we came to office, Mr Speaker, we found the key decisions which could have been made - - -

Mrs Grassby: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; the Minister is not answering the question. I asked about the recleans and the statements which he made and which were in the paper.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs Grassby.

MR DUBY: When we came to office, Mr Speaker - and I am answering the question - we found the key decisions which could have been made earlier had not been made, and they related not only to the removal of asbestos from homes which had never had it taken from them but also to homes which needed recleans and which she had funded.

Mr Berry: On a point of order; this is tedious repetition.

MR SPEAKER: The answer has been given. Thank you, Mr Berry. You are a bit late.

Mr Moore: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; 118(a) states that the answer to a question without notice shall be concise and confined to the subject matter of the question, which was about recleaning.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Please proceed.

MR DUBY: For those who do not know, "recleans" refers to removing the final vestiges of asbestos fibres from homes which had previously - - -

Mr Berry: All of it? What is the safe level? Tell us the safe level. You do not know.

MR DUBY: Removing the lot. As I said, Mr Speaker, that is what a reclean means. Someone has already had a private removal done but finds vestigial remains of asbestos in the roof.

In relation to recleans, I have treated the matter most urgently, which the previous Minister could not do. Following a review of the matter, you will remember that I announced in the Assembly on 20 February this year that the Government had decided to award a 750-house contract to Gardner Perrott to remove asbestos from the ACT, which the previous Government could not do. That decision set the Government strategy and underlines our commitment to complete the removal program within four years. I am pleased to say, Mr Speaker, that the Gardner Perrott contract has now been signed, and work is expected to commence in early June.

Mr Berry: On a point of order - - -

MR DUBY: In my 20 February statement, Mr Speaker, I also said - - -

Mrs Grassby: Mr Speaker, I asked which one of those quotes was correct.

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MR SPEAKER: Order! Mrs Grassby, please do not talk over me. A point of order has been raised by Mr Berry. Mr Berry, what is your point of order, please?

Mr Berry: Thank you. I refer again to the point of order which was raised by Mr Moore. Standing order 118(a) states that it shall be concise and confined to the subject matter of the question.

Mr Kaine: Keep going, Craig. You're doing well.

Mr Berry: I also call the Speaker's attention to the issue of tedious repetition.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Duby, please be concise and to the point.

MR DUBY: I am only too willing to make this announcement and to tidy up the position in relation to recleans.

Mr Moore: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; the Chief Minister said to Mr Duby, "Keep going. You're doing well".

MR SPEAKER: Is that the point of order?

Mr Moore: Yes, I am getting to the point of order now. I believe that is disorderly, Mr Speaker, because you gave an instruction and he is suggesting the opposite to your instruction. I suggest that he be named.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for your observation, Mr Moore. Please proceed, Mr Duby.

MR DUBY: In my 20 February statement, Mr Speaker, I also said that with the key decision made I could move quickly to examine other outstanding issues, particularly those of recleans.

Mr Berry: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; as a result of the point of order which I raised earlier I would like some sort of a ruling.

MR SPEAKER: I gave a ruling, thank you, Mr Berry. You must have been talking at the time. Please proceed, Mr Duby.

MR DUBY: Mr Speaker, I have now done this. In April I announced a temporary accommodation scheme, which all parties saw as an important issue needing quick resolution, and today - - -

Mrs Grassby: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; would he like me to read the question out again so maybe I could get an answer to the question that I asked? That is what I would like.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs Grassby. Would you like the question re-read, Mr Duby?

MR DUBY: No, Mr Speaker, I have my answer.

Mrs Grassby: Obviously he needs it; he does not know.

MR DUBY: I have my answer; I know the question.

Mr Moore: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; 202(e), Mr Duby has persistently and wilfully disregarded the authority of the Chair, and the member may now be named by the Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Moore. Mr Duby, please terminate your answer.

MR DUBY: Thank you. Today, I have received a report from my department about those houses needing recleaning. Thirty-seven houses have been identified as needing recleaning, and I have decided - I have decided something, Mrs Grassby - that they should be done as quickly as possible, using existing Asbestos Branch removal teams.

It should be noted that all of these houses were cleaned by private contractors and many were cleaned before the government program commenced. Contrary to suggestions in the press today, no additional removal teams are to be employed. The recleaning will be done at no cost to the householders, with my department meeting reasonable temporary accommodation costs - - -

Mr Berry: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I think this Assembly deserves to have attention paid to the issues raised in standing order 118; otherwise this place becomes a laughing-stock. I refer you again to 118(a).

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Berry.

MR DUBY: This is an extraordinarily important issue, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Duby, you can seek leave later to make a statement on the issue.

MR DUBY: Mr Speaker, the question was about recleaning, and it is a very important issue.

Ms Follett: That was 20 minutes ago.

MR DUBY: I would have had it finished if I had not had so many interruptions. The recleaning program will commence in early July and should be completed within two years, Mr Speaker.

Mr Berry: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I think I heard you inform the member opposite that he could make a ministerial statement at some other time.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for your observation, Mr Berry. Mr Duby, I ask you to resume your seat.

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MR DUBY: Mr Speaker, why should I need to make a ministerial statement when I am asked a question and I have the details here?

MR SPEAKER: Order! It has dragged on too far.

Literacy Skills

MS MAHER: My question is directed to the Minister for Health, Education and the Arts. An article in the Canberra Times dated 25 April refers to the high rate of illiteracy in adults in our society. It says:

The Australian Army has now joined the list of employers, educators and training bodies to condemn the appalling literacy of Australian school-leavers.

Can the Minister tell the Assembly the measures that are being taken to ensure that our school children are not leaving school with poor literacy skills? What is the ACT Government doing to contribute to the International Year of Literacy?

MR HUMPHRIES: I thank Ms Maher for her question, which is a very good one. I am also pleased to note that the Leader of the Opposition has an interest in this matter, according to the newspaper report on the weekend. It will come as no surprise to those who have followed issues concerning literacy in the ACT that the Alliance Government is strongly committed to promoting and maintaining literacy levels in our education system.

The Department of Education already offers a number of special programs for students experiencing difficulty with literacy. We have the reading recovery program for year 1, the learner assistance program for high school students and the English as a second language program. As well, we have resource teachers placed in a number of schools assisting all teachers to teach literacy skills to their students more effectively. We have programs such as the early literacy in-service course, the Canberra illiteracy program, the language for understanding across the curriculum program, all of them enhancing teachers' skills in literacy.

As Ms Maher pointed out, this is the International Year of Literacy, and it puts a special onus on us to address the particular problems of illiteracy which we face, including determining the level of illiteracy in our society. The Government is presently in the final stages of preparing its green paper on literacy and numeracy, which I hope will be released this month and which will provide the basis for widespread community discussion on these issues. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will take part in that. We

are also hosting two national conferences this year promoting the International Year of Literacy. We are publishing a book of students' writing, from kindergarten to year 12. There are activities promoting the practice of parents and children reading together and activities involving students reading around a different theme each month.

Mr Wood: And making it harder for little kids to get to preschool.

MR HUMPHRIES: No, Mr Wood. I can assure the Assembly that the Alliance Government's commitment to literacy is a long-term one and that, with the outcome of the green paper, we intend to build on the ongoing programs and the special projects of the International Year of Literacy to ensure that the ACT maintains the highest possible standards of literacy.

ACT Court System

MR CONNOLLY: My question is directed to the Chief Minister. What action has he taken to resolve the apparent dispute between the Chief Justice of this Territory and the Attorney-General in relation to the radical restructuring of the court system which has been announced by the Attorney with no consultation with the profession or the wider community?

MR KAINE: I have not been involved in the negotiations leading to the transfer of the court system on 1 July. That is correctly and properly within the jurisdiction of the Attorney-General.

I do not believe there is any great dispute involved in this matter but, if I thought that there were, I would certainly become involved. I do not believe that there is any disputation that is beyond the capability and the competence of the Attorney-General to resolve. There is still some time before the due date on which the court system is to transfer. It is regrettable that the Commonwealth, against the advice of this Government, has appointed two magistrates, which this Government believed should not occur until the court system transferred to us on 1 July.

Ms Follett: They don't trust you.

MR KAINE: The Leader of the Opposition talks about trust. We have a Commonwealth that has given us self-government yet is not prepared to permit us to exercise the prerogatives of self-government. It did it to the previous Government on the eve of its taking office in May last year. The Commonwealth took a couple of very significant decisions then, and it is continuing to do it.

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Mr Berry: On a point of order; I again mention standing order 118. I think the question asked by Mr Connolly related to the action that the Chief Minister might take, but I think the Chief Minister has gone well beyond the bounds of that question.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for your observation, Mr Berry. Would you answer the question posed, please, Mr Kaine.

MR KAINE: I think I have probably answered the question sufficiently. I request that any further questions be placed on the notice paper.

PROPOSED REVIEW OF ACT COURT SYSTEM

MR COLLAERY (Attorney-General): I seek leave to make a statement. I claim to have been misrepresented.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Collaery.

Mr Wood: We have to grant leave.

MR SPEAKER: Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Please proceed.

MR COLLAERY: Thank you. I am indebted to the members. In a question asked by our newest member, Mr Connolly, a few moments ago, he referred to two matters that would be of serious concern to the people of the ACT: firstly, that there would be a dispute between a Chief Justice of the Territory and its Attorney and, secondly, that there had been no consultation with the profession. I can simply put an end to both of those issues by tabling today the speech given by the Chief Justice at the address for newly admitted practitioners last week and the Chief Justice's extract from his speech launching Law Week yesterday.

Neither of those speeches gives any comfort to the imputations in Mr Connolly's question. Specifically, whilst I will never discuss the confidence of my discussions with the Chief Justice, I will happily inform the court that I have had discussions with the Chief Justice - - -

Mrs Grassby: This is not a court.

MR COLLAERY: I mean the Assembly. Prior to any statement made by this Government, the Chief Justice had a brief which was given to the consultant, a former senior official of the Federal Attorney-General's Department. I will quote it, Mr Speaker, because I think this is very important. It states:

The consultant is required to consult as widely as practicable with members of the judiciary (including officers of the Magistrate's Court and

of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal), the legal profession and in particular with any persons that may be nominated by the Attorney-General.

I had hoped that a question of this nature would not have entered the Assembly today. The Government has set about something that may take a year or two years or may never take place. It has appointed a consultant, a person of indisputable standing, to prepare a discussion paper which will be issued at the end of June for full consultation with all affected members of the community. Mr Connolly refers to lack of consultation. What is consultation when you cannot do that?

Ms Follett: So did Mr Phelps. So did the Law Society.

MR COLLAERY: I have spoken with Mr Phelps, president of the Law Society, and I can inform the house that Mr Phelps has issued a statement which is entirely consistent with the Assembly's intentions to ensure that there is full consultation with all elements of the profession. No decisions have been put forward to the Executive of this Government in relation to any of those matters at this stage. They are for consultation.

I do wish to say one thing, Mr Speaker. In the Chief Justice's address to newly admitted practitioners they were senior partners of national law firms and - - -

Mr Moore: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; he sought leave to deal with a misrepresentation, and this has absolutely nothing to do with it. It is irrelevant.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Members of the Opposition incorrectly said that the leave of the Assembly was required for Mr Collaery to make a statement. That was not correct. I address you to standing order 46 in particular, Mr Wood. It is up to the Chair to give leave on a personal explanation but, because you forced the issue, you now have given leave of the Assembly to Mr Collaery to make a statement and therefore I am not prepared to intervene. Please proceed, Mr Collaery.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, the Assembly gave - - -

MR SPEAKER: Order! You are not given permission to debate.

Mr Moore: The point I am making is that we gave him - - -

MR SPEAKER: You are making a point. Order! Please proceed, Mr Collaery.

MR COLLAERY: I said I was indebted to the members. If they care to read their rule books, they will understand what they are doing. Mr Speaker, I will read into the record one comment by the Chief Justice. He said:

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As practitioners -

he was referring to newly admitted senior partners largely -

of the Supreme Court ... you will all know something of the impact of self-government on the legal system.

He went on to say:

In this current interim period - the twilight or the dawn depending upon your point of view ...

For the record, Mr Speaker, I see self-government neither as a twilight nor as a dawn.

Mr Moore: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; my point of order refers to standing order 62, and that is the point I was trying to make, that this is irrelevant. Mr Collaery was given leave of the Assembly to make a statement about misrepresentation. What he is presenting is irrelevant.

MR SPEAKER: My interpretation of the question posed is that it is of a legal matter, and I believe Mr Collaery is addressing that question. Please proceed, but be brief, Mr Collaery.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, I will be brief. Mr Connolly imputed that there is a dispute between the Chief Justice and me. I merely observed that the Chief Justice has commented upon the advent of self-government. It is not a criticism of the Alliance Government. The Chief Justice chose, in his wisdom, to comment on whether the advent of self-government was, in the area in which he was speaking, a twilight or a dawn. That is a matter for him to choose to comment upon. I make no comment upon the propriety or otherwise of that, but he was not commenting upon this Alliance Government. Certainly I draw the attention of all members to the Chief Justice's comments so that we do not enter into a fractious debate which will demean the status of either that court or this Assembly.

MR CONNOLLY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a statement. I claim to have been misrepresented.

MR SPEAKER: Please proceed.

MR CONNOLLY: Mr Collaery says that I wilfully misrepresented the views of the Chief Justice. My point was that all residents of this community were aware of the comments of the Chief Justice which were published on the front page of the Canberra Times on the weekend and would be concerned at the - and I said "apparent" - dispute between the Chief Justice and the Attorney.

Mr Collaery now announces that wide community consultation will take place before a court restructuring is completed.

That is what we have been long calling for. This is the first I have heard of wide consultation. Indeed, the criticism of the Law Society today was made on the basis of a lack of consultation.

Mr Collaery now is announcing to this Assembly that before any concrete proposal is developed there will be full consultation. We welcome his statement. I have said in public statements before entering this house that the Labor Party thought there may well be a basis of some good idea in Mr Collaery's announcement but that we wanted full consultation with the profession and the community. The Attorney is announcing that that will now be the way to progress this matter, and we welcome it. This, today, is the first we have heard of full consultation. We hope that Mr Collaery's announcement today will signal a return to the open and consultative approach that this party adopted when in government and that the consultation to which Mr Collaery is referring will not be similar to the consultation which Mr Duby has complied with on the Ainslie tip issue.

MR COLLAERY (Attorney-General): We have seen a boomerang and now we see a trump today, Mr Speaker. I table the Attorney-General's announcement, dated 19 April 1990, with Mr Curtis's terms of reference attached, which was fully distributed to the media and our parliamentary colleagues on 19 April. I present:

Media statement by ACT Alliance Government, dated 19 April 1990, together with a consultants brief.

Mr Moore: It is probably something entirely different. Don't bother. It's something entirely different. It won't be what you say it is. You just table anything.

MR COLLAERY: As well, I table the following documents, the speeches of the Chief Justice to which I referred:

Extracts from speeches made by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the ACT to -
Launch Law Week 1990;
Newly admitted practitioners, dated 27 April 1990.

Mr Jensen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I am not sure whether you heard it, but Mr Moore was implying that Mr Collaery was tabling anything, not the document that he said he was tabling.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for your observation, Mr Jensen, but I believe the documents have been presented as Mr Collaery promised.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, in the event that Mr Moore's comments, which I did not hear, are in the record, I ask that he withdraw the imputation that I would table a false document.

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MR SPEAKER: I did not hear the words either. I was listening to the speaker.

MR COLLAERY: Ask him to withdraw them, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Moore, did you make that imputation?

Mr Moore: I certainly did, Mr Speaker, indeed.

MR SPEAKER: Would you withdraw it, please.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, the point really is that there has been a censure motion on this matter.

MR SPEAKER: Order! You were not given the floor to debate it. I just ask you to withdraw. Would you withdraw that imputation, please, Mr Moore.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, I will follow your direction.

MR SPEAKER: No, I did not give a direction. I asked you to - - -

Mr Moore: And, in following your direction, I will withdraw the imputation that was, of course, previously a matter of censure which the Government used its numbers to stop on the previous occasion Mr Collaery did this sort of thing.

MR SPEAKER: That is a qualification. I request an unqualified withdrawal, please, Mr Moore.

Mr Collaery: "I withdraw the imputation"; say it.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Moore, please make an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, the point is that he has previously tabled documents like this.

Mrs Grassby: Aye, aye, Herr Bernard.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mrs Grassby, I warn you. The point is, Mr Moore, that you are referring to something that you did not qualify as a previous debate in the house. Therefore I ask you to make an unqualified withdrawal of the imputation that you have admitted that you have made.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, it is not quite as straightforward as that because you asked me what I said as you did not hear it. When I made the comment I referred to the previous debate. Hence I am not really in a position to make that unqualified withdrawal unless you absolutely insist.

MR SPEAKER: Please, I direct you to do it.

Mr Moore: Yes, Mr Speaker, I make an unqualified withdrawal.

**RESEARCH AT THE ROYAL CANBERRA AND WODEN VALLEY HOSPITALS AND
THE POTENTIAL FOR A UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
Ministerial Statement and Papers**

MR HUMPHRIES (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts), by leave: Mr Speaker, today I would like to take the opportunity to table the recently completed review, entitled "Research at the Royal Canberra and Woden Valley Hospitals and the Potential for a University Hospital". It has a rather longwinded title, but nonetheless it is a very significant report. The review was conducted by Professor Gus Fraenkel, foundation dean of the Flinders Medical School, Adelaide; Professor Colin Johnston, chairman of medicine, University of Melbourne; and Dr Brendon Kearney, whose name is well known to us here, I am sure, who is the administrator, Royal Adelaide Hospital, and author of the Independent Review of ACT Health Services of November 1988, known as the Kearney report.

In August of last year the Royal Canberra and Woden Valley Hospitals Interim Board of Directors invited Professor Fraenkel to conduct a small study with the following terms of reference: to review the state of research in the Woden Valley and Royal Canberra Hospitals; to develop proposals for strengthening the research infrastructure; and to develop proposals for a university hospital concept.

Subsequently, Professor Johnston and Dr Kearney were asked to participate in the research review and the development of the university hospital concept, respectively. The report describes the existing situation in Canberra and suggests what is needed to ensure the development of appropriate medical care for the people of the ACT and surrounding area. I am grateful to the Interim Hospitals Board for making the report available, and I recommend it for widespread reading.

One of the most valuable features of the report is its description of the relationship between the issues involved in research and those associated with good health care. In his Independent Review of ACT Health Services of November 1988 Dr Kearney commented:

Like any other community the people of Canberra and its surrounding districts deserve the very best of public health care.

Excellence in medical services is a significant contributing factor, and it implies excellence in patient care, excellence in teaching and excellence in research. These three factors are interrelated. Weakness in any one area creates an overall weakness in the system.

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Research is an integral part of general clinical practice. Without it, clinical medicine becomes outdated and standards generally slip. The lead time for research discoveries to be introduced into clinical practice is now considerably shorter than it was a decade ago, particularly in the areas of diagnostic methods and high technology.

Mr Wood: Are you going to spend money on this?

MR HUMPHRIES: If you wait and listen, Mr Wood, you might find out. Clinicians not exposed to a research environment find it increasingly difficult to keep up with modern practice and fall behind. Not all clinicians can or need to participate in research, but all should be exposed to it in varying levels and degrees. The importance of communicating to other practising doctors is an important facet of research.

Without a favourable atmosphere for research, the training of residents is sub-optimal. Therefore, if we in Canberra wish to attain levels of patient care comparable to those in other major cities in Australia, it is necessary to pay attention to the well-being of teaching and research.

Research in the ACT started in 1952 with the formation of the John Curtin School of Medical Research located in temporary quarters. The transfer to permanent buildings in 1958 enabled the conduct of medical research of high international standing. Expansion of clinical research occurred in 1966 and again in 1982 when facilities were gained at Woden Valley Hospital. Further expansion recently occurred in 1989 at both Woden Valley Hospital and the Australian National University. A review of the John Curtin School of Medical Research was conducted in early 1988.

The report noted the overall high-quality work of the human genetics and medical and clinical sciences laboratories. The report further commented that the establishment of productive relationships with the clinic through the Woden Valley and Royal Canberra Hospitals was to be applauded and was considered to be advantageous for both the basic and the clinical research programs of the school and to contribute to the application of new technologies to clinical diagnosis and practice. Such laboratory-clinic interactions should be enhanced further in the future.

A valuable amount of research is being done at Woden Valley Hospital and a smaller amount at the Royal Canberra Hospital, and this is significantly enhanced by the contribution of the division of medicine and clinical sciences of the John Curtin School of Medical Research. The full-time medical specialists private practice trust funds have provided a significant amount of money for research.

The report summarises what currently exists in Canberra, its shortcomings and what is believed to be needed. Importantly, it identifies the next steps to improving our system. There has to be some basic support in terms of laboratories, animal facilities, library, workshops, medical illustration, and facilities for clinical investigation with the necessary secretarial, computing, biostatistical advisory and technical staff. Scholarships for undergraduates would be required to be funded through the university or the hospital corresponding in general conditions to those awarded by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Much of clinical research is dependent on adequate medical records. If the clinical record is deficient, the diagnosis cannot be computer coded and therefore case finding and retrospective analysis will be impossible. Medical records, peer review and quality assurance programs need to be improved or established to a high standard. To enable the provision of a satisfactory research environment, a formal and properly constituted board of research would also need to be established.

The report suggests that a research grants committee will need to be appointed by the board of research with external members experienced in different fields of medical research. The possibility of establishing a research foundation to raise money for research and to establish a significant capital research fund will also need to be explored.

The research team presented the following options for a university hospital in the ACT. The first would be to enter into a relationship with an established State university medical school. Many of these are short of clinical teaching facilities and might welcome the opportunity of sending clinical students elsewhere. The second option might be to enrol the medical students in the newly created University of Canberra, which already has courses in areas related to medicine. The third option is to establish in the principal hospital, at Woden, an undergraduate clinical school for the last three years of a six-year course, with the degree awarded by the Australian National University. This school would be open to all third-year undergraduates from State university medical schools who meet the selection criteria set in Canberra. Newcastle requires special consideration. However, the review team was unanimous in preferring the proposal to establish the clinical medical school as part of the Australian National University.

The Government is now considering the review team's recommendations concerning the establishment of a university hospital in the ACT. Canberra does have some advantages for the conduct of clinical research. It has a well-defined catchment population, an excellent hospital system, and proximity to a large amount of expertise in the John Curtin School of Medical Research and some other

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institutions and significant groups in statistics, epidemiology and social sciences.

However, the review team acknowledges that it did not undertake detailed costings as part of this study. By identifying the significant features necessary, it has provided a good basis for a thorough evaluation of the financial impact of the recommendation, but the Government must now explore this aspect in detail. It would be irresponsible to do otherwise.

It is significant to note that, as the report acknowledges, this study is to a considerable extent based on the assumption of a one principal hospital concept - one to which this Government is committed. As the report states:

Given the small population of the region, any other arrangement would make consideration of the University Hospital concept a waste of time, because the duplication or triplication of small specialist units leads to inferior patient care, lack of clinical and intellectual collaboration and waste of resources.

The review team also acknowledged that its study was limited in scope to the consideration of medical research and proposals for a university hospital only. However, it notes the importance of the flow-on effects of improved standards of medical research to other health professional groups.

Clearly the report raises issues that are central to achieving better health care in the ACT. In my view, it is important that the report is widely read. I am most interested in hearing views on this report and its findings and would welcome any input from interested persons or organisations. I commend the report for your reading and further consideration. I present the following papers:

Review of research at the Royal Canberra and Woden Valley Hospitals and the potential for a university hospital -
Ministerial statement, 1 May 1990;
Review by Interim Board of Directors, dated February 1990.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

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

AINSLIE TRANSFER STATION
Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stefaniak): I have received a letter from Ms Follett proposing that a matter of public importance be submitted to the Assembly for discussion, namely:

The need to retain the Ainslie Transfer Station.

MS FOLLETT (Leader of the Opposition) (3.43): Mr Deputy Speaker, with every passing day the people of Canberra are realising more and more the mistake that they made in voting for the members opposite. There is very little that we can say about the disappointment of the people who voted for the No Self Government Party, except perhaps that it was clear that many of them did so because they were fearful that services to their community would suffer, and how right they were. With the decision to close the Ainslie Transfer Station those people have been stabbed in the back by the people they elected. As for the Residents Rally, it has taken somewhat longer, but people are realising more and more that its claim to represent the interests of local residents is an absolute fiction. It has totally given in to the dictates of the Liberal Party and its business mates.

The closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station is only the latest example of the way this Government operates, but it is the starkest example that we have had so far. There has been no consultation, no regard for the needs of the community, a total lack of a coherent, overall approach to making policy.

This decision was quite deliberately announced on a day when media and public attention was distracted by other events in this Assembly and by the Anzac Day commemoration. It was also deliberately announced with only six days before it became effective so that there would be little opportunity for public opinion to be expressed. The Government was terrified to hear from the public on this matter, as on so many others. Quite simply, Mr Deputy Speaker, there has been absolutely no consultation with the people affected by this decision. Not once has Mr Kaine or Mr Doby said to the residents of north Canberra or to the workers whose jobs have been destroyed that this action was being considered.

Anybody who is interested in the subject would have been led to expect exactly the opposite to what has happened. After all, Government members were in the majority on the Assembly committee which recommended an expansion of the facilities at the transfer station. A Government member chaired that committee. It is all there in black and white, as I pointed out at question time. It was recommended in that report that the Government "investigate the possibility of establishing oil collection points at the Ainslie transfer station".

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That was one recommendation. Another recommendation was that it "investigate the possibility of a special collection bin at the Ainslie Transfer Station for organic wastes".

Mr DUBY has left the chamber. I hope he has done so to read this report, as so far he has clearly not done so. Finally, the most damning recommendation of all, although Mr DUBY again has denied its existence - it is in this report in black and white and is the one that Dr KINLOCH, I believe, has to stick by - is "that recycling facilities at both landfill sites and Ainslie Transfer Station be upgraded and access improved".

So I believe that the report has made it clear that the Ainslie Transfer Station, in the view of that committee on which the Government had the numbers, was to be improved, not closed; that access was to be upgraded, not denied. Did the Government suggest closure of the transfer station to that committee? Of course it did not. So either it misled the committee and this Assembly or it completely failed to listen to the committee's recommendations. Either way, I believe both Dr KINLOCH and Mr DUBY are left with egg all over their faces.

Members of the media have remarked in the past few days on how strong the feeling on this issue is in the north Canberra suburbs. I am not surprised by that because I know how much the transfer station is used by the community and how much it needs it. Had Mr DUBY or Mr KAINE or any of the other Ministers bothered to ask the community, the Government would have been saved this embarrassment. Mr DUBY's answers at question time today and last week have exposed the fact that this decision was taken in complete ignorance of the level of use of the Ainslie Transfer Station. He does not have the remotest idea how many people use it. Given that he had no idea, I believe it might have been appropriate for him to ask. He could have asked the community. He could have asked Dr KINLOCH, who obviously would have been able to tell him what the service means to the community.

But the arrogance of the members of this Government knows no bounds. We saw this with the ignorant blustering of the Chief Minister when he said last Thursday that "there would be no detriment to anybody by closing down that transfer station". That is all he knows. He went on to say that "every minor administrative decision is not referred to the public". I think that the people of north Canberra would be very interested to know that the Chief Minister considers this a minor administrative decision.

The Chief Minister also seems to think that this decision affects only the people of Ainslie. Last Thursday he said, "If you do not happen to live in Ainslie you put your rubbish in your car or your trailer and you deliver it out there", meaning West Belconnen or Mugga Lane - not Mugga

Way, as Mr Duby said at question time. It is Mugga Lane, Mr Duby, a different thing entirely. The Chief Minister went on to say, "I do not expect that asking the residents of Ainslie to do the same thing puts them at any disadvantage and they are therefore in any different position to people who live anywhere else in the Territory". So much for the people of Ainslie; the Government has written them off.

Mr Speaker, the thousands of signatures on the petitions which are presented today - there are over 2,000 today and there will be more tomorrow - may show the Chief Minister that every north Canberra suburb is affected. There are even signatures from residents of Belconnen. To say that there is no detriment completely ignores the fact that residents will now be faced with a 40-kilometre round trip to another tip. It ignores the needs of the substantial elderly community of north Canberra. Quite simply, the tips at Belconnen and Mugga Lane are closer to every other part of Canberra than to north Canberra.

Quite apart from the question of convenience, we on this side are very concerned about the effect on the environment and in particular on recycling. The ACT Government Service and recycling groups have put considerable effort into encouraging people to recycle glass and paper. Everybody here knows that it is very easy for householders to simply throw out bottles with the rest of their garbage. We are concerned that the closure of the transfer station will be a significant setback for the cause of recycling in this Territory.

North Canberra residents have become used to the idea of taking bottles and wastepaper to the transfer station and separating them for recycling. A number of people have telephoned me in the past few days to say that they do not use a garbage bin at all, that they take all of their recyclables to the Ainslie Transfer Station and compost the rest of their household waste. Now you have written them off as well.

No matter how much Mr Duby pretends, he cannot hide the fact that the Government has totally failed to provide alternative recycling facilities. It may be that he has good intentions, at some future stage and when funds permit, but we have not heard about them yet. One miserable set of bottle banks at the Hackett shops will not cater for north Canberra, especially when nobody knows they are there. When did you tell the people what you were going to do about it? It is clear that thoughts about recycling came to Mr Duby only after people made a fuss. The bottle bank system is fine, but people will not use it when they know that the bottle banks are often full to overflowing and litter the footpath.

Everybody knows just how easy it is to miss the once-a-month wastepaper collection from the kerbside. Just as with domestic garbage, there needs to be a convenient

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location where people can take wastepaper when they have accumulated too much or missed that collection.

No doubt Mr Duby will make much in his speech of the proposed recycling facility at Mitchell. All I can say is that he had better; I am dying to hear about it. But some future new service does nothing to make up for the fact that this transfer station has been closed and that there is currently no alternative. The lack of a convenient alternative could well mean that some people will simply give up recycling. It is a matter that needs constant encouragement.

Then we come to the Government's defence of this decision as being necessary on budget grounds. Once again, we have the accountant mentality appearing. The fact that, in their view, a few dollars can be saved on paper by this decision is what matters most to Mr Kaine and his Government. The Chief Minister completely ignores the fact that government exists to provide services to the community. This decision may, in their view, save the Government \$200,000, but what about the cost to the community and the environment?

When we look at those issues it is clear that the cost of this decision will be greater than the proposed savings. Firstly, there is the cost to north Canberra residents - the cost of driving 40 kilometres to and from a tip. Then there is the cost to the Government, because the Ainslie Transfer Station is used by the Government itself. Litter patrols and other government services will now have to go a considerable extra distance to unload waste material. Either there will have to be more of them to do the same amount of work or the amount of work that they do will be reduced. Either way, the community pays. Then there is the cost of cleaning up the garbage which some people undoubtedly will leave on the streets or in the nature reserves around north Canberra.

There is the environmental cost. It is very difficult to quantify that cost in dollar terms. But of course Mr Kaine would not be too concerned about that because the sand mines which will be stripped to make the extra bottles and the native forests that will be felled to make the extra paper are not in the ACT. Mr Collaery, I notice, is very disturbed by that fact. Perhaps he should have considered it before he was a party to this ridiculous decision. Of course, as we all know, it is only the tinkle of the cash register, the hard dollar, that concerns the Chief Minister and the Government.

This Government stands condemned for a stupid decision. It stands condemned for an arrogant, very short-sighted decision. The people of north Canberra certainly will not forget it. It is my belief that this Government will live to regret it at the next election.

MR DUBY (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (3.55): We have heard the Leader of the Opposition attack this Government over the decision to close the Ainslie Transfer Station. I note, however, that the wording of the matter of public importance refers to the need to retain the Ainslie Transfer Station. It would appear that most of Ms Follett's speech was directed at attacking the decision and the decision making process, and in no way tried to justify the need to retain the Ainslie Transfer Station.

Ms Follett: You should have read the report.

MR DUBY: The decision that the Government has made is entirely consistent with our Government's environment policy which was released only a few months ago. We have heard lots of questions about whether we have read the report of the waste management committee. I wonder how many people on the other side have bothered to read this Government's environment policy, which has been hailed by bodies such as the Conservation Council as being the most comprehensive environment policy of any government in the Commonwealth of Australia.

Mrs Grassby: Where did you get that from? He must have made that one up, Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker.

MR DUBY: We are into the hackling and the cackling. That policy statement begins with our objective - to produce harmony between the retention and enhancing of the natural ecosystem, on the one hand, and human needs and aspirations, on the other. That policy document goes on to note that the operative word is "balance". Our stance on waste management and recycling is even more clearly stated. Our objective, as noted in the environment policy document, is to reduce waste production in society and to increase recycling. This is an objective that has far-reaching and long-term implications, and the Government is currently developing plans to progress towards it.

One element of this process is the preparation of the Government's response to the report on commercial and domestic waste management by the Assembly's Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment. Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, again I wish to make the point which I emphasised today in question time, that that committee's recommendations did not include the future of the Ainslie Transfer Station per se but the report did consider recycling and waste management practices. The Government believes that the closure of this facility is consistent with the committee's report and its objective of providing for the effective, long-term disposal of wastes.

Mr Wood: Now, that is a nonsense. That is really a nonsense.

MR DUBY: Mr Wood, how can you say such a thing? (Quorum formed)

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It might be worth noting that this is a matter of such great public importance that there are now only four members of the opposition in the Assembly. That is how much importance they place on it.

Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, the Government is determined to achieve its environmental objectives - to reduce the amount of waste produced and to encourage, as much as possible, recycling of the waste that is produced.

Mr Wood: What about emission of gases? How do you feel about that?

MR DUBY: I do not think there is too much gas emission at the Ainslie Transfer Station. Of course, members will also be aware of other pressures on the Government, and I refer to the economic and financial constraints that this Government is facing, which the previous Government - the previous Labor administration - refused to acknowledge existed and went on a blind spending binge. The Alliance Government is committed to creating a cost-effective administration for the Territory which provides acceptable levels of service to the ACT community at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers and ratepayers.

Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, some background information on the way the station was operated might be useful at this point. We have heard a lot of pious words about what a marvellous facility the Ainslie Transfer Station is. It was run under contract at a cost of some \$200,000 per year. The contract expired on 30 April 1990 - that is, yesterday - and the contractor saw fit not to renew the lease under the existing conditions. An offer to extend the contract, under the terms of the original agreement, was not accepted by the contractor. The contractor did, however, indicate a willingness to continue the service, subject to a new contract price.

Mr Wood: He does not want to go broke, does he? Haven't you heard of CPI and price increases?

MR DUBY: The renewal amount required by the contractor was far in excess of any CPI figures -
- -

Mr Wood: You did not throw it open to tender, did you?

MR DUBY: No, we did not throw it open to tender because, by agreeing to that new contract price, in effect, that would have been the requirement. It would have resulted in an even higher cost to the ratepayer and it would have required a throwing open to tender for a new contract.

But price was not the only factor that influenced our decision. Other factors were considered. Most of the waste from households going to the Ainslie Transfer Station was garden rubbish. The cost of double handling this rubbish and transferring it to the landfill sites was about \$16 per tonne; about 240 tonnes is carted each week,

amounting to nearly \$4,000 per week. Having listened to Ms Follett talk about the needs of the Ainslie residents to recycle, you would have imagined that they never got around to dumping any rubbish there at all, that all they did was go there to deliver their empty cans and bottles. But most of the rubbish deposited at the transfer station could be composted in householders' backyards.

Mr Wood: That is a nonsense. What figures can you quote on that?

MR DUBY: I can quote figures. There is 240 tonnes - - -

Mr Wood: No, as to what is compostable and what is not. I've had more experience there than you.

MR TEMPORARY DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jensen): Order! Mr Wood, your turn will come.

MR DUBY: It could be said that the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station should encourage recycling and waste minimisation, which everyone is in favour of, I hope.

There were obvious problems and considerable costs in maintaining the Ainslie Transfer Station under the previously existing arrangements. The contractor wanted more money to cover the costs of vandalism, fire and theft, which have occurred at the facility. The Ainslie Transfer Station was costing the ratepayer \$200,000 per year.

The Canberra Times today reported that considerable amounts of money have recently been spent on ensuring users' safety at the Ainslie Transfer Station. However, the report in the Canberra Times is, as usual, incorrect. Necessary work has been undertaken since 1987, and the total cost is in the order of \$60,000, not almost \$90,000, as reported. Works undertaken since 1987 have included \$7,000 for a sprinkler system following fire damage as a result of various causes; earthworks at a cost of \$9,000 to re-establish the ground which had become unsafe after heavy rain; security, lighting and power supply at a cost of \$25,000 to combat the problem of vandalism, and \$18,000 to repair paper recycling facilities.

The cost of current and likely future annual repairs and maintenance costs for the transfer station will more than cover the extension of current recycling facilities. Those costs were in addition to the contract, and it was anticipated that those costs would have been continued in years to come.

The Government has announced that it will soon open a new recycling facility at Mitchell. This will provide a more convenient and efficient facility for north Canberra and Gungahlin residents as well as the commercial sector at Mitchell. In the meantime, facilities have been provided at Dickson and Hackett shopping centres. Indeed, they are now much closer to the users of the Ainslie Transfer

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Station, whose fate Ms Follett was so bemoaning. The people who do not take any rubbish at all but simply take glass and cans can now go to a much more convenient place than the Ainslie Transfer Station.

The new Mitchell recycling centre will complement existing and planned recycling centres at Tuggeranong, Belconnen and Woden and the two landfill sites at Belconnen and Mugga Lane. The land and equipment from the Ainslie Transfer Station will remain assets of the ACT Government. Suggestions that this decision has been made so that the land can be sold off quickly and turned into a ready cash reserve are, frankly, straight out of Alice in Wonderland. The Government did not believe it would be cost-effective - - -

Mr Wood: Isn't it part of the ACT Nature Park?

MR DUBY: I am pleased to hear Mr Wood say that. Yes, it is.

Mr Wood: Otherwise you would try to sell it.

MR DUBY: No; that is where I beg to differ. The Government did not believe it would be cost-effective to continue operating the station under these conditions and, having considered the environmental implications which I have already spoken of, decided to close the facility. As I mentioned before, \$200,000 per annum could be better spent on further encouraging recycling in the whole of the ACT, not just for those citizens of the inner north.

Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station, whilst a necessary cost-saving measure, is not inconsistent at all with this Government's comprehensive plan to develop an integrated waste management strategy. The Alliance Government is committed to this cause. The ongoing savings arising from the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station can be better utilised to further extend our recycling facilities.

Canberra people have a strong recycling ethic, and the Government is committed to providing appropriate facilities for the community. With that in mind, it makes a joke of the matter of public importance, that there is a need to retain the Ainslie Transfer Station. I think I have demonstrated that the Government has a firm commitment to recycling facilities throughout not just the inner north but all of the ACT and that recycling can be efficiently done throughout Canberra without retaining the transfer station yet with a saving for the ACT community.

But, Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, there is one further point that I would like to raise in relation to the comments that Ms Follett made. As usual, in her opening statement she made highly emotionally charged accusations which appear to be headline grabbers for the people in the media who are present - like suggesting that we are closing the Ainslie Transfer Station to look after our business

mates. I think I have demonstrated that that is simply not on. We are doing it in the interests of all of the citizens of Canberra.

But even more to the point, I suppose, is this bland accusation that we are closing the transfer station and that people will have their jobs and their lives destroyed. I think that was what she said. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not one person who is currently employed at the Ainslie Transfer Station will lose his or her job because of the closure of the station. Those persons will be redeployed - we have that guarantee from the operator - into the further operations of the company which has been handling the station. So, once again, we see that the complaints that the Leader of the Opposition has come up with are nothing but pure sham.

MR WOOD (4.10): I suppose we could expect outrageous statements from a member who came into this Assembly with the idea of abolishing this Assembly and who subsequently joined the Government.

Mr Duby: Never; no; Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, I object.

MR TEMPORARY DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Mr Duby, do you wish to raise a point of order?

Mr Duby: Yes. Mr Stevenson and I are being tarred with the same brush, and we both object to it.

MR WOOD: You can object, but there is no point of order.

MR TEMPORARY DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Wood, please resume your seat. While I am sitting in the chair, I will be the one who decides whether we have a point of order. Mr Wood, continue.

MR WOOD: In that circumstance, I suppose we can expect outrageous statements, but the statement that this transfer station was closed as an environmental factor is as outrageous as any that we will hear anywhere. What a nonsense that is. The conservation committee that Mr Duby quoted is now gathering its forces to look at energy conservation in the ACT. A very significant part of that committee's investigation, and a major part of its aim, is to try to stop people travelling unnecessarily. But what has this Minister done? Quite arbitrarily, he has decided that people from 10,000 homes will have to take a round trip of 30 or so kilometres to the tip. You might dwell on the outflowing of gases that would contribute to the greenhouse effect as a result of that. When I was a member of that committee, it considered quite carefully whether people should be charged to go to the tips. A sound argument for that - though in the end I did not agree with it - was to discourage people from driving to tips. Mr Duby might tell me how he is going to reconcile that when the next report lands on his desk. We may well have a motion to review that decision.

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We all have to play our part in this Territory, and that was the point of that reference to the committee which came from Mrs Grassby when she was Minister. We will have an energy report which surely will be recommending that the mileage that Canberra people travel be reduced. I do not know how Mr Duby will respond to that.

Mr Duby has endeavoured to use the report of that committee to which I referred as evidence for the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station. He has consciously, wilfully, evaded the issue in a number of circumstances. It is true that the committee, of which Mr Stefaniak, Dr Kinloch and I were members, did not recommend that the Ainslie tip stay open. That is not an argument that we allowed it to be closed. We have not recommended in that report that we keep open the Mugga Lane tip and the Belconnen tip. Is Mr Duby going to close them? We have not raised them as an issue in our report. What a nonsense it is to say that, because we did not refer to it, it is a ground for closing it. I suppose when a no self-government candidate sits in the ministry we can expect those nonsense statements.

Mr Duby has also evaded the issue of consultation. He said he consulted within the Government. Dr Kinloch may correct me, but I have a fair memory of a recent remark by him that he did not know about it. He lives in the north part of Canberra, a stone's throw from the tip. If Mr Duby intended to consult, one would think he would have turned around to Dr Kinloch and said, "Hey, listen, this is what we're proposing". He did not consult even that far.

Mr Duby: No favouritism.

MR WOOD: Whom did he consult? He did not talk to Mr Humphries, because I know his views on recycling; they are quite sound. Mr Duby further evaded the issue when he said that the contract was not going to be renewed. Of course, no contractor would renew his contract based on something that was signed three or five years ago. How many years ago was it? Does Mr Duby know offhand? He says that it was three ago. Rates have gone up a good deal in that time. Of course the contractor is not going to renew the contract in the circumstances that you have presented to him. Do not use that as an argument here; it is quite hopeless. Once more Mr Duby evaded the question of recycling elsewhere. Mitchell came out of the blue. Nothing is planned for Mitchell at this stage. At the end of the year something might happen.

What concerns me as much as anything else about this closure is the ruthless way in which it was done. I had people sign petitions out there on Saturday, and I was fairly optimistic, especially in view of what Dr Kinloch said, that there might be some review by the Government. But on the television news last night I saw ACT workers, or contractors of some sort, on overtime on Sunday cutting down all the signs with oxyacetylene gear. They were

really closing it up. I suppose there is a big brick wall across there now, to make sure that people do not go near the place. They were on overtime. Was that necessary? You are trying to save money. What did it cost you to get them out yesterday? Surely all you needed to do was shut the gate and put a padlock on it. But, of course, you wanted to make sure that there is absolutely no review. Dr Kinloch would not have a chance to ask you to change your mind.

Mr Temporary Deputy Speaker, north Canberra has lost a facility that it should have. I have lost a facility that I use regularly. Dr Kinloch has lost his facility; he has lost out doubly, I might say. But, most of all, Mr Duby has lost because I can tell you, after having petitions signed there on Saturday, there is not one vote left for him anywhere in north Canberra. Mr Duby and his party are the losers. I met some very angry people on Saturday. I met a member of a Liberal Party branch in that area who is considering his position.

The general view of people was that they pay their rates, as does everybody else in Canberra, and that they should have access to that facility. There is no point in having facilities 20 kilometres or more away. Those people in north Canberra believe that they are being discriminated against and that their rate payments are worth less to them than to anybody else. The real meaning of all this has been explained by the Chief Minister. Once again, we have a Cabinet Minister of this Government taking decisions without any consultation. I could go through them one by one. They do not want to consult.

There are two matters in this: one is the tip, and people are entitled to have a facility where they can dump their rubbish; the other is recycling. On the matter of the tip, as a pretty regular visitor there, I can tell Mr Duby - I am sure Dr Kinloch will support me - that most of the so-called compostables that he talks about are the heavy branches, the material that people cannot make into compost. It would be a good idea if he put a large-scale shredding machine there to do it for them.

Mr Duby said that Ms Follett had not answered his questions about the need for the place. She certainly did. Let me repeat them. She said that this is a well-used and valued facility. It is needed in that community, and the community wants it. How is that for a reason? They told me that very clearly on Saturday. That is particularly the case when you consider the age composition of the suburb. It is an older suburb, and people are not happy about driving any further than they need to. A further reason, Mr Duby, is that it is counterproductive. The cost may come out of different pockets, but it will cost the community more.

Finally, as explained by Rosemary Follett, it will contribute to the greenhouse effect, which at all levels we

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should be seeking to minimise. The gases that will be put out by making people travel further will harm the environment more.

MR MOORE (4.21): I thought I would open my part of the debate by reading from a letter from one constituent. It starts, "Dear Michael", and refers to a matter discussed with the Reid Residents Association and then to be followed up with the ACT branch of the Australian Conservation Foundation, which will be meeting on Wednesday evening. It continues:

I wrote to Mr Collaery expressing my views and hoping to draw his consideration to the following aspects of this matter.

- (1) Residents Rally got a very solid vote from the North Canberra population because it appeared to offer consultation on local environmental issues.

Of course, this constituent is now very disappointed about this matter, and he will be further disappointed, no doubt, in terms of consultation. That is his next point:

- (2) Mr Duby has provided no consultation - just a bald announcement of a "fait accompli". This is no better than previous Federal Ministers, Hodgman, Holding, etc.
- (3) Demographically, North Canberra has a high aged population.

Of course, some of us are very aware of some of the difficulties that are caused to these people having to take their rubbish, because of this decision, to other tips, as outlined further in this letter. It continues:

- (4) North Canberra's landscaping - a feature of the beauty and attractiveness of Canberra as a whole - is dominated by exotic deciduous trees. This is the period of greatest colour just starting now. In the next 6 weeks tons of leaves will fall on the nature strips and roads of North Canberra. In the past - with a local tip people would mostly rake the leaves, gather them and take them to Ainslie. What will happen this year?

What should have been the consideration - and what would have happened with some public consultation - is that Mr Duby could have been finding out what to do about composting those leaves, particularly the leaves of plane trees, which are very, very difficult to compost in a normal composting system. I like to compost my own oak leaves, as they make a beautiful compost. I have seen other people from Canberra coming down our streets and picking them up. But the vast majority of them are raked by residents and taken to that tip. Now, at this

particular time, we will see a total change in that. I presume that most people will rake those leaves off their nature strips onto the road and give them back to Mr Duby as his responsibility to pick them up off the roads with his street sweepers.

Imagine the expense of that. I have seen these street sweepers operating on Saturday mornings, particularly in the old days when we had parking problems - not so much now that this Alliance Government has resolved that aspect - and the expense associated with those efforts will be quite significant. It is clear that Mr Duby has not taken that into account at all.

Remember that, demographically, north Canberra has quite a high aged population. The letter continues:

You cannot expect retired people ... to take the trip to Belconnen or Mugga Lane - at least an extra hour over the previous "round trip".

The writer also draws attention to how elderly people will see those tips. The letter continues:

... Belconnen and Mugga are - not bitumen surfaces so not All Weather services - do not have recycling facilities close to the tip face so you have to park in two or three different places (Ainslie is very compact and the re-cycling works because it is convenient there) -

and it could have been improved there. With a simple signature and without any consultation, you have taken away an ideal transfer station. For the elderly, in particular, those other tips are not safe in the wet because of the enormous trucks digging deep tracks in the mud.

I know, Mr Duby, that you may not have this problem when you drive, but the elderly have it and it is quite significant for them. It has been happening out of north Canberra for a long time. The letter continues:

the large trucks intimidate car drivers, especially less confident drivers such as older people.

5. Finally the Ainslie Tip had a friendly, helpful atmosphere where it was common for the Tip supervisor -

and I can vouch for this because I have seen him do it -

(who has done a damn good job over the last couple of years working there) to assist people in packing and/or emptying loads if they were having trouble. Similarly, regulars such as myself often help people unload heavy or bulky loads if they need help.

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At Mugga Lane or Belconnen there is no conviviality with the officials - you just get out of THERE as quick as possible to avoid being squashed by the Bulldozer.

Mr Duby: When was the last time you went to the Belconnen tip?

MR MOORE: I have been to the Belconnen tip quite often, Mr Duby. I am aware that the dropping of rubble at the Ainslie Transfer Station was inappropriate so, when my house was being built, I took the rubble to Belconnen tip and sometimes to Mugga Lane. I am aware of those tips; I am aware of their differences. If you had been aware, you also would have understood that.

Mr Duby: A lot of other commercial users did not. They were happy to go and dump it into hoppers at Ainslie.

MR MOORE: The point about it, Mr Duby, is that you did not consult with anybody. You do not have a clue about consultation. You have been attempting to shout me down, but you will need a bigger voice than that. The public consultation process is the most important factor and that is what people are angry about. If you can prove to people of north Canberra that there is a considerable cost benefit - if you do a cost-benefit analysis and can show them that - they might be able to see their way clear to allow it to happen and not to object in the way they are objecting.

There is a petition today with more than a thousand signatures, but that is simply the tip of the iceberg as to the strength of people's feelings on the matter. The feeling is about the fact that you have taken a high-handed decision that is probably a bad one and you probably cannot find the appropriate evidence to support it. You have made no attempt to look into it and you have made no attempt to look at the environmental impacts of that. Mr Wood has referred to them and so has Ms Follett, so there is absolutely no point in my going back over them. The most important thing is the cost-benefit analysis.

While we are on this debate I will add that a statement made by Dr Kinloch at question time today was incorrect. He has misled the Assembly, and I am prepared to take further action on that.

Mr Jensen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I would suggest that Mr Moore is about to get onto very dangerous ground.

MR MOORE: Name the standing order.

Mr Jensen: It is 241, Mr Speaker. I believe Mr Moore is just about to get onto very dangerous ground in relation to matters before an Assembly committee prior to a report being brought down.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Jensen, for your observation. That is not a point of order. Mr Moore, please be careful.

MR MOORE: What I am saying, Mr Speaker, in referring to that matter of 241, is that Dr Kinloch has misled this Assembly. That is what I said and that is what I stand by.

I also make it very clear that at the end of this matter of public importance I intend to seek leave to put a motion which will read:

That the Assembly demand:

- (a) that the Minister for Urban Services reopen the Ainslie Transfer Station; and
- (b) that any future moves to close the transfer station be preceded by -

and this is what you should have done -

- (i) full public consultation;
- (ii) consideration of all environmental concerns; and
- (iii) a publicly available cost-benefit analysis.

People in Canberra are not stupid. If they can see the benefits of taking some action like this, they will go with it. But you have made no attempt to show them any benefit, other than that this will save a couple of dollars - and a couple of dollars saved is less than the cost of transferring the Executive Deputies to the fifth floor, when it comes to the crunch.

MR STEVENSON (4.30): Mr Speaker, I speak on behalf of many people in Canberra who feel they are not being correctly represented in government. In answer to my question to Mr DUBY about what consultation there was with members of the Canberra community who are affected by the closure of the Ainslie tip, he said, basically, none.

When we look at the idea of transfer stations, it is not necessarily something that we should be phasing out. In Sydney, in various parts, they are phasing them in. They have been seen as an environmentally sensible way to avoid the cost, safety problems and environmental damage of small vehicles transferring waste over long distances.

Mr Moore raises the point, quite correctly, that the people of Canberra are not silly. A logical explanation can be given to them. If it makes sense, they will agree with it. The problem is not just with this Government but with governments in general - they act first and talk later. We need consultation. Any number of people to whom I have spoken and I do not disagree that cuts should be made. In other words, the people of Canberra do not have an inexhaustible supply of money to pay for things. They know that; we know that; but it needs to be done after consultation with the people.

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The tip was closed without consultation. The full details of economic and environmental impact should have been presented to the people. There should have been consultation before the act, not after. The people of Canberra have been concerned about no or little consultation. Let us hope that it is not too late now to get full consultation going on the matter so that the people of Canberra can have a legitimate say in what happens to them.

MR JENSEN (4.33): Mr Speaker, one of the things that I need to say from the outset in relation to this matter is that I, like other members within this place, regret the fact that the decision in relation to this matter had to be made when it was made. I am referring to the circumstances of the contract, as outlined by Minister DUBY before. It resulted in the decision having to be made to close this facility at this time.

Mrs Grassby: The great Residents Rally! They tell you they belong to the people. They could not care less about the people.

MR SPEAKER: Order! You are taking up your own time. Please proceed, Mr Jensen.

MR JENSEN: Mr Speaker, the issue that relates particularly to this decision referred to the requirement for the Government to make a decision on the renewal of a contract that Mrs Grassby knew full well was due - - -

Mr Moore: Do you remember promising open government? Do you remember your promises of open government?

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Moore, you have had your turn.

Mrs Grassby: So what? You can always let another contract. Don't you know about those rules?

MR JENSEN: Yes, Mr Speaker, I am about to get to letting another contract. It is all very well for the people opposite to say, "Just let another contract". What are we going to do while we go through the tendering process that would be required?

Mrs Grassby: What are we going to do now?

Mr Moore: Bureaucratic tactic. Why didn't you do it before?

Mrs Grassby: Just closing it down. Well, why didn't you do it before? You knew what you were coming up with.

MR SPEAKER: Order, Mrs Grassby, please!

MR JENSEN: It would be very good, Mr Speaker, if I had an opportunity to speak without continuous interjections.

Mrs Grassby: Well, we get them from you, Norm.

MR JENSEN: I think, Mr Speaker, we gave the others a chance to talk.

Mrs Grassby: We get them from you, Norm.

MR SPEAKER: Order, Mrs Grassby, please! I warn you.

MR JENSEN: One of the key issues in relation to this matter - and I heard Mr Wood say it before - is that the people of north Canberra are losing a facility. Mr Speaker, residents of Tuggeranong and Weston Creek do not have that sort of facility. They have to use the Mugga Lane tip, and the people of Belconnen have to use the Belconnen tip. We do not have the sort of facility that the people of north Canberra had.

One wonders why more of these sorts of facilities have not been provided to the people of Canberra. I suggest that it relates specifically to the cost associated with the running of them. I know Mr Stevenson has raised the fact that these facilities are coming into use in other cities, but it was quite clear at the time that the Government had to make a decision. I would like such a facility in Tuggeranong, as would other residents of Tuggeranong, and in Weston Creek. There are also aged people in Weston Creek and Tuggeranong. They do not have such a facility. It is all very well for those in the Opposition to say, "Build another one", but they are not in charge of the budget of the ACT at the moment. When they were in charge of the budget they did not provide the sorts of facilities that they are now seeking for the people of north Canberra. Why did we not find in the budget of the Follett Labor Government the sorts of facilities and requirements that clearly Mr Wood feels should be available to every person in Canberra?

Mr Berry: These dogs in the manger.

MR JENSEN: There will be plenty of times, Mr Berry, when we can talk about dogs in the manger. I note Mr Wood's comments about necessary trips. There is the proposal to establish recycling centres in the shopping centres in the same sort of way as recycling centres have been established at Woden, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong, where there are big bins for glass and metal.

Mr Wood: They're suddenly appearing in north Canberra.

MR JENSEN: That is the point. The people who live in north Canberra will have less distance to go, and that will reduce the amount of time that they spend in their motor cars going to these facilities. They will be able to go to the Hackett shops, buy their groceries and then drop off the cans and other items of recyclable waste. They will be able to make one trip, instead of two. That is really what we are talking about.

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Let us now get onto the issue of compostable matter. As Mr Duby has already said, a lot of compostable matter was going into the Ainslie tip.

Mr Duby: It was 70 per cent.

Mr Wood: It's not the case.

MR JENSEN: Is it not the case, Mr Wood? Was it just big trees? Were there no garden clippings at all? Where were the garden clippings going, Mr Wood? Through you, Mr Speaker, we have to ask Mr Wood. I apologise for not addressing my remarks through the Chair, but I think it is important, Mr Speaker. One has to ask: where was all this compostable matter going? As Mr Moore quite clearly said, he composts his own rubbish in his backyard.

Mr Wood: So do I, but I still go to the tip.

MR JENSEN: It is good that these members across here are keen to do that. I hope that they encourage their constituency to take up the task of composting matter in their own backyards so that they can improve the soil that we in Canberra, particularly those of us who live in the south, know is not particularly brilliant. We need that compostable matter.

It is interesting that one of the issues that was also raised by the report that was produced by the Assembly committee related to the need for these sorts of facilities. The only tip that has it at the moment is the one at Mugga Way.

Mr Duby: Mugga Lane.

MR JENSEN: Mugga Lane, all right. I suspect that at some stage or other there probably was a tip at Mugga Way; Calthorpes' House probably had its own tip at one time.

A large amount of the waste disposed of at the Ainslie Transfer Station, as I have said, consisted of garden waste, such as grass and clippings. It is appropriate for us to encourage people to compost it at their own locations, not to cart it off to the tip, because that also increases the amount of petrol that they use and produces other gases that relate to the problems associated with the greenhouse effect.

Mr Speaker, the Government will be seeking to ensure that all citizens of the ACT, not just people in north Canberra, have ready access to recycling facilities at their nearby shopping centres. I recall, from driving around Tuggeranong, that those facilities are available at the major group centres. Let us see those sorts of facilities being available - - -

Mr Moore: There's more to recycling than bottles, Norm, for heaven's sake.

MR JENSEN: Bottles, cans, plastics - all those sorts of things have to be recycled, Mr Speaker. Plastics is another area that has not been forgotten by the Alliance Government. Cages for the disposal of plastic containers have been installed at the Hackett and Dickson shops, ensuring easy access for the people of the area.

Mr Wood: Yes, very suddenly.

MR JENSEN: Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, I think you would find that they were on the agenda anyway, as my colleague Mr Duby has already said in relation to the Mitchell facility, which will also provide encouragement for recycling.

Mr Wood: Have we got that yet?

MR JENSEN: No, Mr Wood, we do not have it yet, and I suggest that we probably would not have had it yet under the previous Government. There are lots of things that we did not get under the previous Government.

Mr Speaker, the report that was produced by the Assembly committee will ensure that by the next election we will have the best recycling program, and residents of north Canberra will be very grateful for that.

Mr Berry: Just like they are now.

MR JENSEN: It is all very well for Mr Berry to say, "Just like they are now", Mr Speaker. Once again, I refer to the other people who live in Canberra. More people live in Canberra than just those who live in Ainslie or north Canberra.

Mr Berry: Did you strip consultation out of the Residents Rally policy?

MR JENSEN: No, Mr Speaker, we have not stripped consultation out of the Residents Rally policy.

Mr Berry: Not "Mr Speaker"; I'm Mr Berry.

MR JENSEN: I am doing it correctly, Mr Berry, through Mr Speaker.

MRS GRASSBY (4.43): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on such an important matter as the closure of the Ainslie Transfer Station. We on this side of the Assembly are constantly criticising the Government for its lack of action, but it has rushed in, without asking anybody, and has closed the transfer station. I join with our leader in saying that the people in Canberra are realising more and more each day their mistake in voting for the people opposite. Every day the Government

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is either closing down or trying to sell off something that belongs to the people.

As for the members of the Residents Rally - known as the NIMBYs in Canberra - it shows how out of touch they are with the people who voted for them. They do not really care what happens to the people of Canberra.

Members interjected.

MR SPEAKER: Order!

MRS GRASSBY: Do not worry, Mr Speaker; I can yell over the gagging lot on the other side of the house. I have a very good voice. So do not worry about it, Mr Speaker. I can handle it.

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

MRS GRASSBY: I ask for an extension of time, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Is an extension granted? An extension is not granted.

Suspension of Standing and Temporary Orders

Motion (by **Mrs Grassby**), by leave, agreed to:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Mrs Grassby speaking for a further five minutes.

MRS GRASSBY: As I was saying, the members of the Residents Rally are out of touch with the people who voted for them, because their big base was in north Canberra where the transfer station was. That is where the roots are of the people who voted for them, and they do not care about them.

As for Mr Duby - we know about St Craig who had the conversion to nowhere and the No Self Government Party - he does not care. Why should he care what he does? He can close down anything; it does not matter. He came in on a no self-government policy. Why should he care about the people of north Canberra and Ainslie? As for telling us that he is going to do something in Mitchell, I would have thought, Mr Speaker, even if he were not going to consult with the people, at least he would have had the facility up and running at Mitchell before he closed the Ainslie Transfer Station down.

As for Mr Jensen over here, who tells us exactly what has happened at the transfer station, I am quite sure he has never been there; he would not know. He is interested only in Tuggeranong. He said that they have nothing at Tuggeranong, but our Government would have done something

about that. We would not have closed places down. We would have done something about that. We would not have done that. But this Government, Mr Speaker, rushed in to grab power for the glory of the power. Its members are not interested in the people of Canberra. They are interested only in the glory of being in government and being Ministers. They are not interested in the residents of north Canberra.

I thought they would have taken care of opening the facilities at Mitchell - if they are going to do this, and I am not sure that they are. They tell you that they will do these things, but all we hear about is what they are going to close down. They have more twists than a bottle of worms, Mr Speaker. You do not know what they will do next.

Last week the Chief Minister gave us a great speech on the greenhouse effect. He made statements about the ozone layer. But, at the same time, Mr DUBY was forcing residents of inner Canberra to drive many kilometres more to dump their rubbish. Have they asked the shopkeepers in these areas whether they mind having the stench of garbage all round their shops? I would like to know about that. Of course they have not been asked. The Government does not ask, Mr Speaker; it just goes ahead and does it.

Mr DUBY said, "Oh, we'll give them big bins; don't worry about that". It does not matter that the people have said that they do not want big bins. Again, we will just give them to them. It does not really matter, because Mr DUBY will not be here after the next election; he does not really care what we give the people. He does not care whether the people are asked. We have only to look at the papers on the weekends - and I quote from one of the letters which said "Bring back Rosemary" - to know they are sick of it. The sign at the Ainslie Transfer Station says "Dump DUBY". That is what we should be doing, Mr Speaker - taking Mr DUBY to the tip and dumping him. I think that is the best thing that we could do, Mr Speaker. He had the tag of "No Self Government".

Mr Collaery: And he gave you five minutes.

MRS GRASSBY: No, I think you gave me the five minutes. I think Mr DUBY wanted to sit me down.

Mr DUBY: No; I supported that.

MRS GRASSBY: I am sorry, Mr DUBY. If you supported me, I will forgive you. But I cannot help it; the sign at the tip said "Dump DUBY". As I said before, the letters in the Canberra Times say "Bring back Rosemary". People are sick of not being consulted and they are sick of being told what they are going to get.

All Mr Collaery can say is, "Where is the money?". Mr Collaery, I think you should run a better government so that you have the money to do the things that people want.

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

Suspension of Standing and Temporary Orders

MR COLLAERY (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that Mr Humphries have leave to speak for five minutes on this topic.

Mr Berry: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; one would expect that the deputy leader opposite would be able to put a motion in the proper form.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Collaery, would you rephrase that.

MR COLLAERY: I move:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Mr Humphries speaking for five minutes on the matter.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

MR HUMPHRIES (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (4.50): Mr Speaker, I do not propose to use more than the full five minutes that I have generously been given by the house. I do not think the issue really has the heat in it that the opposition would make us think it has. Certainly, the capacity to whip up the issue into something terrible and heinous on the part of this Government by members of the opposition cannot be underestimated, but I am confident that the decisions that we make in relation to matters such as this are the right ones and will be seen as such by the people of the ACT at the next election. They are sometimes difficult decisions; I acknowledge that. Sometimes they cause pain. They sometimes cause particular people in particular categories of employment or places of residence or whatever in the ACT to be regretful. But I think we have to make the right decisions when they present themselves to us.

I have looked at the arguments that Mr Duby has presented for that decision and I am confident that it was the right one. It was not easy. I do not think Mr Duby imagined, when he made the decision, that he would be "Mr Popularity", necessarily, and for that reason - - -

Mr Duby: The most hated man.

MR HUMPHRIES: "The most hated man", he says. But I think he has to be given credit for having made a difficult decision. It was difficult, but it had to be made.

I want to address a few very difficult issues which were raised by the opposition but which ought to be rejected.

One was a suggestion by Ms Follett that people would lose their jobs. I am assured that nobody has lost his or her job and that nobody will lose his or her job as a result of this closure of the transfer station. Alternative facilities will be opened at Mitchell, as we have made abundantly clear already, and it may even be that in time the expansion of such facilities will provide further jobs in Canberra. Who knows?

The second point is that, contrary to suggestions from those opposite, there will not be any threat to the capacity of litter pickers on the north side of the lake to properly dispose of the litter that they pick up. The effect of the change will be minimised through operational adjustments and alternative internal transfer arrangements for collecting litter. As a result, nobody need worry that there will not be adequate facilities for taking away rubbish collected by those people on the north side of Canberra.

Mr Wood made a good point - superficially, at least. He said that there will be a big impact on recycling in north Canberra if we go ahead with the closure of the station. He ignores one very important thing about this Ainslie Transfer Station, and that is that the vast bulk of things taken to that station are not recycled. They are simply thrown into large bins to be carted away to one of the two main tips.

Mr Wood: You ought to see the junk that goes in.

MR HUMPHRIES: That is right. A lot of junk goes into those stations.

Mr Kaine: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; can we stop this debate across the floor of the house, please? It is getting unbearable.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Chief Minister. Please proceed, Mr Humphries.

MR HUMPHRIES: Mr Wood and those opposite would know that the important thing about our approach towards waste management in the ACT, and indeed in the rest of Australia, is to get Australians away from the habit of throwing away everything because it is convenient to do so. We have to get people away from the view that they can throw whatever they want away without any care in the world. We, in turn, make it so easy for them to do it that they have no second thought about recycling. That is the important thing, Mr Speaker. I am confident that, with a comprehensive restructuring of our waste services in the ACT - and the report brought down by Dr Kinloch, I think, is a good starting point in that regard - with that effort to achieve a comprehensive recycling and waste management system which takes account of that basic reality, we might have a good chance of attacking that basic problem.

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I have to say that I think there is some regret on our side of the chamber that this issue has caused so much pain. I certainly regret the fact that the people of north Canberra have felt hurt by this. I would have liked to see us put more effort into explaining the reasons for that decision. I acknowledge that.

Mr Wood: Did you hear that, Mr DUBY?

MR HUMPHRIES: I think Mr DUBY is well aware of that fact, and I think he would support it. Certainly it is a lesson for us in explaining the reason for the decisions that are made in the ACT along these lines. I will be making sure that we do that in future. I think we can learn a lesson from this, and it is a valuable experience for us all.

MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

MR MOORE (4.55): Mr Speaker, I seek leave of the Assembly to move the motion that has been circulated in my name.

Leave not granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND TEMPORARY ORDERS

MR MOORE (4.55): I move:

That so much of the standing and temporary orders be suspended as would prevent Mr Moore moving -

That the Assembly demand:

- (a) that the Minister for Urban Services reopen the Ainslie Transfer Station;
and
- (b) that any future moves to close the transfer station be preceded by:
 - (i) full public consultation;
 - (ii) consideration of all environmental concerns; and
 - (iii) a publicly available cost-benefit analysis.

Mr Speaker, these are just standard, ordinary things that should have been done in the course of considering a situation such as this. Mr DUBY previously said, "We didn't have time. We came to the end of the contract". As Minister, he has known that that contract - - -

Mr Kaine: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I submit that Mr Moore is debating the motion, and he is not entitled to do that.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr Moore, please stick to your motion.

MR MOORE: We need to debate this motion in order to give an opportunity for each member to express his or her concern. Dr Kinloch has publicly expressed his concern, for example, and this motion will give him the opportunity to come out, as he claims he would like to, and support the motion. Or, if he wants to be honest, he can vote against the motion, as he did with the motion before the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment, which was carried, despite what he said earlier today.

Dr Kinloch: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; I would ask that Mr Moore withdraw those last comments. The details of that meeting have not been put before a committee. There is considerable dispute about what was said and what was not said, and that is a partisan view of it.

MR SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw that, please, Mr Moore.

MR MOORE: I withdraw it, Mr Speaker. But let me say that that matter will come up later because Dr Kinloch is not going to be able to mislead this house and leave it as it lies.

MR SPEAKER: Order! It is an imputation again. Will you please withdraw that.

Mr Jensen: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker, on 202.

MR MOORE: It is not imputation, Mr Speaker; it is a direct statement of fact that Dr Kinloch has
- - -

MR SPEAKER: You are inferring.

MR MOORE: I shall withdraw it to take it up later. Mr Speaker, I do not need to withdraw it because I said I shall later take up that matter of Dr Kinloch misleading this house. This is what I said, and it is not necessary for me to withdraw that sort of statement.

MR SPEAKER: There is the same implication, Mr Moore. It has been withdrawn anyway.

Mr Collaery: He has repeated it. Mr Speaker, he has been ignoring your directions flagrantly all afternoon.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Collaery. Please withdraw the last statement you made also, Mr Moore - an unqualified withdrawal.

MR MOORE: I withdraw it, Mr Speaker. The opportunity will come for us to consider that matter, and I will ensure that the Assembly does so. I move this motion in order to make sure that people like Dr Kinloch can start being honest with the electorate and give them a chance, when they do object to something, to be able to say that they object, instead of saying to everybody, "I opposed that; I did not like that idea", and we are supposed to believe - - -

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MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Moore, please debate the motion before the Assembly.

MR MOORE: That is what I am doing. The motion, Mr Speaker, is to give him the opportunity to do so, so that we can get a straight option, a straight chance, for people in north Canberra to see that the whole of that Government supports or opposes Mr Duby in this stupid decision. We need a motion to do that, and that is why, Mr Speaker, it is absolutely essential that this motion be put before this house.

MR WOOD (4.59): Mr Speaker, I will support this motion to suspend standing orders so that we may place this matter before the house. Unfortunately, suspension now seems necessary so that we can do so. We need to suspend standing orders because we discovered today that one person at least was consulted in this process - one person admitted to that, but we have not found any others. Let us suspend standing orders so that we can have a consultation to explore them. They have not been adequately explored to date, and we need to do it.

We need also to suspend standing orders to discuss the rather outrageous claim and the point raised in this motion concerning consideration of environmental aspects. We need to clarify those points because there seems to be some confusion on that side of the house about what is and what is not an environmental benefit.

It seems to me that there is some problem of a conceptual nature with the Minister and his colleagues, so that would surely lead to that third point of the motion, to get a publicly available cost-benefit analysis. The costs, on a superficial view, can be hidden. The Government has clearly seen a \$200,000 benefit but it has declined to see that there is a much more substantial cost to the ACT taxpayers who believe that they pay their rates to get a service that has now gone. It is difficult to get a precise estimation of the additional kilometres that will be travelled - and that will be an expense to the ACT community - but on estimates from people with whom I was discussing it at the weekend it would not be less than 1.4 million kilometres extra a year worth of petrol and gases pouring into the atmosphere. That is the environmental side. On the cost-benefit side we would see that the cost spread across the ACT community would be much greater than \$200,000.

Mr Kaine: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; Mr Wood is debating the substance of the motion.

MR SPEAKER: You are debating the issue, Mr Wood. Please stick to the motion.

MR WOOD: Mr Speaker, the grounds for suspension are valid. They have my support, and I believe they should have the support of the Assembly.

MR JENSEN (5.03): Mr Speaker, I believe that at the moment we are seeking to re-create the debate that we have already had this afternoon. I move:

That the question be now put.

Question put.

The Assembly voted -

AYES, 11

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

NOES, 6

Mr Berry
Mr
Ms Follett
Mrs Grassby
Mr Moore
Mr Wood

Connolly

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted -

AYES, 6

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

NOES, 11

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

Question so resolved in the negative.

Mr Moore: Now what are you going to tell the people of north Canberra, Hector?

Dr Kinloch: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; I ask Mr Moore to withdraw that comment. He is constantly making these derogatory comments across the house.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Dr Kinloch. I would ask you to refrain from that activity, Mr Moore. You do it often.

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Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, I withdraw referring to Dr Kinloch as Hector. I should have said, "Now what are you going to tell the people of north Canberra, Dr Kinloch?"

Dr Kinloch: Mr Speaker, I did not hear Mr Moore withdraw his comment. I ask that he withdraw it.

MR SPEAKER: Dr Kinloch, even though it is less than appropriate, I do not believe that it is a requirement for Mr Moore to withdraw that.

Mr Moore: Mr Speaker, you said that that comment was less than appropriate. It was certainly an appropriate comment. I wonder whether you would mind withdrawing that - - -

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Moore. Please be seated.

SCRUTINY OF BILLS AND SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION - STANDING COMMITTEE Report

MS MAHER (5.08): I present the report of the Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation Standing Committee, report No. 6 of 1990, dated 1 May 1990, and seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MS MAHER: The report that I have just tabled details the committee's comments on the Audit (Amendment) Bill 1990, the Housing Assistance (Amendment) Bill 1990, the Pawnbrokers (Amendment) Bill 1990, the Second-hand Dealers and Collectors (Amendment) Bill 1990 and the Truck (Amendment) Bill 1990. The report also contains the committee's comments on the Government's response to the committee's report on the Weapons Bill 1990. I commend the report to the Assembly.

COMMITTEES - MEMBERSHIP

MS FOLLETT (Leader of the Opposition) (5.08), by leave: I move:

That:

- (1) Mr Wood be discharged from attending the Standing Committee on Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation and Mr Connolly be appointed in his place;
- (2) Mr Berry be discharged from attending the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs and Mr Connolly be appointed in his place; and
- (3) Mr Berry be appointed to the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and

Infrastructure and the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures.

This motion relates to Labor membership of standing committees. It arises from our changed membership on this side of the house. Briefly, it makes appropriate arrangements for Mr Connolly to be our member on the Standing Committee on Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation and the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs and for Mr Berry to take Mr Whalan's place on the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure and the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures. Mr Speaker, I will not take up the time of the house by speaking on the matter. I commend the motion.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 5.10 to 8.00 pm.

**BUDGET STRATEGY STATEMENT
Ministerial Statement and Papers**

Debate resumed from 3 April 1990, on motion by **Mr Kaine**:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

MR SPEAKER: Before Mr Connolly commences his speech, let me remind members that this is his maiden speech. I note that the convention in other legislatures is that a maiden speech is heard without interjection or interruption. I intend to encourage that convention in the Assembly.

Mr Moore: Inaugural speech, Mr Speaker; surely "inaugural" was the term we had agreed on before.

MR CONNOLLY (8.01): Mr Speaker, I thank you for that call. As my colleagues point out, at the risk of breaching over half a millennium of parliamentary tradition, it may be more appropriate in Canberra in 1990 to refer to an inaugural speech rather than a maiden speech. Be that as it may.

It is an honour for any citizen to be elected to a parliament. It is a particular honour for me as a member of the Australian Labor Party to stand in this place on this day. As our leader, Rosemary Follett, mentioned in her remarks in support of my candidature earlier this afternoon, 1 May - May Day - is a day of deep significance to the Australian Labor movement, both in industrial and parliamentary wings, and indeed to the Labor movement internationally.

I stand here in this parliament today as the newest Labor member of this new parliament but hopefully as part of the tradition of Labor members that reaches back in this country now nearly 100 years. It was in the events of 1890

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and 1891, the great shearers strike in Queensland and outback New South Wales, that the Labor movement was forged. It was forged in the industrial wing and moved and evolved from the industrial wing to the parliamentary wing. I hope to do my part to maintain those standards and traditions.

The Labor movement of which I find myself a proud representative has, in its 100 years, known times of success and times of adversity but, throughout its tradition, throughout its 100 years of existence, the Labor movement has been known by the people of Australia to be a movement and a party that can be trusted. It can be trusted to stand by a platform and deliver what it stands for. At times, what the party stands for may not find favour with the community and then the party finds itself in opposition. But it is a party that stands for principles, and the community, faced with a choice, may decide freely to elect a Labor government to stand by those goals.

The goals which our party stands for in this parliament were well articulated by our leader in the opening remarks of this parliament. I would like to hark back to our leader's remarks because I think they stand for goals that unite all of us on this side of the house. The goals of the Labor Government, as announced by Ms Follett, were:

... to develop a community based on social justice and economic security, a community which provides for the broadest possible individual liberty in terms of freedom of speech, education, assembly, organisation and religion; a compassionate, tolerant community which recognises and rejoices in our diversity.

Behind those goals we all stand united.

There has been increasing comment in Australia in recent months - and particularly since the recent Federal election - in both academic and journalistic circles on the future of the two-party system. Those scribes that think they can see into the future have been commenting that the two-party system is doomed and that the way of the future is in independents. I would reject those views. I would reject those views because here in Canberra we have had the opportunity to see that system in operation. We have had the opportunity, and members of the Canberra community have had the opportunity, to see that independents may often not stand for what they are believed to stand for. We have had the opportunity to see anti-self-government parties and no self-government parties turn into government parties.

The Australian Labor Party stands for what it puts in its platform and delivers what it puts in its platform. And indeed, it must be said, so do our conservative opponents. The two-party system as it has evolved in Australia has provided stable government and provided the community with

a real choice. While independents may appear an attractive alternative, the community may discover to its cost that "what you vote for ain't what you get". The Labor Party seeks always to govern in its own right, with the support of the community earned through its members' efforts - our efforts at probing the government, our efforts at swinging the community around to support our views. We reject coalitions of convenience and alliances of ambition. If we govern, we govern in our own right, albeit at times supported by independents, but independents not in the government.

My involvement with politics and with the Labor Party and the Labor movement grew naturally from my background. I hail from the Port Adelaide area in South Australia. It is traditional for a member addressing a maiden speech to refer to the area in which he grew up, which often is the area he represents. In this community, in Canberra, that often is not the case because so many of us come from outside Canberra. I believe Mr Stefaniak is one of the few members of this Assembly who can proudly claim to have been born and raised in Canberra. Although he went the other way for some years, he returned to live in Canberra.

I came to Canberra originally for a short term but chose to stay. The area in which I grew up is an area in which it is natural to turn to the Australian Labor Party. When one grows up in state schools in a working-class area in the industrial suburbs of Adelaide, or indeed of any other great capital city, it is natural to turn to the Labor Party because one is exposed, at an early age, to the great reality of inequality in this country. It is born and starts in the education system. One realises that one's colleagues at a state primary school and a state high school are assumed not to be going on to university, are assumed to be fit only for other things.

While I grew up I was fortunate that there was a time of hope for the Labor Party and new vision. Don Dunstan was in power in South Australia and Gough Whitlam had assumed power in Canberra. That in itself for me and thousands of others of my generation was of enormous significance because one of the great achievements of the Whitlam Government was to break down the crucial barrier to access to higher education. Prior to Gough Whitlam the only real choice for persons from that sort of background was often the teaching service, because one was offered a tied scholarship. Access to higher education was usually through that route. Whitlam, by abolishing fees, opened access to full university education for all for the first time. I was able to take advantage of that and pursue a career in law.

It was also in South Australia that I grew to see the benefits that could be delivered by government at the local level. While under the Australian federal system power tends to be centralised in the Federal Government and while my career as a constitutional lawyer has tended to be on

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the side of arguing for greater Commonwealth powers at the expense of assertions of States' rights, I realise that the State governments can have an enormous influence on the way people live. That is not to say that one defends States' rights. States do not need exclusive powers at the expense of a central government. What State governments can do is make a real contribution to developing the quality of life as it is lived by members of the community in the community.

Growing up under Don Dunstan in South Australia, one was able to see the real and tangible ways that a social democratic government could improve the quality of life for all citizens, could introduce measures to open society to all its members and could achieve real goals in terms of social justice. It is for those reasons that I was attracted to seek office in this Assembly, because like all my colleagues on this side of the house I believe that this Assembly can be important in delivering real improvements in the quality of life to the citizens of Canberra.

We realise that self-government was not widely popular in this community. We realise that to some extent the first election was treated by some as a referendum on self-government. A number of our fellow citizens chose to vote for parties which claimed to be opposed to self-government. That, Mr Speaker, in my view, will never happen again. The community realises that there is no point in supporting no self-government groups that end up in government. The community realises that it is forced to make a choice. The choice is whether it will be governed by the Australian Labor Party and its vision of social justice or by a conservative government or some form of conservative alliance.

Mr Speaker, I came to law as a first career rather than politics, although I had been involved at university in the Australian Labor Party, in the Young Labor movement as federal president at an early age. I chose to develop a career in law because law, as well as being an instrument of social control, is the primary weapon in the fight for social justice. We are all, as legislators, involved in developing better laws and we on this side of the house believe that law can be a real and effective weapon in achieving the goals of reform of this movement. In the Australian Capital Territory there are enormous and pressing issues of law reform that need to be addressed. (Extension of time granted)

I will be doing my bit in making my contribution to achieve those goals of law reform. I will not dwell tonight on the controversy surrounding the reform of the courts in this Territory. I will, however, refer to the question of human rights enforcement and the need, as seen by those of us on this side of the house, for cooperation rather than confrontation with the Federal Government on that issue so as to provide a human rights office that is open and accessible to all and that can deal with complaints against

both the Federal and Territory governments. We see no point in a Federal office in Sydney and an ACT office in Canberra.

The other issue of enormous concern to me personally and to my party is consumer protection. Whilst this was an area of great interest and reform in Australia in the 1970s, there is a view in some quarters that the economic realities of the 1990s put consumer protection low on the agenda. We would reject that view. There are glaring inadequacies in this Territory in consumer protection laws. One only has to go into one's local supermarket and see the out-of-date food openly on display, and suspected by many to have been trucked down from Sydney after its expiry date has made it unlawful in the surrounding districts, to realise that urgent action is needed. Landlord and tenant reform is another area where Canberra is in the Stone Age.

Mr Speaker, these areas can be addressed quickly. There are no novelties in the problems surrounding Canberra. They are all issues that have been experienced and dealt with by reformist Labor State governments in Australia in the last decade or more. We would seek urgent attention to be paid to these problems and would suggest that, rather than reinventing the wheel, we derive such assistance as we can from the reforms already on the statute books in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales as a result of the efforts of the Labor governments in those States.

Planning is another issue of concern to all of us in the Territory because it is central to the quality of life that has made those of us who choose to live in Canberra make that decision and probably has made those born in Canberra decide to stay here. I will be seeking to devote considerable attention to that issue in the coming months and years.

Mr Speaker, above all, as members of the Labor Party we are members of a movement committed to reform. I thank those of my colleagues who supported my candidature, in particular Mr Terry Higgins, QC, president of my local branch, who was of great support and encouragement to me in electing to stand. I thank as well all those members of the party who supported my candidature.

The Australian Labor Party, as I said earlier, has often been dismissed as a party born in the 1890s and welded to a structure that is no longer relevant. In the mid-1970s, following the disastrous defeats for the Federal Labor Government, many learned commentators said that Labor was locked to the traditions of the past and, as a party connected with the trade union movement, had no future. I reject those views strongly. The connection between this party and the Australian trade union movement is a proud one and one to be maintained. It is never a popular course to stand up in any parliament, in any forum in Australia, and defend the trade union movement. It is very easy to attack the union movement. The press makes it easy by

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referring almost universally to the leaders of the union movement - who have always faced ballots for their position - as "union bosses". Employer representatives are referred to in rather more flattering terms.

I am proud, Mr Speaker, to have been involved in the trade union movement as secretary and then president of the Australian Government Lawyers Association - a small white-collar union, true, but one that takes seriously its responsibilities to its membership. I will be keeping a close eye on public service conditions of employment in Canberra. It is easy to criticise public servants as fat cats and easy to make cheap political points by looking at public service conditions, but I would warn the Government that, unless we are very careful to maintain at least parity between ACT public servants and Commonwealth public servants, in the environment of Canberra where the Commonwealth is the dominant employer we will find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain quality public servants to provide the administration of the ACT to implement the reforms that we seek.

Mr Speaker, this party stood on a promise of responsible government for Canberra. For six months it delivered on that promise. It provided a government that was open and accessible and that consulted the community fully before decisions were announced. Sadly, we no longer enjoy that consultation and cooperation with the community, but we will see how long that lasts. Mr Speaker, instead of an open and consultative government we now have a "conservative, Rally, no government" government. Disraeli described a conservative government as an organised hypocrisy. Today we must wonder at the level of organisation.

MR MOORE (8.17): Mr Speaker, I now present my response to the Kaine budget strategy. The inadequacy of the Kaine budget strategy lies in the fourth goal of the strategy given on page 3 of the document. As part of the introduction, the Chief Minister stated:

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.

The crux of what the Chief Minister is saying is that we have inherited a system which is overcapitalised. We are well off in capital terms but our recurrent situation is very poor indeed. The analogy is well drawn with the home owning family who have purchased and extended an expensive house and can only just keep up with their own budget. I am sure many of us know that feeling, and if you do not then surely you lack the empathy for so many Canberrans who are in this position. The choice to be made is similar for us in our budget. Does the family now go on to extend further - for example, by building another garage - simply because they have always spent a certain proportion of the

family budget on their capital assets, or do they stop and reconsider the proportions of their spending? Any sensible family would consolidate before spending more on the house.

The ACT budget is, of course, not so simple. However, the principle remains, and we have to ask whether the proportions going into capital and recurrent budgets are appropriate. The Chief Minister would like to think that this budget strategy is a budget of vision, that it takes the long-term view. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This is a budget of medium view. Granted, it does extend beyond the Labor vision of last year, but it does not look to the future. The future is tied up in our health and our education. This medium-vision budget has not protected the long-term needs of our citizens, in particular our children. Donald Horne has recently been trying to take Australians out of the "lucky country" thinking and into a frame of mind that we need to be the "smart country". If the budget strategy that we have before us is implemented, we will rapidly become the "stupid state", or the "stupid Territory". You cannot expect people to see you as having a long-term vision when the financial future is so clearly tied up in brain power and you are putting the scythe through our education institutions, from preschool all the way through to TAFE.

You have a series of possible choices. The first one is to realise that we are fortunate to have had an overspending in capital terms up until now and to reduce the rate at which we are spending on capital items whilst we consolidate, the same as a family would do. In the interim, until our budget gap decreases, as you have suggested on page 8 of your strategy, we could make any of the required cuts primarily from our capital budget.

You have presented the notion that we have been oversupplied with facilities. Now is the time to make genuine, hard decisions - instead of limiting yourself to what your public servants tell you - and protect the long-term hopes and aspirations of the people of the ACT. That is what is required by a hard decision.

The second hard decision you have before you is rethinking the promises that you are in the process of breaking. It is one thing to say, "We did not know how bad a position we would be in and therefore we have to make extensive cuts to the areas of public welfare" - that is in the broad sense - it is another to say at the same time, "We cannot break our promises about raising rates". You, as a group - and I am not just speaking to the Chief Minister - have broken so many of your election undertakings, what is one more of your promises?

It is no good just attempting to take credit for what others have done, as you attempt to do on page 5, with reference to regional roads and deregulation of the airlines. That is not going to fool anyone. I quote:

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We have identified 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.

The community can see only one area that you have decided that needs to be improved, and that is the wallet of those who are already well off. Your contributions to business, as you have outlined in your strategy, are clearly not in the best interests of the whole community as we go through hard times.

Mr Collaery: Where are they? Identify them. What other contributions would there be - - -

MR SPEAKER: Order!

MR MOORE: The really hard decisions would be to look to ways of raising funds through betterment tax, Mr Collaery. You have managed a compromise, Chief Minister, with the Residents Rally, who probably did not even realise that the effects would be to have no real change to the system of paying betterment tax. The champions of the leasehold system, as they would like to be seen, and of land planning were totally outsmarted and outclassed by the Liberals in yet another area. I wonder whether they even care.

Hard decisions are about using our greatest asset to maintain what makes living in this city desirable, and there I speak of our leasehold system. Since I have spoken on this topic before, I shall not pursue it further tonight. That may surprise you.

Mr Doby: That surprises me.

MR MOORE: Perhaps you could learn the same thing. This budget strategy also fails to look for other methods of revenue raising which have not yet been levied. When you are looking for further charges you should be looking to distinguish between levies on productivity and levies on the transfer of money that has no productivity associated with it. It is not my intention to spoon-feed the Alliance, but you must look carefully at supporting manufacturing and hitting all forms of speculation with heftier charges. It is there, amongst the speculators, that you will find the vultures and the pariahs of our society. I digress a little to do what I said I would not do. One method to return some of their immoral gains is to charge that 100 per cent betterment. There are many others.

I shall now turn to negotiations with the Commonwealth. This city was designed as a government town. Whilst I applaud the notion of widening our base into the productive private sector, and that includes those businesses in the ACT who are providing support and material to the Government, we have little hope of turning Canberra into

something which it is not. We must build and expand on what we have.

Payroll tax, rents and other revenue raising measures which are available to the States are not so open to us because our business is about supporting a Commonwealth government which is exempt from such things. Our method is to argue better in the Grants Commission. What hope have we got when our negotiators have given away the bottom line before they even start?

Speaking of hard decisions, let us get rid of any pseudo-moralistic grounds and rapidly introduce a tax on the X-rated industry. Chief Minister, you supported Dennis' ban and it did not work. The majority of people do not want to see the X-rated industry banned; however, let me assure you, they want it taxed. Make a genuine, hard decision; raise \$5m or so from them.

"At the very least, 1990-91 grants should be real at 1989-90 levels", you say on page 7. That is the negotiating point that you give away. Before you even start you have given them your back-down position. What kind of negotiation is that? Basic negotiating skills require that you do not come to your bottom line until you are driven to it. It is pathetic.

The most positive statement in the whole strategy is a statement reflecting the long-term vision, as found on page 9:

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 are tied up in just paying interest on the debts that have accumulated. We will not allow this to happen in the ACT.

Congratulations; that is great; I think that is a significant step forward and I applaud it. What has happened in those States is that they have borrowed to pay capital expenditure and they are now paying the debts and interest from their recurrent expenditure. It is simply, therefore, a method of transferring money from the recurrent to the capital account. My suggestion actually operates in the reverse. (Extension of time granted)

Avoid that situation, I agree, but take the extra step and transfer the spending so that more of our money goes into the recurrent budget than into the capital budget. If we are to look at a few particulars which would benefit from a transfer of money from capital to recurrent, I would like to start with public health. At the moment we have two and a half public hospitals and one private. Under an Alliance plan we will have two public hospitals and one and a half private. This budget strategy should recognise this equation and resist the incredible capital expense which we

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simply cannot afford at this stage. If we are to have two public hospitals then they should be Woden and Royal Canberra; let Calvary continue operating and let it operate as a private hospital.

You must make sure that your monetary decisions are not made and influenced by a few doctors who are putting forward all their arguments so that they and their colleagues can line their own pockets at the expense of the community in general. It is absolute nonsense that the Royal Canberra Hospital is in such a run-down state of repair as some would have us believe.

Dr Kinloch used to believe that the Royal Canberra Hospital should stay open; did you not, Hector? You used to believe that our education would be expanded and improved. That is what you used to believe. But look at that word, Hector, "believe".

MR SPEAKER: Order! I draw Mr Moore's attention to the fact that he should not refer to members by their Christian names.

Dr Kinloch: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; might I suggest Mr Moore address his issues and principles and not individuals ad hominem?

MR SPEAKER: Order! Dr Kinloch, you are debating the issue.

MR MOORE: Believe, B-E-L-I-E-V-E; when you look at the spelling you can see that even within the word "believe" there is a lie.

MR SPEAKER: Order! I request you to withdraw that. It is an imputation. Please withdraw it.

MR MOORE: I withdraw that, Mr Speaker. This brings me to education. Take a long-term vision of the ACT, take a long-term vision of our real assets, our children, and make them your capital expenditure. Do not be so foolish as to cut off the opportunity that we have to become the smart country and for the ACT to be the leader in the field. Go back to the Grants Commission and say to them, "If the ACT is overfunded by comparison to the other States" - which I still debate - "then do not be hypocritical and call for us to be the smart country while dragging us down to their level. Look at our retention rates, look at our comparative statistics from ACER, and drag them up to our level".

Mr Humphries: With what? Where is the money coming from?

MR MOORE: From the Grants Commission, from the capital expenditure. That is what I am trying to tell you. Take someone with you who has the ability to negotiate, which none of you appear to have.

In the medium term you will also have to come to grips with TAFE. We cannot be the smart state and withstand cutting our TAFE. The words of doom hang out on page 15:

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.

How long is it going to be before TAFE is consumed by the colleges? The question is not whether TAFE will be swallowed by the schools and universities but when, if you pursue this suicidal policy.

On the positive side, your suggestion for the development of west Belconnen appears excellent. Will you consult with the people of Aranda, Weetangera, Hawker or Cook about the advantages and disadvantages to them? Using the current infrastructure to delay the development of Gungahlin is clearly a way of using the capital infrastructure that we already have in place. I am sorry, Mr Collaery, if you cannot understand what is going on, but I recognise your difficulty with financial factors. I have seen it before.

With the electricity authority, it is time to look carefully at all the ramifications of a "pay as you use" system. With ACTION, when workers are paid for the hours they work, when you make that decision, then you will be making a hard decision and removing one of our concrete shoes. In conclusion, look to raising revenue, spend more than you currently plan on recurrent expenditure and less on your capital outlay.

MR COLLAERY (Attorney-General) (8.32): The punch line in the Leader of the Opposition's response to the budget statement was "a thinly veiled ideological attack on the public sector" and "the Alliance is, in fact, an ultra-conservative, capital 'L' Liberal Government".

Now, that is the sort of extremism that launched the Leader of the Opposition into her debate on the budget strategy. She did not seek to analyse the strategy itself. There then followed a long ideological discussion, in a vein that we have become used to, about the budget strategy. Those of us who were part of the original so-called budget consultative session with this former Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett, clearly remember all those sessions until the very last morning, when the Chief Minister and I decided that the farce could no longer continue. We decided that this putative Chief Minister knew nothing about budgeting, knew very little about government, and this was an amateurish charade which was going to pull the Territory down to the dimensions that now clearly become evident.

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Today we heard a question from Mrs Nolan in relation to a very important issue in the budget; that was the provision of a second domestic violence shelter. That question by Mrs Nolan did not throw any credit on the former Chief Minister. It revealed that her budget, if she knew what she was doing, did not include the allocation of funds that she thought she was allocating. So, just by way of introductory comment - - -

Mr Berry: Are you not supposed to be selling the budget strategy?

MR COLLAERY: I set the stage for how the Labor left sees budgeting, Mr Speaker. We recently heard the new member's speech. Of course, in it the same message came over - the belief in miracles. There is still a belief in miracles in the ALP. Of course, it was very warming to see and to hear that wonderful speech, but the tragedy about the Labor Party and the way it does budgets is that it has left the proletariat behind. It does not know all about hard budgeting. It does not know a thing about running a budget. It is used to the hand-out life. It has no - - -

Mrs Grassby: He ought to speak - the NIMBYs of Canberra!

MR SPEAKER: Order!

MR COLLAERY: They are cackling, Mr Speaker. They are upset. They are on edge. The tragedy of the Labor Party is that it has left the proletariat miles behind. Those of us who did not have the somewhat interesting pleasure of growing up under Don Dunstan know that there is a move in this country that will change things for a long time. There is a very tired Labor Party out there that purports still to give us advice - recently through one of its sycophants over there near the pillar - on how to run - - -

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mr Collaery, I ask you to withdraw that comment.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, I have never suggested that Mr Moore can play the violin. I withdraw the suggestion that he is a sycophant.

Mr Speaker, shortly after we heard a very straight Marxist ideological rendition of the Labor ambition - which, of course, denied the role of independents in the democratic process, and people should note that - Mr Moore stood up and launched into his enormous support for the very party that denies his existence beside the pillar.

The fact is that law is not an instrument of social control, nor is a budget an instrument of social control, and that is where the Labor Party has it wrong. Budgeting and lawyerising are not elements of social control. That is the whole thing about power in the Labor Party which is wrong, and it typifies its response to this excellent budget that the Alliance Government has put forward.

Mr Berry: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I think the issue of digression arises in the course of Mr Collaery's presentation.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, he takes so long to uncoil himself from the desk that I have lost a minute before he is on his feet. I am entitled to a repechage every time Mr Berry - - -

Mr Berry: Mr Speaker, there is some imputation that there is something wrong with being tall. The people who are usually concerned about that are short people.

MR SPEAKER: Order!

MR COLLAERY: For the sake of order, Mr Speaker, whatever Mr Berry wishes me to withdraw, I will.

Mr Berry: No, I am not concerned about any withdrawal; it is digression that I am concerned about.

MR SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order. Please, Mr Berry, resume your seat. Mr Collaery, please proceed.

MR COLLAERY: Now, Mr Speaker, I saw this evening one of those more amusing experiences in my life, but convention requires me not to respond in kind. Truly, cooperation is really important to run this Territory in the short term and it is most important that the Assembly come together on some issues at some stage in terms of budget strategy.

We can score points all we like, but the fact is that there are substantial elements of this budget strategy statement by my colleague Mr Kaine that deserve the support of everyone in this house. If we continue to produce the type of destabilising behaviour and the mayhem that we have seen in recent weeks, the people of the ACT will become really jaundiced about self-government. They will not appreciate the genuine motives of most of us here in this Assembly.

Mrs Grassby: Ho-ho! I am sorry, Mr Speaker.

MR COLLAERY: Of course, we have heard again from Mrs Grassby. The fact is that there needs to be some sort of reformist program in this Territory to bring us down from the plateau of Commonwealth Federal expenditure. If Mr Kaine is prepared to take the unpleasant, unpopular decisions then you have got it good, members on the other side of the house, because we are going to take those decisions, come what may, to the ballot-box in 1992. We have got the courage to do that.

It would have been very easy for some of us to stay out of government and to have watched you, the Labor Party, mire this Territory further and to have seen how you manipulated some of the voices behind the pillar in bringing forward a variety of sham arrangements and sham cosmetic devices to

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please the people of the Territory. Mr Speaker, this is not an ultra-conservative government. This is a government which is epoch making. This is a government which is going to set a new standard in Australia.

I confidently predict that this will not be the last alliance government in this decade in this country. Given the sophistry and the sort of gamesmanship of the Labor Party, there will remain for some years a lot of people fooled by the type of insincerity that we hear mouthed in this chamber. But the people are waking up. They are appointing independents and they are warming to the view that the Labor Party, as was candidly admitted here tonight, does not admit of any coalition arrangements - and it has not since 1908 - with any other group or party. It is born to rule. It is forming the born to rule mentality again because it conned the greens in the last Federal election and appointed Ros Kelly to be a right green environment Minister. Mr Speaker, the truth of the matter is that we have heard the full admission here this evening - - -

Mr Berry: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker, on the issue of digression. Again, you might just draw it to Mr Collaery's attention.

MR SPEAKER: You are getting away from the point there, Mr Collaery. Please proceed.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, Rosemary Follett said at page 3 of her budget response, "How can you expect cooperation when there is no involvement? The Kaine budget process is a recipe for confrontation". (Extension of time granted)

I am indebted to members.

Mrs Grassby: We will be here all night, Bernard.

MR COLLAERY: Mrs Grassby has got another five minutes at the oars and now she is punishing.

Mr Speaker, I repeat the words: "How can you expect cooperation when there is no involvement? The Kaine budget process is a recipe for confrontation". The fact is that Rosemary Follett spelt out her program there. She said that there would be no involvement by the Opposition in assisting us to see the Territory through its most difficult stages and, moreover, she promised confrontation. She promised it. Her Labor left have done a putsch in the Labor Party and they have got a little temporary grasp of power here in the ACT. They will be rolled by the Labor right in no time. The Federal Labor right will pass the same messages as they passed to us all a few months ago: "For God's sake, how embarrassing. Get rid of them. Put them out of their misery". The fact is that we see here in front of us now the Labor left - - -

Mr Berry: Dare I raise a point of order about digressing?

MR COLLAERY: It has uncoiled. It is up again.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Berry, I accept your point of order. Mr Collaery, please stick to the debate before the house.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, I will turn the page. At page 4 - - -

Mr Berry: There must be a point of order which deals with contempt for the Chair, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: No, there is not. Please sit down, Mr Berry.

MR COLLAERY: I appeal to the Chair, Mr Speaker. I am only up to page 4 of Ms Follett's response. At page 4 Ms Follett's response is, "Mr Speaker, I submit that there is no strategy. We have been given some indications of what is in store". Mr Speaker, this is the sort of querulous commentary that comes from the amateurism of Labor's left at the moment. Few of them know much about society and - - -

Mr Berry: I think it is about time he sat down, Mr Speaker. He was warned.

MR SPEAKER: Order! That is a frivolous point of order, Mr Berry.

Mr Berry: I will raise the issue of digression again. That is not frivolous.

MR COLLAERY: Well, stop the clock.

Mr Berry: No, I do not think the clock ought to be stopped.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Berry. Do not debate the issue. Please speak to the debate.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, I will want injury time soon. I turn to page 5, Mr Speaker, and what do we have here? We have the words "a classic example of political kite flying". You can imagine the acolyte that drafted this for her, Mr Speaker. It says, "There is vague talk of school closures". Mr Speaker, this is a vague Opposition that has a vague concept of government.

Mr Berry: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I am going to persist with this point of order until Mr Collaery sticks to the issue of the budget strategy.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Berry, I believe Mr Collaery is commenting on comments previously made in this debate. Please proceed, Mr Collaery.

MR COLLAERY: Mr Speaker, I am troubled by the fact that Mr Berry feels that this issue is trivial and he can knock

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time off it by climbing to his feet. The ladder to government does not come out of diversionary tactics and the types of issues that have been raised in this budget strategy response. I welcome the muscular energy that Mr Berry has forced upon me this evening in sitting down and standing up, but the fact is that it shows their very defensiveness. They are not willing to hear us fully on this floor. They do not understand that their ideological perception is wrong. My role in this debate tonight is to point out your ideological responses. They are hopelessly out-of-date in terms of a response to the budget. All they know is knocking. They do not know anything about proposing programs. They had no useful programs to put to us and they still do not have any.

MR WOOD (8.46): Mr Collaery is not the Treasurer, nor is he the Treasurer's assistant. That was quite evident in the speech that he made, wherein he made no defence of the Treasurer's statement but merely attacked what Rosemary Follett and two other members in this chamber said in reply to the statement. I was not fussed when he brought into the debate elements of frivolity. I suggest that tomorrow we might all benefit, Mr Collaery most of all, if we take the time to read his speech. He will see just how little was contained therein.

In passing, I might mention that I have been hearing for 35 or so years this story about a tired, old Labor Party that is out of touch. You know, it really has been coming up for a long, long time.

Mr Speaker, in his statement on page 2, the Chief Minister pointed to four clear goals of his Government in relation to budget strategy. The first of those was to promote the development of the private sector. Further on he amplified that by saying that he wanted to encourage the right environment for businesses, both large and small. I agree with that. They are statements I endorse. But in nearly five months this has not been happening. I have seen no evidence of it and, what is most important, the business community in this town, the private sector in this town, has not got that message. Indeed, it has the opposite message. The private sector in this town is rapidly moving from a situation of doubt about this Government into one of despondency and soon of despair.

Mr Kaine: I do not know who you were listening to, Bill.

MR WOOD: I am listening to people, believe me.

Mr Kaine: Well, I talk to them every day - - -

MR WOOD: I am talking as I move around.

Mr Kaine: I do not get that message, I can assure you.

MR SPEAKER: Order!

MR WOOD: Well, you are getting nice words. I am hearing the honest truth. Where are the positive actions of this Government? Where are they? What are they doing? We are only getting negative messages from this Government. We are getting those things that bring doubt and despair and despondency to this community. All the d's, I might add.

Mr Collaery: They are coming from you. You are talking the market down.

MR WOOD: This Government is talking down the economic climate of this town. Where are we learning? Where is the optimism? What is happening? Where is this confident and thriving city? Look at the messages we are getting - 5,000 jobs are to go over a period of years.

Mr Kaine: That is a falsehood. Nobody ever mentioned 5,000 jobs, Mr Wood.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Chief Minister, please address your comments through the Chair.

MR WOOD: You mean that what I have seen written, the evidence, is wrong?

Mr Kaine: Nobody has ever mentioned 5,000 jobs.

MR WOOD: Well, I am pleased you are changing your mind about that. It seems to be the case.

Mr Kaine: Get your facts straight. Do not misquote. Do not distort.

MR WOOD: Well, you had better be careful in future about what you say, and when you say something you had better darn well mean what you say and not take 10 steps backwards subsequently.

Now, let me take another situation. You might comment on this. What messages are we getting? Look at the Canberra Times site. Industry, commerce, business, the private sector in this town, would dearly like a message from this Government.

Mr Kaine: Why did you not fix it while you had the chance?

MR WOOD: Well, it was about to go. It was about to happen, was it not, before you stepped in and cut it out? When are you going to do something about that? When the report came out it had three names on it. It had three good names - the now Chief Minister, the now Deputy Chief Minister and Mr Craig DUBY - as well as mine. Bear in mind and remember, Mr Collaery, this was a unanimous report. We all agreed. Let me read recommendation 4.12. It says that the committee supports the surrender and re-grant of the lease - on a few simple conditions.

Mr Kaine: On some conditions that have not yet been met.

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MR WOOD: They are very simply met, Mr Kaine; very simply met. One would assume that it would not be very much trouble to take those steps, and those conditions did not have to be met before steps were taken.

Mr Kaine: Yes, they did.

MR WOOD: No, they did not.

Mr Kaine: It was a precondition.

MR WOOD: No. I remember the debate that we had.

Mr Collaery: There has been a shift to the right in the Labor Party.

MR WOOD: Well, that is a nice, evasive way out of your problem, Mr Collaery. The business community, the private sector, would like a message from this Government to say something is going to happen.

Take one example, the Canberra Times site. The private sector in this community is giving a D rating, on a scale of A to D, to this Government. Do you know what I heard last week? People do not call it the Alliance Government any more. They put that "D" in front of it and it is the "Dalliance" Government. That is what is going around this town - the "Dalliance" Government. It is a more appropriate name, might I say. Let me tell you what The Macquarie Dictionary says about "dalliance". It is "a trifling away of time".

Mr Kaine: Mr Speaker, there must be a point of order on relevance. We are talking about a budget statement.

MR WOOD: Mr Kaine, I am talking about what you say in this budget strategy document, and "dalliance" is the operative word. It also means "dawdling", Mr DUBY. There is another meaning that is becoming more and more obvious here.

Mr Collaery: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; we are very generous to our colleague Mr Wood, but could we gravitate him towards the subject at issue?

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for your observation, Mr Collaery. Mr Wood, please stick to the point.

MR WOOD: There is a third meaning, and that is "flirtation, amorous toying". The trouble is, of course, that the love affair is starting to break up on that side of the house.

Let us be serious about this. What is to happen about section 19? Will the same problem arise? Will this go backwards and forwards from joint party to Cabinet, to party, backwards and forwards, around back to Cabinet again, back to the Law Office or somewhere else? What is

going to happen? You are going to get that proposal on your desk very soon if you have not already got it.

On a number of occasions the Chief Minister has noted that the section 19 development is an important component in the development of Canberra. Perhaps he has changed his mind on that as well, but that is my reading of what he said.

Mr Kaine: My mind is focused on many things, Bill.

MR WOOD: Thank you, at least. I wonder when you will change your mind on that one too. What is going to happen when the recommendations come across on section 19? Is this going to go backwards and forwards again and around for ever until some hopeful developer walks away in disgust? We do need this. The problems are emerging. I do not have to tell you what they are. We have all been briefed over the year on them. But we do need some signs from the Government.

Where are the positive statements in this document? I can see "encourage" over and over again and a lot of words of that nature. Someone has used a thesaurus and pulled out all the words that mean the same as "encourage". Where are the clear, precise statements of what this Government is doing, the projects that you are now planning or which you have long since planned to cater for all those young people now leaving our institutions in greater numbers? Where is something specific about that? No, it is not there. You have not even thought about it. We have nice rhetoric in this but we have no positive actions.

I was going to spend more time on the question of the fourth of their four points. I will raise this next matter - realising the capital assets of the Territory - in an education speech tonight or tomorrow. In short, that is a euphemism for "sell our schools". That is what that means. I would have hoped that you might have been honest in what you said.

Mr Jensen: Like the Federal Government is trying to do with Gowrie, Bill.

MR WOOD: That is one place, and it has not got the significance of a school. If you want to sell our schools, why do you not write it into your document? I will have more to say about that in a speech shortly.

MR HUMPHRIES (Minister for Health, Education and the Arts) (8.56): Labor, Mr Speaker, is desperate to paint an image of certain things about the budget direction that the Chief Minister has clearly announced. It does so because it, to some extent, needs to feel that it has some direction of its own, that it has some legacy of its own, that it wishes or needs to protect. I can understand that. I can see that the Labor Party, now in opposition, is feeling a little bit sore and bruised. It can see certain strong directions, notwithstanding what Mr Wood has said, emerging

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from this Government, and it wants to believe that in some way its own direction when in government was equally strong, equally forthright, equally purposeful, and that this direction that we now pursue is the wrong direction.

I think those that look carefully at what the Follett Government achieved when it was in power will realise that all its actions, all its directions, were shaped, above all, by the fact that it was a minority government and did not have the capacity to shape any real, firm, purposeful direction. This Government, Mr Speaker, does have that capacity, and it is proceeding and will proceed to shape and articulate that direction, both for the benefit of members opposite and for the members of the Territory generally. I want to answer, first of all, a few points raised by earlier speakers.

Mr Wood: Why do you not defend the statement?

MR HUMPHRIES: I will defend the statement, Mr Wood, I can assure you. I will defend it by pointing out some of the inaccuracies in what you and Mr Moore have said.

Mr Moore: Inaccuracies? Me?

MR HUMPHRIES: There were plenty of inaccuracies, Mr Moore. We had what I call here in my notes "Michaelnomics" or "NIMBYnomics" from Mr Moore, these peculiar ideas of how to make ends meet. Mr Moore is sensible enough, he is a rational enough person, to realise that there is a problem. We have got less money to get by with than we had in the past so we have got to do something about it. Mr Moore has racked his brain to think of some solution to the problem which is not our solution. Of course, that would not be acceptable; that is being in truck with the conservatives, according to him. He is trying to find some alternative way of getting round this problem. His solution is to slash the capital budget; let us not spend any money on capital works in the Territory. Mr Speaker, I am sure that Mr Moore could speak to members of Labor governments around the country to get this piece of advice; sensible members of other governments will tell him that it is a false economy not to spend money on capital works where they are needed, because to a significant extent - not entirely, of course - spending money on capital works is part of the process of providing services to the people of the Territory.

When you build a hospital you are spending money on capital works but you are also providing services to people out of that hospital. When you build new schools in the southern part of the Tuggeranong Valley you are providing services to the people out of those schools. You cannot slash the capital budget terribly far before you slash services, and this is what Mr Moore needs to realise. I would be very willing to listen to what he has to say about where we might make cuts in the capital budget but, ultimately, he has to get the process to the stage of cutting services, and I do not believe that is an acceptable solution to him.

Mr Moore: What are you doing to education? That is the most important bloody service of the whole bloody lot.

MR HUMPHRIES: I will come to that in a moment, Mr Moore, if you will just listen and be patient. Mr Wood spoke about the private sector. He claimed that the Alliance Government was sending a negative image to the private sector. "When are you going to send a positive image?", he said. I do not know whom he talks to in this Territory but the people I speak to give me a very different message. The people I speak to in the private sector have said, "Good on you". The most consistent message I have heard from the private sector, not just since the advent of the Alliance Government but for many years, is, "For goodness' sake, do something about runaway government expenditure".

Government expenditure is a problem that we have to face up to here, not because of any ideological reason but because we have less money to get by with than previous governments have had to get by with. That is the overwhelming reality which Mr Wood and Mr Moore ought to listen to very carefully. The private sector I listen to tells me that we are making the right decision. It is saying, "Good on you for getting into this very serious and critical problem".

He has also been very anxious in the course of this debate and previous debates to portray this Government as a divided government. I have to repeat what I have said before: I have been extremely impressed by the degree of cohesion that we have achieved on this side of the chamber. Frankly, it has been quite extraordinary how well we have been able to deal with each other's own respective policy positions in a compatible and sympathetic way and at the same time establish a single stream of government thought and direction.

Mr Wood was the person who made all sorts of claims at the beginning of this Government about how it was headed for ruin; how we were going to be racked by divisions. Where are those divisions? I have not seen them. I have sat in the joint party room and I have sat in the Cabinet and I have not seen those divisions. Those predictions were wrong. Mr Wood has made many wrong predictions. Mr Wood predicted that Mr Stevenson was going to have to buttress this Government. That did not happen. Some members of the Government predicted we were going to have a wholesale sacking of senior public servants. That has not happened either. Mr Wood is predicting we are going to fall apart over section 19. I am confident that we will not. I think that we will see Mr Wood once again eating his words.

I want to come to a point which Mr Wood raised a little while ago about the idea of cutting and how we can claim to be preserving the quality of services in the Territory if we are cutting. There is an assumption in that line of argument which he obviously has not addressed, and that assumption is that, if you cut the amount you are spending

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in a particular area, you have to reduce the quality of services being offered in that area. That assumption in turn rests on another assumption, that the money you are spending already on a particular area is being entirely effectively and productively spent.

That is an assumption which is false, and it is false by the admission even of members sitting to his right, members of the Opposition, members of the Labor Party. That is an assumption they would not agree with because, when they were in government, they also attempted to cut government expenditure. The argument that they used was that some government expenditure was inappropriate or badly spent or, for some other reason, deserved to be reconsidered.

Mr Moore: I did not say, "Do not cut any".

MR HUMPHRIES: Well, Mr Moore, the question then becomes: where do you make sensible and rational cuts? That is the question, and I think if you look clearly at what we are doing you will see great benefits in the approach that we have taken.

Mr Moore: Come off it!

MR HUMPHRIES: I think, Mr Moore, you should go beyond rhetoric and look at the facts. Let us look at our hospital situation. The ACT needs a principal hospital. There are no ifs or buts about that. Mr Berry agrees with that argument. Every sensible commentator agrees with that; we have to have a principal hospital. The cost to the Territory of maintaining a principal hospital and two further public hospitals, as well as other private establishments around the Territory, would be exorbitant. It would put something like \$8.5m extra on the Territory budget, \$8.5m which we simply do not have. That is why this Government has made the decision, the sensible decision, not to retain the Royal Canberra Hospital. That is an area where we will be able to cut expenditure without cutting services.

The quality of services being provided by our health system will not be reduced one iota by the closure of Royal Canberra Hospital; in fact, it will be increased. Every sensible worker in the health system in the ACT will tell you the same thing, if they are honest about it.

I think that this argument can be applied in many other areas in this Territory. We have, as Mr Moore himself acknowledged, a legacy of overexpenditure in the ACT by the Commonwealth Government. We have had extremely generous allocations in the past and this has made a rod for our back which we must now address. This means getting a slimmer, trimmer infrastructure base. I hope Mr Moore will join in the process of making that task easier and making that transition more palatable, rather than using his own "NIMBYnomic" arguments to say that we should not be doing any of this.

Mr Speaker, the direction that the Chief Minister has outlined in the statement is an eminently sensible one. It is purposeful; it contains direction; I believe it is the right way for us to be going and I believe that our legacy will be, when this Government next goes to the people, a trimmer, leaner, more efficient, more productive and more effective ACT.

MRS GRASSBY (9.06): Mr Speaker, the Alliance Government promised "a comprehensive financial plan, clearly spelling out to the community the Government's priorities and intentions". What we have is the so-called budget strategy statement - a document which gives us only the briefest glimpses of the Government's hidden agenda for the next 12 months. It could not, in any sense, be called a five-year plan.

Mr Kaine: It was not meant to be. I will deal with you in my concluding speech.

MRS GRASSBY: Thank you, Chief Minister. I have always wanted to be dealt with by a Chief Minister.

Why do we not have the promised five-year financial plan? Let me suggest two of the reasons why we do not have it. First of all, this Government of nonentities does not have the capacity to think that far ahead. It has trouble planning a week's business of the Assembly, let alone strategy for the next five years. But, more importantly, the less this Government tells the community of its true intentions the more it hopes to defer the community's outrage and ease the tensions within its own ranks. We all know about those, do we not? The absolute sell-out of the Residents Rally party policies by Bernard Collaery and Norm Jensen is having a disastrous effect on their own party. We do not need to look any further - - -

Mr Moore: Hector keeps telling everybody he still believes those things.

MRS GRASSBY: Yes, he keeps believing. We do not need to look any further for confirmation than the front page of a recent Canberra Times. What are the Rally's own members saying about their party? Let me quote part of this article. It refers to "poor consultation between ACT Deputy Chief Minister, Bernard Collaery, and the Rally membership", "loss of Rally identity through policy compromise or reversal of Rally policy to make it acceptable to the Alliance Government", "Mr Collaery's 'self-anointed' decision-making on a day-to-day basis".

Mr Jensen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I do not wish to interrupt the tirade in relation to the Residents Rally - - -

MR SPEAKER: Order! What is the point of order, please?

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Mr Jensen: My point is the relevance, Mr Speaker.

MRS GRASSBY: But, Mr Speaker, nobody should be surprised by this. A look at the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement will show us numerous examples of how the Residents Rally party has sold out the principles on which they were elected simply for the glorification of Bernie, the Attorney.

The threatened closure of the Royal Canberra Hospital as part of the budget strategy is a slap in the face for those people most responsible, or perhaps irresponsible, for putting Bernie onto this giant ego trip - that is, the people of inner Canberra. Then, of course, there is the issue of education. At the time of the self-government election, many Canberra residents were upset that nine schools had been closed and replaced by four new ones. Many Canberrans were concerned about future education standards in the ACT. The Residents Rally party played on this concern and hoodwinked the people into believing that they would be more responsive to their concerns and they would consult with the community.

Of course, last year they were not in government. They actually called on the Labor Government to increase expenditure on education. Now that they are bedfellows with this capital "L" Liberal, conservative Government, we do not hear a word out of them. Of course, we would not want concern for schools and hospitals getting in the way of the Attorney-General's egomania. We would all pray that he is better at being Attorney-General than he was as a \$3,000 a year man.

Then, Mr Speaker, we have the alleged erratic behaviour of Dr Kinloch. Perhaps at his more mature age he finds it more difficult to sell out his principles than do his Residents Rally colleagues.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Mrs Grassby, you are getting away from the topic.

MRS GRASSBY: No, I am not, Mr Speaker. I feel that he does not sell out his principles so easily, or perhaps the move to the Government's benches has not brought the perks he was hoping for. On the other hand, there is something more erratic occurring in the education debate. In the Chief Minister's budget strategy statement he said, "Unfortunately the legacy of oversupply of places still remains. It has now reached a level of 13,000" - or 10,000, 9,000, 6,000. They cannot even decide on how many places there are in existing schools.

Mr Kaine: Are you quoting from my speech?

MRS GRASSBY: I am quoting all the figures you keep giving us. No, I am not quoting from your speech, but we get different figures from everybody at question time. He said "vacant places in existing schools or 20 per cent more places than the number of students".

On the Pru Goward show Dr Kinloch said that he did not agree with that figure or any other figure. He quoted a figure of 9,000 vacant places. Mr Speaker, who is right, or who is wrong? That is what we would like to know. Has the Chief Minister, in his budget strategy statement, given us the wrong information or does the Executive Deputy for education not know what he is talking about? Perhaps Dr Kinloch is being honest and will not be a party to the use of false figures to help the Liberals' hidden agenda, the privatisation of assets in the ACT.

Mr Speaker, a keen student of politics would not be surprised by the words of the Residents Rally party and the Liberals. None of them have ever had a connection with the people most under threat here, the lower levels of the ACT public service. When the Chief Minister's priorities review board wields its razor, the bosses will be okay. It is always the lower level public servants who are under threat. Of course, Mr DUBY may laugh. Members of the No Self Government Party hoodwinked the people of the ACT well and truly. They have transformed themselves into the "Now Self-Glory Party". At least they have not thrown their schools or health policies out of the window. They did not have any, so they did not have to throw them out the window.

I know, however, that there are many public servants working for the ACT Government who thought that at least Craig DUBY and Carmel Maher were "one of them". After all, they used to work with them; they thought they were "one of them". This budget strategy statement puts the lie to that. In his response to last year's budget Mr DUBY called for an expansionary budget achieved by borrowing an extra \$100m or so. This year he sits there as a Minister in the conservative Government and watches while his Liberal mates pull the razor on those he would have once considered his friends and work mates. They are not his now, I can tell you that.

Mr Speaker, let me now turn to an issue of particular concern to me, and that is the threatened privatisation of the workshops. When I was Minister for Urban Services I was approached by unions representing the workers in the special duty workshop. They told me that the work had been taken away from the workshop and, despite their best efforts to increase efficiency, the workshops were being threatened with closure. It seemed silly to me that workshop facilities were being duplicated throughout the ACT Government services and, after discussions with my ministerial colleagues, I ordered that no action be taken which would prejudice the future of workshops until a complete review of workshop facilities has been carried out. Unfortunately, this review was not completed by the time the Liberals and their cronies grabbed power.

In the Chief Minister's budget statement there are many veiled threats to privatise these facilities.
The workers

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at ACTION, and at the special duty workshop in particular, were so concerned about the privatisation rumours that they held a stop-work meeting a few weeks ago. I addressed the meetings and advised them that the Labor Party opposed privatisation. We found out it was true because he left his notes behind and there they were - my God! The whole of Canberra now knows that it was true, that I was not rumourmongering or scaremongering; it was true. We know that. Does the Government still claim that this was scaremongering?

Why, then, does the Government's own resource review of the ACT Government's fleet say that "the ACTION special duty vehicle workshop should be wound down and closed as soon as practicable"? Why does it go on to say that the new arrangement should take effect from 1 July 1990? It is time for the Government to come clean on this and other issues. What will Mr DUBY do to protect the interests of the workers of his department? Little, I am quite sure.

MR DUBY (Minister for Finance and Urban Services) (9.17): Mr Speaker, how refreshing it was to hear Mrs Grassby in full flight, providing us with an erudite expose of Labor's lack of fiscal and financial expertise. This veiled attack was supposed to be - - -

Mr Berry: I did not think it was veiled.

MR DUBY: It was a veiled attack on the budget strategy statement because I do not think it addressed it once. Instead we had to listen to Mrs Grassby's waffle. Mind you, it was very entertaining waffle, Mrs Grassby, I must admit. When the points come down for the speeches tonight I am sure you are going to win hands down for the most entertaining.

Mr Jensen: And the loudest.

MR DUBY: And the loudest, too. We heard, as I said, nothing of substance from Mrs Grassby except a call for a workshop-led recovery of the ACT, something which I cannot quite fathom myself. The Chief Minister tried to interject about some notes that were stolen from a meeting which he had in good faith with those members. Of course, Mr Speaker, we all remember the editorial in the Canberra Times when the people who stole these documents leaked them. The editorial said, "How amazing". We have been led to believe that the Chief Minister is wielding a knife, is going to cut into the flesh, and when we read the comments that the Chief Minister has made in the margins of that report, what do we find? We find a reasoned argument and a questioning mind. We find a mind that says, "Prove that point. I don't quite accept this point. Perhaps we need facts and figures on that point".

Mr Speaker, is that the mind of a troglodyte, someone who is going to return us to the Dark Ages, someone who has got the mind of a supposed capital "L" Liberal, someone who is

going to take us back to a laissez faire economy? Of course not.

While we are discussing these matters I think it might be worth while for us to look at the comments that our Opposition's Federal Labor people are making about the state of the ACT economy. I have here, Mr Speaker, a transcript of a television report of 20 April where the new Federal Territories Minister, Mr Simmons, is quoted as saying that today he warned that the ACT Government will need to go on making tough financial decisions to make ends meet.

Mr Collaery: Do you hear that?

MR DUBY: That is right. The report goes on to say that Mr Simmons takes the Territory portfolio at a time when the ACT Government is set to make major cuts to education, claiming inadequate funding guarantees from the Commonwealth. And what does Mr Simmons have to say about it? He says, "Well, if you are going to be in government and you think it is going to be all a Sunday afternoon picnic, you are in for a big shock, because that is not the reality". We are living in tough economic times and people expect governments to make decisions, and to make hard decisions.

Mr Collaery: That is the big Labor party, not the side-valve outfit we have got opposite.

MR DUBY: That is right. This is not that embarrassing disgrace we have across the road from us - the disgrace that so many people were so pleased to see dispatched to the opposition benches only in December. That very crowd was leading us up the path of rack and ruin.

We have listened to a whole variety of people complain tonight. We have heard Mr Wood say that in the Chief Minister's budget statement there are four major plans. As far as I could hear, he only got to the first. The first is to promote the development of the private sector in the ACT and the regional economy. He then went on to say, "Goodness gracious, what have we done for the private sector?". Well, Mr Speaker, all I can say is that when this Government took over I think the collective sigh of relief from the private sector could have been heard in Oodnadatta, because they were suffering; they did not know which way to turn; and, not only that, there was no firm direction for them to follow.

I think that is well-known and it is well-assessed. Even the Trades and Labour Council, the union side of politics in this town, at least knows where it stands now. Its members are not forever in doubt as to which way the Government will hop, depending on which way they have consulted or which way the public opinion polls may be going.

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While I am at this, I might just put into the record the second goal of this strategy. That is to produce a balanced recurrent budget, not just in our first or second years but in the longer term. Of course, that is something which the Opposition was in no way able to do. You only have to look at the fiasco of their budget figures. We know what a mess they were in.

The third goal, of course, is to minimise the Territory's borrowings. I think everyone agrees that governments throughout the country and throughout the world have overexposed themselves to borrowing and I think that is a very sensible suggestion. Has anyone in the Opposition in discussing this Territory budget strategy statement criticised that objective? The answer, of course, is no.

These are the four goals that we are trying to achieve in this strategy statement. The fourth goal is to make full use of the capital assets that have been transferred to us, not, of course, to be namby-pamby and say, "We have got these community assets and people might like to use them for two afternoons a week, so we will not worry about whether they are totally under-utilised or whether there is only 15 per cent occupancy", et cetera. That, of course, is another goal that people on that side of the house cannot object to at all.

Mr Speaker, I had actually prepared a speech for this debate tonight on the basis of what my department was doing in relation to trying to meet the needs of this budget strategy but my time, unfortunately, has been taken up in answering those pathetic accusations from the other side of the floor. I would like to do a broad rundown of what my department is doing in its approach to the budget strategy statement brought down by the Chief Minister, which, of course, is the goal of this Government.

There is no doubt about the fact that my department provides many services that are taken for granted here in the ACT. They are only missed when there is a difficulty in delivering them or when there is some impact personally. We do, however, need to pay attention to the cost of these services within the budget. We are reviewing the methodology of charging services to both municipal and territorial budgets. This is a thing which the Labor Party was incapable of doing. We were left with a terrific hotchpotch of figures from their budget statements last year which you need to be a Rhodes scholar to understand half the time.

Mr Speaker, it is important to ensure that services are delivered on an effective basis and that we achieve value for money and rates are set at a level to recover the costs of providing the services we see as important. My department provides services to all other government agencies as well. We provide common services such as vehicle fleet operations, purchasing, tendering, personnel and accounting arrangements. We have undertaken a review

of the fleet operations. The recommendations contained in that report are currently under consideration, not only by us but, I believe, by the rest of the Canberra community since it was knocked off.

There are a number of inefficiencies inherent in a system that has remained unchanged for decades. This is something, of course, that we can all identify with, that we all know about, but something that the previous Government just did not have the guts to take on.

Mr Collaery: Saturday night fever - Friday night fever.

MR DUBY: Friday night fever. Friday night, Saturday night; who knows when it will strike? Mr Speaker, the Government will shortly be considering a purchasing policy which will stress value for money and shortly it will be providing a streamlined and understandable tendering process. We are looking to reducing duplication between departments. We are going to look at the government computing area as a key area in which we can make sure we can deliver more effective and cost-efficient services which complement our commitment to clients.

Mr Speaker, there are a number of other areas that are administered by my department but I can only mention a few of them. There is ACTION, which provides a real service to the community. It is one which we know can never be done on a cost-efficiency basis but one in which I am sure there are many efficiencies that can be made. Mr Speaker, I seek leave to - - -

Mr Collaery: Table your speech; incorporate your speech in Hansard.

MR DUBY: Yes. I seek leave, Mr Speaker, to incorporate my speech in Hansard with the full details of exactly what steps the Department of Urban Services, along with the other departments which fall within my portfolio, are going to undertake.

With that, Mr Speaker, I once again repeat that the budget strategy statement as brought down by the Chief Minister is an effective fiscal policy which shows the way this Territory should head.

MR SPEAKER: Order! I believe it is out of order for a member to incorporate a speech in Hansard at the end of a speech he has given because that then could give the member hours of speaking time. You may seek leave to read your speech. I suggest that would be the way to go, Mr DUBY.

MR DUBY: That is all right, Mr Speaker. I will not seek to table it. What I will do is save it and read it another day because it is full of very interesting information.

MR BERRY (9.27): I think the most interesting element of the debate here today has been the crying and whingeing

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from those opposite about the budget strategy statement by the Chief Minister. I must say some was slightly out of context, but now I suspect it is considered relevant to the debate. Of course, that crying and whingeing about the successes of the Follett Government distorted them in such a way as to justify some of their own crazy strategies.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that the Follett Labor Government set the pace, a cracking pace, for the establishment and continuance of government in this Territory. It is the sort of cracking pace that the lazy Government members opposite have not been able to repeat, notwithstanding the substantial time they had to practise while they were languishing in opposition - a proper place for them. They have given a dismal performance in opposition and a dismal performance in government.

Earlier, during the debate over the dumping of Mr DUBY, I was surprised to see a glimpse of remorse when Mr HUMPHRIES' long face appeared on the scene in relation to something of an admission that they had done the wrong thing in respect of the Ainslie Transfer Station. That, in fact, was true, but it seems to me that the Government is preoccupied with making hard decisions - with the emphasis on the hardness - without regard to the people in this Territory who use the services provided by the Government. That preoccupation with hard decisions leaves out any regard for decisions of substance and worth for the community.

Mr Speaker, I want to turn now to the hospital closure and the winding back of the public hospital system in the ACT.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

MR SPEAKER: Order! It being 9.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr HUMPHRIES: I require the question to be put forthwith without debate.

Question resolved in the negative.

BUDGET STRATEGY STATEMENT Ministerial Statement and Papers

Debate resumed.

MR BERRY: As I said, Mr Speaker, it is a hallmark of this Government's mode of action that there is no consultation

within the agenda of this Government. If there is any consultation, it is kept behind closed doors and is so selective that nobody hears about it. That particular area relates to the Government's actions in relation to the Territory's hospital system.

Mr Speaker, after the plan which had been developed by Labor to keep Royal Canberra Hospital open had been accepted and the community reassured, this Government overturned the decision in its attack on our health system. This attack on the health system is about saving money, allegedly, but no doubt it is in response to a requirement by the conservative constituency which seeks to cut government services to ensure that at some time in the future some conservative government might give them some relief from taxes. That pays no regard to the people in this Territory who do not have sufficient income to maintain themselves, but of course that is not something with which the members opposite would be concerned.

Mr Speaker, at the same time, the announced plan is deficient in detail. The convalescent home talked about by Mr Humphries, the hospice, the relocation of the Jindalee Nursing Home and the 24-hour mental health crisis centre are all new projects. The community has a right to know where they will be, how many beds there will be, who will operate them - whether it is the private sector or the public sector - how much they will cost because they have not yet been costed, on Mr Humphries' admission, and how much the overall plan will cost. There is a significant lack of costing and a lack of honesty in the Government's approach to this hospital plan.

The Minister for Health, as I have said, has acknowledged in this house that the Government is working with the same figures as Labor had to develop its hospital plan. The work done by the steering committee did not include the plans for the convalescent home, for a hospice, for a birth centre, or for a 24-hour mental health crisis centre. Now, in spite of all these added proposals which must include added costs, the Government claims to have a cheaper proposal for the ACT health system.

We heard Mr Humphries on his misleading campaign a little while ago talking about \$8m savings. He was suggesting that that was \$8m savings in relation to the hospital closure. If they had been telling the truth, Mr Speaker, it was \$3m over what would have been saved by Labor in its proposal, and none of us have forgotten the \$5m tax which could have been reaped from the adult video industry either, Mr Kaine.

Mr Speaker, these people opposite have misled the people of the ACT with their plan. The same figures which were prepared under Labor are being used by this Government to justify their program and those same figures - or the nearest possible assessment of the program that is to be conducted by the Government - indicate that it will cost over \$190m to implement the Government's plan.

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Mr Humphries: That is rubbish. That is drivel. You have got the wrong figures, Wayne.

MR BERRY: Read the costings. This Minister here is deliberately misleading the people of the ACT in his quest to hand over sections of the public health sector to his private industry mates.

There are other issues in that hospital plan which are severely lacking. One of the issues that I think needs to be discussed is the relocation of a nursing home on the Royal Canberra Hospital site. The Government seems blissfully unaware of the Federal nursing home guidelines and has announced its plan to relocate the Jindalee Nursing Home without any consultation again. That is something we are getting pretty used to. Here is a Minister, Mr Humphries, who is hell-bent on dragging the ACT health system down to the lowest common denominator. He has already said that what he intends to do is to drag it down to that lowest common denominator by handing over a significant part of the public hospital system to the private sector. He has already started that with his attack on the provision of women's services and the privatisation of obstetric beds in the handover of those beds to the John James Memorial Hospital.

I am sorry that Mr Collaery is not here to listen to what I have to say about the lack of future direction in relation to welfare. One of the most shocking things that has been heard in recent times in relation to this Minister is his statement in advance of the report on ACT welfare services by the consultant, Bruce Callaghan and Associates. By his own admission "Mr Welfare" opposite has set about implementing new and wonderful services without the benefit of the expensive consultant's report which will address important welfare issues. With the report due in the next few weeks, the Minister has announced these new programs; programs which, of course, he has admitted were started at the expense of others. This redirection in the focus of welfare programs has taken place before this important report was received by the Government.

Prisons, of course, are another example of knee-jerk reactions. I see that my speech notes suggest that they are another example of "jerk reactions", but I would not say that in this place. They are knee-jerk reactions and a further demonstration of the sort of adhocery that this Government will lower itself to in the delivery of services in the prisons. It took the suicide of an ACT prisoner in Goulburn to drag out announcements by the deputy leader that there will be a new gaol for juveniles. It seems that his plan was to get them off the streets in their wild years so they could go out there and restore old farm machinery. I do not know that there is much of a market for that sort of stuff and I do not know that there is much of a market for the sorts of skills that one would develop in restoring old farm machinery once one was finished with

the "you beaut", wish list goal. The budget strategy delivered by the Chief Minister is a sham and will be treated as such by the community.

DR KINLOCH (9.37): It is a great pleasure to have this chance to talk about Mr Kaine's budget strategy in relation to open government. I love to hear the honeyed voice of my young friend, Mrs Grassby; we get great enjoyment from that. One thing I have always greatly regretted over the past year is the situation in which we slang at each other across the chamber, especially when that is aimed at individuals. I wish we could cut that down. I recall with pleasure the time during National Dance Week when Mrs Grassby and I danced the light fantastic in Glebe Park. But, occasionally, we have to disagree.

For instance, on the theme of open government in relation to this budget strategy, I would like to think of open government as a situation in which there are reasonable and proper areas of disagreement. I will take some of the charges that have been made. In the Residents Rally we have open government, within our membership, within our executive and amongst our three Residents Rally members. We like to maintain both solidarity and individuality, and that we do in a range of policies. You have seen it time and time again, and we do the same thing in relation to the budget strategy.

Similarly, in the Alliance Government, the 10 of us cherish both solidarity and individuality. From the point of view of a Labor government I can see that this seems strange. We do not necessarily have the somewhat suffocating close-knitness of decisions made in single party rooms. I am amazed to hear Mr Berry talk about closed doors, saying that we are operating behind closed doors. We have lively and often fruitful and open discussion amongst the members of the Alliance Government. I want to give an example of that when we come to the budget strategy related to hospitals.

We have a broad and open government of comrades, comrades on these budget matters as on other matters. Of course, some of us have strong feelings on some individual issues, and that in a liberal government is entirely proper. That is what classic liberalism is all about, and I wish the members of the Labor Party could bring themselves to be small "I" liberals. Tomorrow I hope to come at that element of this budget strategy in another debate - because time moves on - on education.

I would now briefly like to conclude with an example of sensible and rational comradeship on this side of the house, and here I come to the question of the hospitals. Now, what are my druthers? What would I like?

Mr Moore: Oh, no!

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DR KINLOCH: Michael, could you please shut up? What are my druthers? What all of our druthers would be is a magnificent, brand new hospital with a world famous medical school - all six years of it - on the Acton Peninsula with everything that such a hospital could possibly have. We do not have a new oilwell in the middle of Lake Burley Griffin. The reality that we came to - and certainly that I came to starting from a great wish for the Royal Canberra Hospital to remain - was to recognise the reality of it. I discovered, realistically, that that would take literally hundreds of millions of dollars that we do not have, and I want to describe the budget strategy process by which we came to that.

First of all, there were statements in the house. I thought Mr Humphries' statements were excellent on that matter - careful, well thought-out, well delivered. We then, in our Alliance Government, had very considerable briefings for the entire 10 of us. Sometimes some came, sometimes some others, and the people who gave us those briefings were put under very close scrutiny. We had a very good debate, argument, discussion.

I, personally, was worried about a number of factors. I was given a personal briefing by two members of the staff and I put them to the test on a number of issues. After a long process I was in no doubt that the budget strategy over the hospital was correct. I commend it to the other side of the house. I believe that what we are doing is in the best financial interests of the people of Canberra.

Mr Moore: That is open government, is it?

DR KINLOCH: Now, tomorrow, when I have a chance to discuss - - -

Mr Jensen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker; I refer to standing order 202. Mr Moore has persistently and wilfully disrupted the proceedings of this house tonight and I suggest it is about time we did something about it.

DR KINLOCH: I conclude, with my comrades on this side of the house, by saying that we have a budget strategy that is carefully thought through. It was not done behind closed doors; it was done with very considerable to-and-fro and discussion and argument. I believe that, when we come to the sensible and sound comradely solutions, the other side of the house should listen to us.

MR KAINE (Treasurer) (9.43), in reply: Sadly, Mr Speaker, I have to conclude that the debate from the opposition has added very little tonight to the question of how to deal with the financial dilemma confronting the ACT.

Mr Berry: We disagree with you, you mean.

MR KAINE: Well, you can disagree, but in an open debate one would expect that people of your calibre, Mr Berry,

people who have been involved in the management of the hospital system, might have put something constructive on the table, but you did not.

Mr Berry: We did and you overturned it.

MR Kaine: You did exactly what you have always done.

Mr Berry: We did and you overturned it.

MR Kaine: You are just a knocker. That is what we have had for the last hour or hour and a half of this debate, a lot of knocking - not a single constructive proposition. Correction; I think that Mr Moore, with due respect, made a couple of useful suggestions and I have to exclude him from this criticism. But the Opposition has contributed absolutely nothing about how to deal with the fact that next budget year we will have a \$37m deficiency if we do nothing. This is not very surprising because members of the Opposition had the problem to deal with in this current fiscal year and they did not address it then either. They produced a budget that was the easiest one to get out; they did not have to upset anybody; they did not have to make any hard decisions; they just put out the easiest possible budget and thought that hopefully next year would take care of itself. Mr Speaker, next year is not going to take care of itself. This Government recognises the problem and is going to do something about fixing it.

In the course of the debate, the members on the opposite side have come up with some rather peculiar statements. For example, Ms Follett and Mrs Grassby have said, "The Chief Minister promised us a five-year financial plan, and what have we got - a strategy". A strategy and a five-year financial plan are not the same thing. Of course, we had to produce a strategy, and out of the strategy come the subsequent budgets, year by year. I said, and if the people on the other side ever bothered to read anything or listen to anything that I have ever said they would know that I have always said, that in the latter half of each calendar year we will produce a five-year rolling financial plan. In the first half of the year we will produce the budget; in the second half of the year we will produce the five-year financial plan.

You will see the first five-year financial plan, Mrs Grassby, towards the end of this fiscal year after we get this budget out of the way and we can concentrate on developing it. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the strategy. The strategy simply sets down the climate in which we are operating and the broad approach to how we are going to solve it.

People opposite talked about our approach to the Grants Commission. We will deal effectively with the impending Grants Commission inquiry in the interests of this community, just as some of us have in previous inquiries. This is one of Mr Moore's points of criticism. He will

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find, if he bothers to read the Grants Commission reports of the past, that some individuals in this house have made very significant contributions to those inquiries. Some of us have, but no member of the opposition has made any contribution to any one of those three previous Grants Commission inquiries.

I do not know how they feel qualified to make any comment when not one of them has made a contribution; and, of course, none of them will make a contribution to the next one that is just starting either. Some of us on this side of the house will because we know how the Grants Commission works; we understand its mechanisms; we understand the fiscal equalisation approach that it uses. We will make contributions. Let me see your contribution when the time comes. It will be like it has been in the past, a big zero.

The Government has not yet addressed the revenue side of the budget. Somebody on the other side of the house made this point. No, we have not looked at the revenue side, but if members opposite had bothered to read my strategy statement they would know that I commented there that we are looking first at the expenditure side because - and I have said it many times before - I believe this community is now taxed pretty much at the levels at which it should expect to be taxed. We are taxed at pretty much the same levels and we pay the same kinds of taxes as everybody else does. What the opposition is saying is that we have to look at the revenue side first and we have to become the highest taxing body politic in Australia. If we do not cut our expenditures first and we have to raise the taxes to cover the \$37m deficiency, this would be the highest taxing body politic in Australia. Is that what you are really advocating? Of course you are not, because you would not have the guts to do it and I have more commonsense than to do it.

You look first at the expenditure side to see where you can achieve efficiencies, where you can achieve economies and then, if necessary, you look at the revenue side to see what you can do there. When we have identified all the savings that can be made, when we have achieved all the possible efficiencies that we can identify, when we have made all the possible productivity gains that can be identified, when we have developed a lean, effective public service, then we will move on to the revenue measures, as any sensible budgeter would. Just as we are facing up to the hard decisions on the expenditure side, we will also face up to the hard decisions on the revenue side when we come to them.

In all of this there is something that the people in the opposition have never really understood: you have to balance your social conscience and your financial responsibility. We happen to have done both. You lot on that side will forgo anything in the interests of social conscience. Lord knows where the money is going to come

from! That is where you were with the hospitals, Mr Berry. You were prepared to commit yourself to \$216m to refurbish the hospitals when you had not the faintest idea where the money could come from or where it could conceivably come from. You were not prepared to take the hard decisions that had to be made. You thought you could get away with it by taking the easy route. Well, you could not and you will not.

Mr Speaker, there was some comment about my strategy being only a medium-term strategy. This medium-term strategy - and we are talking about a three to five-year period - will merge under this Alliance Government into a longer-term policy, have no doubts about it. Ms Follett stated earlier that we would not be here very long. Well, I have got news for her. She will be holding her breath for a long time before she takes the Chief Ministership again.

By comparison, Mr Speaker, when the Opposition was in government they could not even address a short-term period of up to two years. They could not get past year one. They produced a bad budget for year one and they did not even think about what was going to happen beyond the end of that budget year. Of course, they screwed up this current year's budget badly anyway, and they talk about deceiving the public. We have even discovered that \$142,000 that the former Chief Minister claims she put in there for a second women's refuge does not exist. It is a phantom \$142,000. She was going to build a phantom refuge, presumably. She sold the budget including the \$142,000 figure for this refuge. The \$142,000 never existed.

Mr Speaker, there was some discussion about section 19, the Canberra Times site and all of that sort of thing, and the fact that the business community is not very happy with us. Well, those are not the vibes that I am getting from the business community. The point is that we have to come up with a long-term, cohesive planning system, which again the Opposition could not produce in its term of office. It was another one of the hard decisions it just kept putting off. We faced up to it. We have got the planning legislation on the table and we will deal within the context of that planning legislation. We will deal with section 19 and we will deal with the Canberra Times site, and the business community will know where they stand, which is more than you could ever say about the members opposite when they were in government. They had not the faintest idea where they were going. It is very easy to be a knocker but we are getting on with the job and we are delivering the goods.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the forward estimates show that there is a \$37m shortfall in our budget for next year, and I point out that this is no more than a simple projection of Ms Follett's current budget. We have done nothing to change that. It is just a projection of Ms Follett's budget. These figures do not include any new initiatives which this Government would wish to implement. In other

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words, ignoring completely the fact that the additional Commonwealth expenditure will cease in the second budget year from now - not next year, but the year after - Ms Follett's mismanagement in this current year is the only cause of the \$37m shortfall next year. (Extension of time granted)

The \$37m shortfall that we are confronting now is absolutely and directly relatable to the budget mismanagement of the Opposition when it was in government. It simply could not produce a budget that could generate any sort of fiscal responsibility even for the second year, let alone the third.

I have set out a strategy for dealing with our financial problems. Simply to try to solve the problem in annual budgetary increments is not good enough. You cannot do it that way. I had hoped that the opposition would have made some constructive contributions during this debate, but it has sadly failed to do so, as it always has done when it comes down to the question of money.

The process of developing the 1990-1991 budget has now begun, and I sincerely invite members of the opposition to give me any constructive comments that they have on how the budget gap can be closed. If they are willing to come to me and make a constructive comment, which they have not done in this debate, I will be only too happy to attribute their valuable contributions to them when I bring down the budget later in the year.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

May Day

MR BERRY (9.55): I think it is important that today does not pass by without some mention of the significance of May Day. Whilst it has been mentioned in earlier speeches, I think it is appropriate that this day is mentioned in relation to the rights of workers and people generally in this country and in others, and that some of the important issues are remembered on this day. In other places, of course, this day is part of the ongoing struggle. I was in the car earlier this evening and I heard on ABC radio that the authorities in Korea had celebrated today by locking up union officials and getting stuck into striking workers out in the street with riot police. Something like 20,000 workers were out on strike at the Hyundai plant struggling

to improve their position in the market. Things are different in this country from Korea and other places, but that has not always been so.

The shearers strike of 1891 was of significance for the union movement of Australia. It was also of importance to the Labor Party, as has been said before, because it was the formation of this great party. The focus in those days was on survival and the improvement of wages and conditions of workers. We are all aware of the great eight-hour day strikes in the 1860s, and some of us would be aware of some of the benchmark decisions of the courts which were later established to consider industrial issues. One of those was the harvester case.

I raise that principally to focus on something that Mr Collaery had said earlier in relation to the provision of prisons in the ACT. He is going to have our young taken off the streets and put away for their wild years and they can restore old farm machinery. As I said earlier, there is not much of a market for that sort of farm machinery, but the sort of farm machinery that he would be talking about, I guess, would be the farm machinery that was made at the Sunshine Harvester Company in those days when the decision was made for a seven bob a day wage for workers. It was made by Judge Higgins. Judge Higgins was a part-time judge from the High Court. He was serving part-time on industrial issues in the Industrial Court.

Mr Speaker, these things are remembered on May Day by workers and I think it is important that it is so. It is also true that in some places there are marches to celebrate the achievements of workers and the continuance of the fight to improve their lot in society. In other places there are displays of military might. I think it is well recognised that the display of military might no longer has a place in this world and one would hope that this would fade on May Day.

It is a great day. I have had the pleasure of participating in May Day celebrations in this city by way of a march some years ago. It consisted of only a few people but it did represent a core of working-class people in the ACT. I was able to participate in a march involving several hundred thousand people in the Philippines when "people power" took over that country and the new President was brought to power. There were great expectations amongst the union movement over there that things would improve. Those workers have since been disappointed because the division between labour and capital still exists very clearly in that country and the struggle goes on. Workers are sacked and killed.

MR SPEAKER: Order! It being 10.00 pm, under the standing orders I declare that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Collaery: I require, pursuant to standing order 34(f), that this debate be extended for 10 minutes.

Mr Berry: Does that mean that I have to speak for another 10 minutes?

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MR SPEAKER: Mr Berry, your time has expired. The situation with that 10-minute extension is that it allows a Minister to reply to a matter raised in the preceding adjournment debate. If you look at standing order 34 you will see the words are there.

MR KAINÉ (Chief Minister) (10.01): Mr Speaker, I would like to make a very brief comment on something that was debated earlier today. I will do it on my own behalf and hopefully on behalf of all members of the Government.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Chief Minister, it has to do with the adjournment debate only.

MR KAINÉ: I am speaking on the adjournment debate.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, but on a comment made in the adjournment debate; in other words, we are discussing the maypole.

MR KAINÉ: In that case, you are denying me the opportunity to be magnanimous to the new member of the Assembly.

MR SPEAKER: You can seek leave to suspend standing orders, Chief Minister.

Mr Humphries: I disagree with your ruling, Mr Speaker. I have to say I have heard this interpretation of the standing orders before. I consider that the standing orders indicate that there is no requirement for relevance, but there is no necessary requirement that you have to be irrelevant in respect of any debate that has gone on earlier in the day. I cannot understand why any member cannot speak on any subject whatever during the course of the adjournment debate.

MR SPEAKER: Order! I direct you to standing order 34(f).

Mr Collaery: Mr Speaker, on a point of order; my colleague the Chief Minister wishes to refer to an event. That event was a remark made by the new member, Mr Connolly, in prefacing his speech in relation to 1 May. He mentioned his delight in being appointed on 1 May 1990. I assume that that is relevant to a matter raised in the preceding adjournment debate because my colleague Mr Berry raised 1 May.

MR SPEAKER: Certainly.

Mr Collaery: If the Chief Minister wishes to make that connection he is entitled to.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, I agree. Please proceed, Chief Minister.

MR KAINE: I think you have destroyed the spontaneity of the moment.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Assembly adjourned at 10.03

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND URBAN SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION

Government Contracts

QUESTION NO. 120

Ms Follett - asked the Minister for Finance and Urban Services: on 3 April 1990:

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that some contractors on ACT Government projects have failed to pay subcontractors in a timely manner.
- (2) Does this constitute a breach of the head contract.
- (3) Is the financial viability of contractors investigated thoroughly prior to the awarding of contracts.

Mr DUBY - the answer to the Members question is as follows:

- (1) It is a fact that some contractors on ACT Government projects have not paid subcontractors in a timely manner.

This practice unfortunately does occur within the construction industry for a number of reasons, primarily because of the Head Contractors restricted cash flow, and is not restricted to government contracts.

- (2) No. Except in the case of a Nominated Subcontractor and it is not the current practice to nominate subcontractors.
- (3) The size of a project will govern the extent of financial assessment. All successful tenderers over \$200,000 are investigated. Lesser tenderers receive only cursory investigation unless:
 - a. doubt exists as to the tenderers financial capacity; or
 - b. current workload of tenderer is high in relation to. previous periods; or
 - c. current annual turnover of lenders expected to be substantially greater than previous years and detailed financial information had not been previously obtained.

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MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND URBAN SERVICES

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTION

Government Contracts

QUESTION NO. 121

Ms Follett - asked the Minister for Finance and Urban Services: on 3 April 1990

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that a document entitled "Special conditions of subcontract" and purporting to be for use with Government contracts NPWL and SCNPWL, is being used by contractors on Government projects.
- (2) Does this document contravene the head contract in several areas in respect ,of the payment of subcontractors.

Mr Duby - the answer to the Members question is as follows:

- (1) ACT Public Works does not issue any "Special conditions of subcontract" as the Government is not a party to arrangements entered into by a contractor and his subcontractors.
- (2) As any such document does not emanate from Government offices, I am unaware of its content.

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