



Debates

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Tuesday, 24 August 2010

MR SPEAKER (Mr Rattenbury) took the chair at 10 am, made a formal recognition that the Assembly was meeting on the lands of the traditional custodians, and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

**Leave of absence
Statement by member**

MS BRESNAN (Brindabella), by leave: I had been on personal leave overseas prior to the sittings. I had the opportunity to meet with the Director of the Institute on Drugs and Drug Addiction in Lisbon, Portugal, on Monday, 16 August, on the implementation of a prison needle and syringe program trial in Portugal, which delayed my return to Australia. I will provide information from this meeting to the responsible ministers and opposition spokesperson when this is available.

When members have been absent overseas on study trips, “Assembly business” has been given as the reason for the absence. As my overseas travel and the visit to the institute were arranged at my own expense, it could not have been described as “Assembly business”: hence, after consulting the Clerk’s office, “personal reasons” was felt to be the most appropriate description of my absence.

I note that, before commencing leave, I had advised the three committees of which I am a member of the leave dates—in particular, the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs, of which I am the chair.

**Climate Change, Environment and Water—Standing
Committee
Report 4**

MS HUNTER (Ginninderra—Parliamentary Convenor, ACT Greens) (10.04): I present the following report:

Climate Change, Environment and Water—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Inquiry into ACT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets*—Final report—August 2010, dated 19 August 2010, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I am pleased to speak to report No 4 of the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water, *Inquiry into ACT greenhouse gas reduction targets*. This final report builds on the interim report presented to the Assembly in September last year.

As members would be aware, this inquiry was referred to the standing committee in December 2008. A comprehensive interim report was presented to the Assembly in

September 2009, with an acknowledgement that the inquiry had been made more difficult due to uncertainty about the commonwealth government's proposed carbon pollution reduction scheme, the potential outcomes from international climate change negotiations held in Copenhagen in December 2009, the lack of detailed analysis from the ACT government on cost-benefit analysis of its existing climate change strategies, and uncertainty about the direction of the energy policy in the ACT.

When presenting the interim report, the committee indicated that the inquiry was ongoing in light of these issues. In preparing the final report, the committee has sought to address these uncertainties, but unfortunately there has not been significant development in many areas. In light of this, the committee will continue to monitor developments with a particular focus on the implications for the ACT.

The report provides an update about national initiatives such as a carbon pollution reduction scheme and renewable energy targets and summarises the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009. The committee has also analysed climate change issues in an ACT context, with a particular focus on the draft sustainable energy policy 2010-20, the ACT GreenPower scheme and 2010-11 budget initiatives.

The committee is concerned about the ongoing delay of the finalisation of key ACT government policy documents relating to climate change, such as the final sustainable energy policy and weathering the change action plan 2. These documents are particularly important in the context of achieving zero net emissions in the territory, and the committee calls on the government to release these documents as a matter of priority.

The committee has also reviewed a cost-efficiency evaluation methodology presented by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission which may be used to assess the efficacy of greenhouse gas reduction strategies and associated policies and programs. The committee recognises that this framework is a valuable planning mechanism for program and policy development and should be viewed as a solid foundation for the development of a range of other methods to evaluate greenhouse gas emission mitigation strategies. The committee's final report outlines some additional recommendations, including:

- adoption of a cost-efficiency evaluation methodology to evaluate programs implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- establishment of a set of criteria to inform the development of a range of evaluation methodologies to evaluate greenhouse gas emission mitigation strategies; and
- implementation of measures to encourage local community action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, a report such as this does not come together without the hard work and assistance of a range of people. I would like to conclude by thanking my committee colleagues Mr Hargreaves, Mr Seselja and also Ms Porter, who was a member of the committee for the development of the interim report, and the large number of

individuals and organisations who provided submissions to this inquiry and appeared before the committee at public hearings. I would also very much like to thank the committee secretaries who worked on the interim and the final report—that is, Hanna Jaireth and Margie Morrison.

I commend the report to the Assembly. My committee colleagues may also wish to provide some comments.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.08): I would like to make some brief points. Firstly, I would also like to thank committee members. I thank the chair, Ms Hunter, and Mr Hargreaves and Ms Porter, who was previously on the committee. There are a lot of good things in both the interim report and the final report. There are a lot of things that we agree on. There are a couple of points of difference which I would like briefly to highlight. Paragraph 1.6 states:

One member of the Committee expressed opposition to the 40 per cent target as outlined in the interim report.

That one member is me. I maintain that we do need a strong and sensible approach, that we do need to take strong action, but I am not convinced about the 40 per cent target that has been put forward in the interim report and that has effectively been adopted in the final report by omission, more than anything, I suppose. It has been effectively adopted by the committee, but, in the end, we do have a point of difference there.

The Canberra Liberals have legislation in the Assembly at the moment for a 30 per cent target. We believe that is a very challenging target. That is a tough target to meet. It is, though, a sensible and strong approach. It shows leadership, but we believe it gets the balance right in what is actually achievable and what is reasonable in the circumstances, given that we now have approximately 10 years to reach these medium targets—in fact, 9½ years or so to meet these 2020 targets.

I also want to highlight another area where there is a slight point of difference. Paragraph 2.44 states:

One member of the Committee expressed in-principle concern about an “opt out” approach to green energy.

I do remain concerned about it. The committee ended up with a recommendation that said that the government should look at this but come back to the Assembly, and I think that is sensible. But I do have a concern with the opt-out approach in that people can effectively be conscripted into purchasing green energy. I think we need to be up-front about these things. Many of us in the community choose green energy. There are many who do so for a number of reasons—because they feel that is the contribution they want to make by paying a little bit extra on their power bills. I would just put on the record my concern about the potential for an opt-out approach where effectively people end up buying something that they were not aware in the end that they were buying.

As well as thanking committee members, I also express my thanks to Margie Morrison and Hanna Jaireth, who did a wonderful job in preparing the documents.

As I said earlier, there are some points of agreement—in fact, on most of this, there are points of agreement. Looking at issues around the kind of framework that the ICRC put to us for cost-benefit of climate mitigation programs, I think there is some really useful work. I think that the government should look very seriously at that recommendation. In the end, we chose not to be overly prescriptive for the government. The ICRC has put forward a model. I am not an expert on these things but it seems to be a reasonable model. The government may wish to modify that model somewhat. But I think what is important is that they adopt a robust model, that they are up-front and transparent about what that model is and that they then report against that. I think that is really important because it is all well and good to have targets, it is all well and good to say that you are committed to action, but that action needs to be measurable and you need to report against those measures.

I think that the committee has made it very clear, in a tripartisan way, that what we expect from the government is that they will put forward a robust methodology. It may be what the ICRC has suggested; it may be a variation of that. But they will report against that, and I think that is really important.

In summary, I think there are a lot of points of agreement. I think all members of the committee agree that we need some strong targets, we need some strong action and there is a lot more to do. Also, there are some points of difference, which I have highlighted. We look forward to the government's response to this. We look forward to the government taking these recommendations very seriously. Again, I thank all those who have been involved in putting together what has been quite a significant body of work.

MR HARGREAVES (Brindabella) (10.13): I would like to join with Ms Hunter and Mr Seselja in thanking the committee office for the work that they did—particularly Margie Morrison and Lydia Chung for actually putting it together. Margie did an enormous amount of research which assisted the committee. Without the professional band of committee secretaries that we enjoy here, we would probably struggle, because we are a small parliament.

I would like to make a comment on the way in which the committee operated in this particular instance. I thank my fellow members for their forbearance, because they were here during the compilation of the first report. Coming in, as I did, halfway through the system, and not having the benefit of the research and the discussion around the compilation of the first report, I was a bit on the back foot. I thank my fellow members for their patience.

I also wanted to express my appreciation for the way in which this inquiry, the consideration of this report, played out. If ever there was an opportunity to play politics, this was it. I congratulate Mr Seselja and Ms Hunter on putting the issue of climate change—and what we, a small jurisdiction, can actually do about it—ahead of any particular partisan gain that we might be able to extract from it.

I would like to make a comment in relation to the weathering the change action plan. It was about opt in and opt out. We did not have the choice about whether you get power on the board. You did not get a chance to say, "No, no. I will stay with the kerosene heater, thanks very much." It is on, and we all use it. That means that we are having to opt out of using really dirty electricity. If people are saying, "I do not want to use this stuff; I want to opt into the green scheme," but they are not doing that because of the cost, that is because there are not enough people buying the stuff. If we reverse the idea, so that you have to opt out of it, then people will say, "Okay then; I can't be bothered. I will stay in." That would keep the price down, I would hope. To me, we really ought not to have a choice.

If I had my choice and I was king of the world, I would go down to Yallourn in Victoria and I would fill the hole in. But it would take all of the dirt in Tasmania to fill that hole. It is huge and it is filthy. The people in the ACT would love it if they did not have any dependence on brown coal with electricity at all. An opt-in, opt-out scheme is the way in which we can attack that.

I also want to make a comment about recommendation 4, the ICRC evaluation comments. I draw people's attention to them. One of the things that we discussed in the committee and with Mr Baxter was that we need to have an agreed evaluation and an agreed formula against which we can measure our progress over the years. One of the things that struck me was that what was missing in the conversation was having a unit of measure that we can use.

We all know that we have got units of measure for electricity, water and all the rest of it, but we do not have a unit of measure about the environment. The conversation was around "we did not have units of measure to tell us the value of water in the catchment years ago, but that was developed, because really clever minds got together and developed a unit of measure". We should be doing exactly the same thing when we are measuring the effect on our greenhouse gas emission abatement and all of the other things that we attack—climate change in the ACT.

When you come up with a formula, you need some units of measure. Units of measure usually have components. We have already got units of measure for things like water, gases and all the rest of it. They can be put together by a very bright academic mind to develop a unit of measure that we can use to start comparing ourselves with interstate jurisdictions.

What we do here in the ACT is completely different from what happens in other parts of the country. It is a pointless exercise to compare our achievements with those of Victoria, which is, in my view, the major contributor to dirty electricity and greenhouse gas emissions. We do not have a huge rural sector which contributes to it. We do not have factories belching out smoke. In fact, we have an urban forest. We are probably the best jurisdiction in terms of tackling climate change. Whether it is by design or by accident, I do not care; it is actually working. We need to make sure that, if we ever introduce manufacturing in the ACT, it is clean, green manufacturing, not dirty, smoke-belching factories dependent upon brown electricity.

I thank my colleagues very sincerely for this report. A lot of the recommendations say to the government, “Go away, check something out and come back and tell us about it.” What we see here is collegiate parliamentarianism. That is what we are talking about. The committees, which represent the parliament, are working with the executive to get a good outcome for the community. That is the way it should be. It should not always be about adversarial exercises where somebody gets a good point on the scoreboard. It should be all about making the community better. This is a fine example of how we can go about it. I thank the chair, Ms Hunter, very much and I also thank Mr Seselja and Margie.

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

Statement by chair

MS HUNTER (Ginninderra—Parliamentary Convenor, ACT Greens), by leave: I would like to add to the statement I made on behalf of the committee on 17 August in relation to the committee’s new inquiry. Paragraph 3(b) should have read:

... trends in resource use in the ACT and the sustainability or otherwise of these trends continuing ...

Paragraph 4 should have read:

... a sustainable level of resource use, in terms of ACT urban, ecological and carbon footprints, for the ACT ...

Paragraph 5 should have read:

... appropriate ecological carrying capacities based on current, higher and lower consumption models ...

And an additional paragraph should be inserted following existing paragraph 6:

... the environmental, economic and social impacts of reduced resource consumption and a sustainable population ...

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny reports 25 and 26

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (performing the duties of a Scrutiny of Bills and Subordinate Legislation Committee)—Scrutiny Report 26, dated 23 August 2010, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MRS DUNNE: Scrutiny report 26 contains the committee's comments on 76 pieces of subordinate legislation and six government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. In discussing outstanding government responses to scrutiny committee reports, the committee has expressed its expectations that government responses to matters raised in subordinate legislation be addressed before the disallowable period for that legislation has expired. I commend the report to the Assembly.

I want to draw members' attention to pages 7 and 8 of scrutiny report 25. The committee draws attention again to the matter that it first raised in September 2006 in report 32 of the last Assembly. That matter is that a power conferred on an administrative decision maker which involves the making of a decision concerning rights or obligations—and many such powers do—will be incompatible with section 21(1) of the Human Rights Act if the composite process surrounding the making and review of that decision is not judged to be "fair". This is a value-laden judgement, but it cannot be avoided if the Human Rights Act is taken seriously.

There has not yet been an acknowledgement of this matter in any government response to a committee report. This stands in strong contrast to how the government of Victoria responds to the application of the equivalent section of the Victorian charter. In report 25, the committee outlined the general nature of the Victorian approach.

There is a more general point here. In Victoria, the second reading speech on a bill contains an often quite lengthy compatibility statement. This statement takes up every provision of the bill in respect of which an issue of compatibility with the Victorian charter of rights can be raised, and then, by specific reference to the matters such as are found in section 28(2) of our Human Rights Act, provides a justification for saying that the provision of the bill is compatible—or, in rare cases, is not.

This practice, the committee considers, is best practice, and the committee urges the government to adopt it. The ACT is the first Australian jurisdiction to adopt a Human Rights Act. While there was a need for a settling-in period in which the government could set up structures for its implementation, it is the case that in this crucial respect of providing an adequate compatibility statement, territory practice has not come up to the mark.

Security Industry Amendment Bill 2010

Debate resumed from 24 June 2010, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MS BRESNAN (Brindabella) (10.25): I stand today in support of the Security Industry Amendment Bill. This is, in essence, the second time we have seen this issue discussed in this place, the last being when the central provisions of this bill were included in an omnibus JACS bill presented to the Assembly last year. As this is quite a major policy change for the security industry, we welcome the decision by the government to properly introduce this bill as a separate piece of executive business for debate.

The Greens stand quite proudly as a party that believes in the union movement as the democratic voice of the worker. We believe in progressive unionism where employers and employees, through their respective organisations, can work together towards their mutual goals and rationally discuss their points of difference through a good faith bargaining system with compulsory arbitration as a means of last resort.

We believe that most employers in the security industry seek to do the right thing by their employees. However, the nature of the industry is such that those security businesses who do refuse to pay the award rates for evenings and weekends, or engage in substandard contracting arrangements, are able to substantially undercut those businesses who do play by the rules.

It is difficult for clients who seek to hire security firms to distinguish between good and bad employers. Often this will mean that poor employment practices are rewarded with contracts. This creates a perverse economic incentive for other employers in the security industry to follow bad employment practices and, in effect, creates a race to the bottom.

As members in this place should be aware, the Fair Work Ombudsman conducted an audit of the security industry that found widespread problems in the application of award conditions. As at the release of the report, 49 per cent of security businesses audited had some form of compliance failure. The ombudsman has recovered over \$450,000 in unpaid wages and entitlements for employees in the security industry. Substantial increases are expected as investigations are ongoing.

I think everyone here can agree that in a low-paid industry like security, unpaid wages and entitlements can mean the difference between paying bills and making rental payments or not being able to do so. Of additional concern was the high incidence of phoenixing, which is defined as the act of self-liquidating an entity to avoid paying liabilities and replacing it with another to undertake the same function, and substandard contracting. This is the practice of disguising an employment relationship as an independent contracting arrangement, which is often used to avoid paying entitlements under the award as well as payroll and other taxes.

The ACT Greens commend the Fair Work Ombudsman for undertaking this audit. We recognise and support the valuable work that the ombudsman does in enforcing workplace rights. However, relying on the ombudsman to operate proactively is an inefficient means of ensuring compliance in an industry that has a high number of short-lived small businesses.

The ombudsman's report noted that of the businesses targeted in the audit, 58 per cent were unsuitable for having no employees, being unable to be contacted or no longer existing. The threat of a possible Fair Work Ombudsman audit is not an effective deterrent against these businesses. As such, the most effective means of ensuring compliance is to arm the workers in this industry with the knowledge about the specifics of their award entitlements to ensure that they can enforce their own conditions, either independently or with the assistance of a union if the person chooses to belong to one.

This bill provides for a registered employee organisation, which in this case will be the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, to provide information on the specifics of the security industry award 2010 and other related legislation to the employee as a requirement for licensing. This ensures that all employees in the industry are equipped with the means to enforce their award conditions as they are licensed. This is of particular importance in combating incidences of employer noncompliance through substandard contracting as it guarantees that this information is available to all employees from an independent source.

Immediately following the last discussion of this issue here, as well as prior to this debate today, we have held meetings with the LHMU and their delegates who are currently working in the security industry to seek information about the nature of the training and to secure guarantees that union membership will be in no way compulsory.

The meetings with the union were helpful and informative, and they have provided us with a copy of their proposed training curriculum, which I will now table in the Assembly for the benefit of members. I seek leave to table the curriculum.

Leave granted.

MS BRESNAN: I table the following paper:

Security Industry Licence Training, prepared by the LHMU.

In this curriculum, as members will see, no element of the proposed curriculum involves any requirement to join the union, which was a concern raised when this matter was previously before the Assembly. Individuals will, of course, be free to join or not to join in accordance with the freedom of association provisions in the Fair Work Act.

Another concern raised by groups such as the Australian Security Industry Association, who we have corresponded with on a number of occasions since this matter was last raised, was that it would duplicate the Fair Work fact sheet that the Fair Work Act requires employers to provide. In response to this, and in support of the bill today, the proposed curriculum clearly demonstrates that this goes well above and beyond the basic catch-all information of the one-page Fair Work fact sheet and provides employees with knowledge specific to their award that will help prevent compliance issues in the industry.

An additional point the Greens would make is that especially in the case of substandard contracting arrangements and lack of compliance with Fair Work requirements, there is no guarantee that workers would receive this information in any case. By providing this information as a part of the licensing process, we can guarantee that all workers receive this crucial information about their workplace rights.

We believe that a registered employee organisation—in this case, the LHMU—is the best-placed player to provide fair, impartial and thorough training to employees about their workplace entitlements. The training will be free, and there will be no additional

impost to either employees or potential employers in the security industry. It is our understanding that the LHMU have already held discussions with training providers in the ACT in preparation for this training being put in place.

As implied earlier in this speech, effective enforcement in this instance is not simply about protecting workers. It is about protecting responsible employers as well. Informed security employees will gravitate towards the best employers and avoid those that violate award conditions, allowing good employers to pick the best staff.

The expected increase in compliance amongst employers currently not complying will reward those employers who do act appropriately by giving them an even playing field and more opportunities to win contracts. I would also like to note that the minister's office provided my office, upon request, with a list of the individuals and groups consulted in the process of developing this bill, and I thank the minister's office for providing this information.

This bill is a win for workers in the security industry. It will benefit those employers who do the right thing by their workers and it will enhance equity and effective enforcement of entitlements. The Greens will be supporting this bill today.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (10.33): The Liberal opposition will be opposing this bill for exactly the same reason we opposed it in December last year. This Attorney-General has presented a bill which is almost exactly the same as the one he tried to sneak through this Assembly in a JACS omnibus bill last December. The only change is to provide for a review of the operation of the new legislation in 12 months time.

Under this bill, a person wanting to apply for a licence to work in certain fields within the security industry will have to get information about their employment rights and responsibilities from an employee association. Who is that employee organisation? The explanatory statement tells us that it is the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union. Anyone who wants to work in the security industry would have to march themselves off to the LHMU. This includes people who want to work as patrol guards, to watch or protect property, to act as bodyguards or to act as crowd controllers.

The information to be provided is prescribed by legislation. But the proposed regulation is quite broad, simply requiring that relevant information be given about workplace rights and responsibilities under territory laws. Examples are given, such as minimum wage, employment conditions, employment agreements and termination thereof, and work safety.

As proof that the worker has marched himself or herself off to them, the LHMU has to hand over a certificate to say that the information has been provided. The scrutiny of bills committee raised the question of whether this requirement for a person to take themselves off to the LHMU amounts to a breach of privacy and whether it amounts to arbitrary interference in freedom of association by the government. The Attorney-General in his response does not address these questions. He seeks to justify his attack on individual rights to privacy and freedom of association by talking about what options he considered.

In doing so, he quite simply fails to explain why a person who may not wish to have anything to do with a union will be forced to present themselves to the LHMU. He has failed to explain it and I am waiting for an explanation here today. In his presentation speech, the Attorney-General also talked about “detailed consultation with key employer and employee representatives of the ACT security industry”. I have no doubt that he had detailed consultations with the union. Indeed, the union movement is obviously driving this whole issue. It is an excellent example of the way in which the union movement drives policy making in the ACT Labor government. But it is also clear that he has failed by any measure to have had detailed consultation with key employer representatives.

Certainly, from conversations that my office has had with the Australian Security Industry Association, the Australian Hotels Association and the Chamber of Commerce, there has not been any consultation. The conversations we have had with key employers in the security industry in this town show that there has been no consultation.

There was a letter written in January from the acting Attorney-General after the failure of Mr Corbell’s last attempt to sneak this through, but that is not consultation. What are we saying about this bill? There are a number of things. Firstly, the industry has not been consulted. There has not been a major employer who has been consulted. It is a way to give the LHMU access to employees without their having to go to their workplaces.

In addition, the COAG agreement of July 2008 intended that the Australian jurisdictions should harmonise their licensing criteria by January 2010. Although this has not yet happened, this bill would take the ACT further away from harmonisation because no other jurisdiction carries a similar eligibility criterion. Information statements are already required to be given to employees under commonwealth law and the one-year review period does not allay any of the above concerns.

It does not end here. My office has spoken to one of the top four security companies operating in Canberra. The representative we spoke to is also associated with the ACT branch of ASIAL, the Australian Security Industry Association. There has been no consultation.

This employer also confirmed that there has been no consultation with the ACT branch of ASIAL or his company. It is interesting to note that this was the company that Mr Corbell lauded as being right behind these reforms in December 2009. But at this stage the company has told me and my office that they are opposed to the reforms on a number of grounds and also that they are opposed because the attorney has not had the decency to consult with them on this matter.

I note that Ms Bresnan said the attorney was prepared to give her a list of all the people that he has consulted with. I would like the attorney to enumerate here not just who he wrote to but who he spoke to or who his agency spoke to, and what feedback they received, because it is clear from everyone that I have spoken to, with the exception of the union, that there is widespread opposition. There is unanimous opposition to this provision from everybody except the union. I do not know of any

employer or any employer representative organisation within the security industry that has a good word to say for this bill.

Another failure of this bill and the process by which it has been cobbled together is that it does not prescribe whether the LHMU can charge a fee. Ms Bresnan has said that the LHMU has said that it will not charge a fee, but that is not the point. Mr Corbell said in his presentation speech that it cannot, but the legislation does not say that. Further, Mr Corbell has done nothing to address issues of concern raised by the industry last year that this measure would further stifle the ability of the industry to recruit staff.

Nor has Mr Corbell acknowledged that the commonwealth's Fair Work Act 2009 already requires employers to provide employees with Fair Work statements outlining their rights and obligations. Section 124 of that act requires employers to give new employees a Fair Work information statement that is prepared by the Fair Work Ombudsman and it allows further information to be prescribed by regulation.

The statement prepared by the Fair Work Ombudsman includes information about national employment standards, modern awards, agreement-making under the act, the right to freedom of association, a role for Fair Work Australia and the Fair Work Ombudsman, termination of employment, individual flexibility arrangements and right of entry including the protection of personal information by privacy laws—something which this bill is at completely at odds with.

You will observe, Mr Speaker, that this information largely duplicates the information that would be required to be given by the LHMU under this bill. This bill proposes little more than duplication of effort or, as I would put it, compulsory unionism by stealth. It is nothing more than a mechanism designed to make it easier for the LHMU to boost its membership numbers. It is an example of just how much the unions drive the policy making of ACT Labor, and it is done under the guise of doing the right thing by employees in the industry.

In reality, though, it is designed purely and simply to provide the LHMU with a captive audience to build their membership numbers. I note that you, Mr Speaker, when this matter came before the Assembly in 2009, opposed the legislation. I note also that you said you were not opposed in principle to the involvement of unions in this process but that you required there should be a coming together of all parties and a general agreement about the way forward on this.

It is interesting to hear today that Ms Bresnan is prepared to support this bill despite the high standards that you set for this bill to be brought back. It is clear that none of the things that the Greens called for in December 2009 have been complied with. This is the same piece of legislation that appeared in 2009. There has been no consultation. There is no agreement with the employers that this legislation should go forward. There is absolute opposition from all the employers about this.

But the Greens are prepared to fold. Why are the Greens prepared to fold? I think it is pretty clear. Ms Bresnan says that the Greens believe in the union movement. The reason the Greens believe in the union movement is because the union movement funds their election campaigns. It is clear from electoral returns in the past that the

Greens party of the ACT has received considerable funding from unions. It was clear during last week's federal election that Green candidates had received considerable funding and support from unions. This is another attempt by the Greens in the ACT to shore up their support in the union movement.

It is quite clear that the actions of the Greens today show that they are closely and permanently aligned with the Labor Party and the union movement and work against the interests of employers and the average employee who does not want to associate with unions.

This mechanism today is contrary to the provisions of the Human Rights Act in relation to freedom of association. It forces people—forces people—to take themselves off to a union organisation to get a tick before they can start work in the security industry. This is clearly the thin end of the wedge and other industries in the ACT need to be very afraid of what will happen now that we have this clear alliance between the Labor Party and the Greens, which is effectively no ticket, no start.

If one of my constituents does not go to the LHMU and be certified, they cannot start work here in the ACT. That is a shameful state. Where will it go? Will it go into the childcare industry? That is where the LHMU will go next. Will it go into retail? That is where other unions will go after this. This is a shameful arrangement that does nothing but give the names and addresses of people who want to work in the security industry to the security industry unions so that they can pester them for union membership.

This is the real problem. This is why it is opposed by the employer organisations and it should be opposed by any right-minded Canberran who really believes in freedom of association.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.45): I would like to lend my support to Mrs Dunne regarding the concerns that she has raised in relation to what effectively amounts to a form of compulsory unionism. As Mrs Dunne has set out very clearly, we are returning through this legislation to the concept of no ticket, no start. If this legislation passes, you will not be able to work in the security industry unless you get the tick-off from a union. That is a regressive step in industrial relations in the ACT.

Mrs Dunne referred to the concept enshrined in the Human Rights Act—that is, the idea of freedom of association. Freedom of association means the right to join an organisation, the right to join a union, the right to join any other association or the right not to. As set out in the scrutiny of bills committee report, this legislation actually raises serious concerns about that right. The scrutiny of bills committee raised the question of whether a requirement for a licence applicant to obtain information from a union enlivens the right to privacy under the HRA and whether the requirement amounts to arbitrary interference by the government.

This is what the Assembly is being asked to vote on today. We are being asked to vote on a piece of legislation that says: "If you want to work in the security industry, you have to get the tick from a particular union. You have to go to a union and get your ticket so that you can actually work in that industry." I thought we had left that behind

a long, long time ago under previous Labor governments. Under previous federal Labor governments we left behind the idea of no ticket, no start. But this takes us back there. And you have to ask why. Why is it that we have to have special legislation that allows the LHMU to recruit? What is the public interest in saying that a particular union should have a special legislatively backed way of recruiting?

If they are serving their members, if they are representing their members, representing the employees in their industry, there is no doubt that they will have a strong membership base, because people will want to pay their union dues and get that representation. That is healthy in our democracy. That is something that is enshrined and should be enshrined. But the idea of going further and effectively making it compulsory to get the approval of the union before you start working in an industry completely undermines that freedom of association and that right to choose to go through a union or to choose not to go through a union, to choose to join a union or to choose not to join a union.

We do need to ask why the government is so desperate—it appears with the Greens' support on this—to give such a leg-up to one union. Where is the public interest rationale? Given that these information statements are already required under law—we have actually got commonwealth law that says you have to get this information—is there a suggestion that the employers are en masse breaking the law in this area? Is that the suggestion? The suggestion is that they are breaking the law. They have not been able to enforce it, apparently. There is this besmirching of all of these employers, saying that they do not abide by the law. Well, if someone is not abiding by the law, let us prosecute them. If there is a law that is not being complied with, the way to fix that is not to undermine the law and undermine the ideal behind the fact that there should be freedom of association, that employees in this industry, like every other industry, should have the right to choose if and when they want to join the union. They should not have to go through this process of no ticket, no start.

We have effectively got the government, through its legislation, besmirching these employers, saying: “Well, they can't be trusted. They can't be trusted to comply with the law.” Apparently, the government is ineffectual in enforcing its own laws. This apparent problem has not been articulated. It seems the problem the Labor Party and the Greens in this place are seeking to fix is the issue of union membership. Now, that is not the role of this legislature. It is not up to us to pass laws that are simply about increasing the number of people who join a union, any more than it is up to us to pass laws designed to have fewer people join a union. It would be just as offensive for us to stand in this place and have a law which was specifically designed to discourage people from joining a union. This is about boosting the numbers of a particular union. This is about returning to a regressive form of industrial relations that says no ticket, no start.

We reject that approach; we reject it completely and comprehensively. We reaffirm that there should be freedom of association in the workplace—that people should be free to join a union or to not join a union and that we should not be putting in place special legislation that is simply designed to boost the stocks of a particular union. That union is free to work to serve its members according to the law. The Fair Work Act allows them to do that; it enshrines their right to do those things. They are free to pursue that. We do not need to put in place laws that are about simply boosting the

stocks of a particular union. The Canberra Liberals reject this approach, and we will reject this legislation.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (10.53): I just wanted to speak briefly in response to the comments made by Mrs Dunne about the approach of the Greens on this legislation. It is true that when this matter came before the Assembly last December, on behalf of the Greens I did express some concerns about the bill. I would like to elaborate on the comments that Ms Bresnan made about why we are now in a position to support this today.

Certainly, our previous concern was that this was introduced as part of a JACS bill, and we believe that that was an inappropriate way to introduce what is a policy change. We agreed with the Liberal Party at that time that such amendments should not come to this place as part of an omnibus bill; they should come as a bill in their own right, and that that would enable a more transparent process where members of the community were able to observe what was going on in the Assembly. I think it would be fair to say that most people do not pay a lot of attention to the average omnibus bill, as disappointing as that may be for some of us in this place who are fascinated by them. That was the first concern we had.

We did then take the approach of seeking additional information and undertaking further discussions ourselves once it was clear that this bill was coming back. We also know that the government has conducted wide-ranging consultations. We have sought that assurance from the government, and I am sure Mr Corbell will clarify those points when he stands to speak. But the government has indicated to us that they have had consultations with industry peak bodies, including the Australian Security Industry Association, the Security Providers Association of Australia, the ACT chamber of commerce and industry, the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Hotels Association. Certainly, in our own right, we have met with the LHMU and held discussions with representatives of ASIAL and the industry.

In our meetings with the LHMU, we sought and secured alterations to the proposed curriculum, and we received assurances that there will be no coercion or any other undue influence on individuals receiving a licence, which is certainly the suggestion that those in the Liberal Party are making—that that is what the true agenda is here. For myself, in thinking about this issue, it really does come down to what is the bottom line here. I think that a report this year from the Fair Work Ombudsman for me underlines what the real issue is. That report showed that up to 50 per cent of employers were not complying with award or industrial relations requirements.

Although many of these noncompliance issues were minor and unintentional, a substantial percentage of them were major, involving sham contracting arrangements, phoenixing—where a company dissolves to avoid paying its liabilities and then another company forms to take its place—or underpayment of award rates. This wide-ranging noncompliance does hurt the honest players in the industry and implies that we cannot rely upon the employer to provide even the minimum information to staff. Similarly, the very limited resources of the Fair Work Ombudsman to conduct audits means there is little incentive from enforcement. As such, the Greens accept that one of the most effective means of enforcement is having the information provided by independent registered employee organisations or unions.

Unfortunately, it is clear that the ideal world of perfect employers that Mr Seselja was referring to in his comments simply does not exist. It is simply not the case. We were told quite a number of stories of situations of individuals who were, frankly, ripped off by their employers, who were not given what they were entitled to for the work that they put in and who had various of their employment conditions ignored, overridden and run roughshod over. In an industry like the security industry, people are working odd hours, odd shifts, and they often operate on a solo basis and are not necessarily in a workplace where they have the opportunity to talk to their colleagues. People often learn these things informally in the workplace about what their rights are. In that context, in essence, what we are seeing here is an opportunity for free training and an opportunity to understand more clearly what an employee's rights are.

That is important in the context of the evidence we see, particularly in this industry. I suspect that is the situation in some others, but today we are looking at security. I accept that that is a problem. I accept that this is, hopefully, a successful means to address some of these concerns. I think we need to accept that employees of the security industry will have the ability to say no if they do not wish to join the union. We do not believe this is a path to compulsory unionism. It may be that more people join, having been exposed to the positive benefits of the union, but I do not believe that is a bad thing.

I wanted to make those observations in light of my comments in the previous debate on this. It is consistent for us to take this approach. I think it is important that we take this opportunity to extend these protections to employees who, the evidence clearly shows, are not receiving the benefits that they are entitled to.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water, Minister for Energy and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.58), in reply: I thank those members who have indicated their support for this bill. This bill is all about education. It is all about knowledge and it is all about empowering workers to understand their rights at work. What is so objectionable about that that the Liberal Party want to oppose this bill? At the end of the day, that is what this bill does—it gives workers knowledge; it gives workers information. Information is, of course, power. It allows you to stand up for your rights. It allows you to know what you are entitled to receive, how you are entitled to be treated and how you are entitled to engage with your employer at work. That is why this legislation is important.

The bill amends the Security Industry Act to enable access to important workplace information for all workers in the security industry. Why is it needed in the security industry, Madam Deputy Speaker? It is needed in the security industry because, in practice, security industry employees have a very limited opportunity to access information which enables them to work more efficiently and safely.

Most security industry employees only have the opportunity for short, quick breaks, during which they have just enough time to have a meal and go to the toilet. This, combined with the fact that most workers work in isolation in disparate locations and often at hours when most of us are tucked up safely at home in bed, means that security industry employees are not always able to access information from those who would otherwise be able to provide it.

Of course, what this recognises is that the provisions of the commonwealth's Fair Work Act, which already provide a right to employee organisations such as unions to meet with employees to discuss their workplace rights and responsibilities, are not always able to be effectively deployed in the territory because the particular circumstances of the workplace, the particular circumstances of the working conditions of security industry employees, mean that it is much more difficult to get this information out to them.

The bill represents the government's commitment to ensuring that workers in vulnerable positions have access to information about their rights at work. It ensures that security guards are able to be informed about their workplace rights and responsibilities and it ensures that they are on the same level playing field as other employees. What is so objectionable about that from the Liberal Party's position? Why do they not see the inherent handicap that workers in the security industry face in accessing information about their rights and entitlements that other employees do not face and that this legislation is needed to put them on an even playing field?

The bill requires applicants for a security employee licence to attend an information session where union officials will provide them with workplace information. This session only needs to be attended once. It is a requirement that it is free and it is easily accessible. Participants will receive that certificate of attendance and they will then be able to be registered as an employee in this industry.

A number of issues have been raised by the opposition in the course of debate on this bill, and I would like to address those now. The first is the issue of consultation. "We have not consulted," Mrs Dunne splutters. That is wrong, Mrs Dunne; it is just plain wrong. At the beginning of this year my department formally approached the seven employer representatives representing employers in this industry. The organisations that were formally approached included the Security Providers Association of Australia, the Building Service Contractors Association of Australia, the Australian Security Industry Association, ASIS International, the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Electrical and Communications Association, the Canberra Business Council and the Australian Hotels Association. Those organisations were all approached formally, in writing, provided with details of the proposal and asked for their comment.

Following that, my department made verbal contact with those same organisations seeking their feedback and their views. On 26 February, my department contacted Mr Grant Shaw, who represents the National Electrical and Communications Association. On the same day, my department contacted Ms Chris Faulks, representing the Canberra Business Council. On the same day, my department contacted Mr Chris Peters and asked him to contact the department. On the same day, my department contacted Mr Kevin Antoine, representing the Building Service Contractors Association of Australia. Again, on the same day, my department contacted Mr Graham Pollock, representing ASIS ACT. In March, my department contacted Mr Bryan de Caires, representing the Australian Security Industry Association and, in March, my department contacted Ms Pam Scott, representing the National Electrical and Communications Association. My department again contacted Mr Chris Peters, representing the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in March. In March, we again contacted Mr Bryan de Caires, representing ASIAL. We again contacted Mr Chris Peters, asking him to respond to the letter and

seeking his feedback. We again contacted Mr Bryan de Caires. We again contacted Mr Kevin Antoine. We again contacted Mr Peter Bourke. Later in March, for the third time, my department contacted Mr Chris Peters, asking him to respond to the issues raised in the letter the acting Attorney-General sent.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, has there been consultation? Yes, there has been consultation. My department actively sought out all the representatives and asked them for their views. Do they all agree? No, they do not all agree, but that is not the point, and they know that is not the point. If the criticism is consultation, then we have addressed that, and we have addressed that comprehensively. Disagreement on the policy matters is an entirely different matter, but they were not in the dark. They knew it was going on and they were given ample opportunity to put their views forward. Lack of consultation? What a load of nonsense.

The other issue that Mrs Dunne splutters about is the so-called breach of human rights. The scrutiny committee report on this matter does not say that there has been a breach of rights. What the scrutiny report says is that, on the face of it, the scheme enlivens the right to privacy, and the issue is whether or not this interference with this right is arbitrary. That is what the committee indicated. It did not say that there had been a breach of rights. Mrs Dunne has grossly and wilfully misrepresented the views of the committee that she chairs.

Mrs Dunne: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, Mr Corbell said that I have misled the Assembly about the views of the committee.

MR CORBELL: No, I did not.

Mrs Dunne: He used the words “grossly and wilfully misled”. I ask that you require him to withdraw that.

MR CORBELL: I did not say that. For the sake of allowing the debate to proceed, I will withdraw any words that are of offence to Mrs Dunne, because she knows she has been caught out.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Corbell.

Mr Seselja: That’s not a withdrawal.

Mrs Dunne: That’s not a withdrawal.

MR CORBELL: I have not been asked to withdraw.

Mrs Dunne: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am asking you to ask him to withdraw unequivocally. He should do that.

MR CORBELL: I withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: It is quite clear that Mrs Dunne knows that the committee did not say there had been a breach of human rights. It said it enlivened that right and the government would need to justify its position in light of that.

Mrs Dunne: Which it hasn't done.

MR CORBELL: As Mrs Dunne also knows, the government has done just that. In my response to the scrutiny committee report on the 18th of this month, I indicated that the government had considered three options as to whether or not this bill was justified and whether alternatives could have been considered. The first was for employers to provide the workplace information. The government has dismissed that on the grounds that we believe that there is a clear conflict of interest. Employers are not the best placed organisation to provide employees with information about their rights of work, particularly those employers that are already doing the wrong thing. Is the Liberal Party seriously suggesting that those employers who are abusing the interests of their employees are suddenly going to tell them about all their rights at work? What a load of nonsense.

The second option that was explored was for security industry trainers to provide the workplace information. The government concluded that this proposal would be both time consuming and involve a cost to the employee. We felt that that was unreasonable. The third option was for registered organisations under the commonwealth Fair Work Act, such as unions—such as the LHMU—to provide that information free of charge. These organisations are already legally acknowledged as having the expertise required to provide information about employees' workplace rights and entitlements. They are an appropriate provider of the information. They are able to provide it free of charge and, therefore, I believe the government has satisfactorily and entirely reasonably addressed the issues raised by the scrutiny of bills committee.

This is a positive reform. This makes sure that employees who work in a low-paid industry, in an industry where they can often be isolated in the workplace—isolated from colleagues, isolated from people who represent their interests, isolated even from their employers—because of the nature of their working hours and conditions, have good information about how they can go about their work in a safe manner, in an efficient manner and in a manner that has regard to their rights and entitlements under law. It is an important reform. It is a reform the Labor government is pleased to present to the Assembly. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question put:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 11

Noes 6

Mr Barr	Ms Hunter	Mr Coe	Mr Hanson
Ms Bresnan	Ms Le Couteur	Mr Doszpot	Mr Seselja
Ms Burch	Ms Porter	Mrs Dunne	Mr Smyth
Mr Corbell	Mr Rattenbury		
Ms Gallagher	Mr Stanhope		
Mr Hargreaves			

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Liquor Bill 2010

Debate resumed from 24 June 2010, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Motion (by **Mrs Dunne**) proposed:

That debate be adjourned.

Question put.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 10

Noes 7

Ms Bresnan	Ms Hunter	Mr Barr	Ms Porter
Mr Coe	Ms Le Couteur	Ms Burch	Mr Stanhope
Mr Doszpot	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Corbell	
Mrs Dunne	Mr Seselja	Ms Gallagher	
Mr Hanson	Mr Smyth	Mr Hargreaves	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Debate adjourned to the next sitting.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water, Minister for Energy and Minister for Police and Emergency Services), by leave: Today, we have seen the Liquor Bill adjourned because of a last-minute ultimatum by the Greens requiring the government to deliver over half a million dollars of additional funding—

Mr Seselja: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MR CORBELL: I have leave, Mr Seselja.

Mr Seselja: Well, I am raising a point of order. The point of order goes to the reflection on a vote. I just ask you to rule on that.

MR CORBELL: I am not reflecting on the vote, Madam Deputy Speaker; I am explaining why the vote has occurred, and I have leave to do so. Yesterday Mr Rattenbury approached me and told me that the Greens would not support debate on these important community safety reforms unless the government was prepared to commit to a financial commitment to improve public transport services late at night in the city area.

The government has already indicated it is considering options to do just that. But for the government to be given less than 24 hours and to have an ultimatum given to it that these community safety reforms will be put at risk and not debated in this place this week unless the government—outside the budget process and with no prior notice from the Greens—gives in to that ultimatum is just outrageous. A last-minute ultimatum with no warning. Mr Rattenbury came to me at one minute to midnight and said, “Unless you agree,” Madam Deputy Speaker—

Members interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! The next person that yells across the chamber to Mr Corbell will be warned. Thank you very much, Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mrs Dunne: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, Mr Corbell is abusing the forms of the house. He sought leave to make a statement, and what he is doing is using his unfettered time to attack members of this house because he is not ready. It is an abuse of the leave, and Mr Corbell should remember that he is speaking with the leave of the Assembly and he should comply with the courtesies of this Assembly.

Mr Hargreaves: On the point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, Minister Corbell sought leave of the house to make a statement. It is not for members of this opposition to judge what Mr Corbell would do in that statement before he has concluded. There is no point of order.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Corbell.

MR CORBELL: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important that we put on the record today why this bill has been delayed.

Mr Smyth: For 2½ years by your inactivity.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, you are warned.

MR CORBELL: It has been delayed because at one minute to midnight, after the government had given ample notice that this bill would be brought on for debate today, the Greens said, “Unless you put up half a million dollars extra—without a budget process, without an appropriation—for extra public transport at night, we won’t debate the bill.” What does this mean? Well, what it means is that this bill will be delayed; it will not be able to be implemented on 1 December as this Assembly itself has asked. It will not be able to be publicised across all the liquor licensees here in the ACT that need information and need to go through a regulatory process to renew their licences in December. All of that is now at risk because of this last-minute ultimatum by the Greens.

The Greens have not previously put this ultimatum to me. They have not previously said to me, “Unless you agree to fund improvements in public transport, we will not debate the bill.” They have not made it a condition of their support for debate of this

bill today. But at this time yesterday, less than 24 hours ago, Mr Rattenbury put that ultimatum to me, and he confirmed it to me this morning.

The government says to the Assembly that we are committed to improving public transport in the city area, that there are a range of options that the government is considering to do just that, that the government is preparing to come back to this place on 1 December and report on those options and what steps it can take before the summer entertainment period occurs, but Mr Rattenbury has rejected that proposal from the government. Instead, he has said, “No, it’s all or nothing.”

The fact is that this bill needs to be passed this week if you want these new reforms in place by 1 December. The government cannot deliver on the implementation of these reforms by 1 December unless this bill is passed this week. This government have provided extensive information and consultation on all elements of this bill. We have provided exposure drafts; we have provided consultation papers; we have provided exposures of drafts of the regulations; we have provided detailed briefings; we have held detailed and complex discussion with all of the key stakeholders. Yet at one minute to midnight, we have it go off the rails because of an unreasonable and unprecedented ultimatum.

Mr Rattenbury will probably seek leave shortly to stand up and explain his position on these matters. He will probably seek to say to the Assembly, “Well, we want all these reforms to be done together.” That is what Mr Rattenbury is going to say. Mr Rattenbury is going to say, “We want to do these reforms as a package.” He is going to say, “We want transport to be in place at the same time that the reforms are in place.”

The proposal that the government has put to the Greens allows for just that. The proposal that I have put to Mr Rattenbury this morning provides for just that—by 1 December, the government will have concluded its position on what options are open to it to improve public transport provision. There is going to be a Nightrider service in place this year, as there is every year anyway, at the peak time when Civic, Manuka and Kingston are busy. And the government will be in a better position to advise what it can do to provide and fund further improvements.

But if Mr Rattenbury is going to stand on his “perfect or not at all” strategy, which is what we always get from the Greens—it is always, “It has got to be perfect, or you don’t get anything,” which is the position the Greens are adopting today—

Mr Hanson: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, I spoke previously in this chamber on a point of order when I asked to make a brief statement and was given leave to do so. Members of the government made constant interjections and took points of order that a brief statement was exactly that—it was not an opportunity to debate an issue. As a result of that, the chair at that time essentially agreed with the members of the government and asked that I wind up. I would ask that you do the same.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, I presume you will be coming to the conclusion very shortly.

MR CORBELL: Madam Deputy Speaker, those are the reasons that this bill is delayed today and why it appears that the bill will be delayed this whole week and not debated until possibly September. I can tell Mr Rattenbury now that the government does not have available to it the money that he wants it to invest in improved transport in the city now. There is no appropriation. You cannot just go and use the Treasurer's advance, Mr Rattenbury. You are not allowed to do that under the financial management provisions. So we are going to have this same stalemate in September.

I ask members to consider the government's proposal, which is to pass the legislation, allow the improved public safety provisions that come from these reforms to take effect, allow us to go and tell licensees with confidence what the rules are going to be for them and give them sufficient time to prepare their risk assessment management plans under the new licensing regime. By denying us passage of this bill today, you are giving them less time to get it right and to go through the regulatory process.

I also say to members they should consider the government's position—that is, by 1 December, we are prepared to come back into this place and tell you what it is we will do to improve transport provision in the city centre before the peak Christmas-new year period, before we see crowds of people on the streets enjoying the summer period. That is the government's position, and I ask members to reconsider. I ask members to support passage of this bill today.

I also briefly must draw attention to the fact that after a six to eight-week winter break, on the day of debate on this bill, the Liberal Party tables 14 pages of amendments. Of course, the reason why this has happened is that Mrs Dunne was on holiday over the winter break and she was not doing any work. It is only when she got back that she realised that she had to do some work, because this bill was coming on for debate. Despite the fact that it was tabled as an exposure draft earlier this year, despite the fact that it was tabled formally as a bill in this place before the winter period, on the day that the bill is scheduled for debate, she fronts up with 14 pages of amendments.

I wonder if Mrs Dunne proposes to give these to the scrutiny of bills committee, as she is urging everyone else to do, or is that not necessary for Mrs Dunne? Madam Deputy Speaker, who is bargaining in good faith in this proposal? Not Mrs Dunne, and I do not think it is the Greens.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo), by leave: The central question that Mr Corbell was posing is: why has this bill been delayed? From our perspective, it is simply that the bottom line with this legislation is that it is about addressing public safety. Clearly, two of the key issues that are floating around that we know are serious problems are alcohol-related violence in the city and drink driving. A key response to both of those problems is the provision of decent late-night public transport.

That is not a new issue. That issue has been around for quite some time. In fact, we have seen on the front page of today's *Canberra Times* a story about a very significant incident in Civic on Saturday night, a significant brawl involving a large group of young people. I have been told that that brawl took place in the taxi queue, exactly the point that we are talking about here—the fact that, because people cannot get a taxi, because they stand in queues for very long periods of time when they are intoxicated, they are cold, they want to go home, the violence erupts.

If we want to talk about timing, I think it is fair to say that the Greens have been explicit about our concerns about late-night transport since we released a discussion paper in September 2009. We flagged this as a central issue when it comes to addressing the issues of alcohol-related violence and public safety.

I would also like to indicate that we wrote to Mr Corbell some months ago now, probably six or eight weeks ago, raising a number of questions about the detail of this bill. We received a response to those significant questions last Tuesday, and I will be clear that I appreciate the significance of the response we got, because there were some very detailed questions. But it became clear to us at that time that the government was not going to seriously address the issue of late-night transport as part of this reform process.

I then wrote to Mr Corbell last Friday indicating that we would not be in a position to debate the bill given the fact that the transport issue had not been addressed. Yes, Mr Corbell and I met yesterday to actually discuss that in detail. So I think it is important to be clear on the question of timing and exactly how we have got to this process. It has been a very long process. Unfortunately, it has come to a crunch point, because the bill is on for debate today, and we have had to be clear about the fact that we cannot support debate going forward on this bill in any good conscience, because the transport issue is not being addressed. Transport is central to addressing the twin issues of alcohol-related violence in the city and our very substantial problem of drink driving.

I do not want to abuse the indulgence of the Assembly in speaking too long, but I would like to quickly make a couple of other points. Mr Corbell has talked about me demanding a half-million-dollar allocation of money. The Greens have not specified a particular path, a particular amount of money. What we have said is that a solution has to be found, because we cannot in any good conscience move forward without resolving the issue of late-night transport. It has to be addressed. I have not specified on behalf of the Greens a particular amount of money. So it is important to clarify that point for the record.

Mr Corbell said the government is going to be providing a Nightrider service over the summer. That is a two-week service over summer. We saw just last Saturday that this is an issue every single weekend in this city. It is just not good enough to sit back and say, "We're going to provide something for two weeks over Christmas and new year." Undoubtedly, that is a particularly busy time, but anybody who has been out in Civic any time recently—we know Mr Corbell has—knows that this is an issue every single weekend.

What price are we willing to pay to allow our young people to continue to drink-drive because they cannot find any other way to get home at night? What price is it to stop these sorts of violent brawls that we saw in the city on Saturday night? How long are we going to have to wait to find a solution to these problems? We must bite the bullet now. We cannot simply put through a half-baked package of measures that say: "Oh, well, we'll worry about transport later. We'll come back to you on 1 December with some options for some kind of solution that we might implement somewhere down the track." The Greens cannot in conscience move this legislation forward without knowing that we are going to seriously address this issue.

I would like to also note that, in conversations with Mrs Dunne yesterday, she did indicate to me that she had amendments. She did explain them to me, but I have not seen them in writing. She has raised issues that we would want to seriously consider. I think that does provide another reason that we could not debate this legislation this morning. Mrs Dunne would have stood up, if we had gone forward, and moved those amendments, and the Greens would not have been in a position to have supported or, frankly, disagreed with those amendments. We would not have had time to consider them.

We were prepared to debate in principle this morning. Unfortunately, between the discussions amongst the various parties, that has not been agreed. I think that we do support this legislation in principle. I think it could have been useful to move forward at some point this morning, but it does not seem to have been possible to agree to that either. Hopefully, we can move forward on this soon, and we can address this very important issue of late-night transport.

Sitting suspended from 11.36 am to 2 pm.

Legislative Assembly—suspension of sitting

MR SPEAKER: Members, before we commence question time, I believe all members are aware that we will be suspending the sitting just before 3 pm. I will try to find an appropriate point, assuming we are still going with question time. Members, we will resume with the ringing of the bells after about an hour.

Questions without notice

Taxation—change of use

MR SESELJA: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, the government is currently undertaking a review of the change of use tax, including codification of the charge. Industry is still quite uncertain about this review as it was to be completed by 1 July this year. Given this deadline has now passed, can you update the Assembly on the review's progress? When will codification come into effect?

MS GALLAGHER: I think I have said in this place a number of times that we had indicated to industry that we were extending the consultation around codification. There are a number of pieces of work being undertaken at the moment, including reviewing the schedules in the draft report, finalising the draft report, keeping the commitments we have given the Assembly around updating the Assembly about a number of pieces of work.

It has not reached cabinet at this stage. So we are hoping that certainly in the next month a number of those pieces of work will be finalised in order for cabinet to consider them further and in order to meet our responsibilities under the motion that was passed in this place.

MR SPEAKER: A supplementary, Mr Seselja?

MR SESELJA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Treasurer, how will the change of use tax be dealt with by your mini-Henry review being undertaken by Ted Quinlan? Will it be included? If so, when will the situation be clarified? If not, when will the situation be made clear to builders and homebuyers in the ACT?

MS GALLAGHER: We are moving forward with codification of the change of use charge. This is something that we indicated. Indeed, it was something that industry called for in the budget before last. We are definitely committed to codification. We expect that it will commence in this financial year; we have been certainly indicating that to industry. However, there are a number of pieces of work still underway.

It will be also something that we expect the tax review to consider and look at as part of its overall review of the taxation system. A number of pieces of work will feed into that and be able to be provided to the tax review in its consideration of change of use, but I do not see why that should stop us moving forward with codification. Indeed, the numbers that we have included in the budget—the majority of the increase in the change of use charge as outlined in the budget is to do with rectification, not codification. We are already seeing more money come through change of use after the system was rectified in May.

MR SMYTH: A supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Treasurer, what charge is ACTPLA currently applying in relation to the change of use charge and on what basis is it being calculated?

MS GALLAGHER: I understand that the chief planning executive wrote to the Australian Valuation Office in May around ensuring that the change of use charge was applied on a site-by-site basis according to the independent market valuation, and that has been in place since early May.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, doesn't this continued uncertainty call into question again the budget bottom line, as well as create significant doubts for investment and housing affordability in the ACT?

MS GALLAGHER: No. The change of use charge is not a new charge; it is a charge that has been in a varied form since the 1970s in this place. It is a tax that I think all members have supported through legislation. We are merely applying the law as it was always intended to apply, and that has been that individual applications are considered with an independent market valuation, and then they pay 75 per cent of the added value as part of the change of use charge. That is what the law requires, and that is indeed what occurs. The codified schedules—I think you are mixing up the two issues.

MR SMYTH: No, no, no.

MS GALLAGHER: Well, you are.

MR SMYTH: You are confused.

MS GALLAGHER: I am not confused on this. I understand exactly what changes under the change of use charge are occurring. There is codification, which is a separate process to rectification. The large increase in our revenue lines—

Opposition members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clocks, thank you. Members, the Treasurer is actually trying to give an answer, and I think she is actually trying to share some information with you, so you will probably benefit from listening to her.

MS GALLAGHER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Well, I think indeed those opposite are just not interested in the answer. The rectification causes the large increase in revenue expected in our budget lines. That is not new, Mr Smyth. I have said that a number of times.

MR SMYTH: I did not dispute it.

MS GALLAGHER: Well, your question was around whether we have got a problem with our budget estimates. We do not believe so, because the large increase in change of use charge in terms of our revenue lines is linked to rectification, not codification.

Children—neighbourhood playgrounds

MS HUNTER: My question is to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. Minister, you recently announced community consultation into a \$1.2 million plan to upgrade six neighbourhood playgrounds. Given the ACT government's commitment to the engagement of children, as outlined in the children's plan, could you please advise how children are being encouraged to participate in this consultation?

MR STANHOPE: I thank Ms Hunter for the question. Ms Hunter is quite right: we have just announced another round of consultation in relation to an ongoing program of playground upgrades. The six playgrounds the subject of that particular round of upgrade, I think, will involve an investment of 1.2. That does not include, in fact, a separate investment in a significant upgrade of the playground on the western side of Lake Ginninderra. I cannot quite recall the total investment in that, but it is a major investment in an upgrade of the western foreshore playground on Lake Ginninderra.

I have to say, Ms Hunter, that I am not fully aware of the exact nature of the consultation that will be undertaken in relation to the announcement that I made. I would need to take some advice from TAMS in relation to what that proposes, but it is early days. I take on board the nub of the question in relation to the need to engage with younger people in relation to services that are delivered directly for their benefit. I will seek assurances that steps are taken to appropriately involve children and younger people in that consultation.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Hunter, a supplementary question?

MS HUNTER: Minister, is this consultation being advertised, for example, through schools? We know that it is being advertised on TAMS's website and by media release, but is it being advertised in other places such as schools?

MR STANHOPE: I will have to take that question on notice. I will take a full brief on the nature of the consultation. I should say, however, that there is some information that I can provide in relation to consultation on programs such as the annual playground upgrade program. I think there is an issue for the government. There is an issue in relation to the timely delivery of capital works or infrastructure. We have—I have had this discussion with the department, focused particularly on playground upgrades and appropriate consultation in relation to infrastructure such as playgrounds—an annual playground upgrade program. There are now somewhere in the order of 500 playgrounds in the ACT. I think it is about 480. There are 480 playgrounds or thereabouts in the ACT. We have an annual upgrade program of well in excess of \$1 million a year. We seek to prioritise playgrounds.

There is a point in relation to a consultation arrangement or process in relation to an upgrade program, a rolling program, such as the playground program, where we can invest, we can identify a priority list and we can consult. And then, where we have, say, six playgrounds, as we currently have, all at a certain age, all featuring a certain type and level of play equipment, we can consult separately in relation to each of them with individual communities, get similar responses and then, six months later, start the next year's consultation. I have asked for some pragmatism to be brought to bear in relation to the nature of consultation on a rolling program such as the playground program. (*Time expired.*)

MS LE COUTEUR: A supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Chief Minister, has TAMS been working with the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support and the community engagement unit to identify strategies and ways to engage children in this consultation or whatever consultation you have done?

MR STANHOPE: I cannot answer the question specifically. I am happy to take it on notice and provide a response through the Assembly in relation to the strategies used for engaging directly with young people in relation to services that are of direct relevance to them. I think the question is well asked and I am more than happy to find and provide information on the strategies that are currently pursued for engaging with younger people.

I do not say this lightly, though. I invite members to reflect on it in relation to government and the implications for government of, say, six separate consultations in six different parts of Canberra in relation to a single piece of infrastructure, namely, the form and makeup. We are spending, say, \$50,000 on a playground upgrade and there is an issue for government in terms of efficiencies and capacity in relation to—and we saw this just recently—the consultation in relation to community upgrades at Chifley, Holt and Campbell.

Through the consultations, every one of the consultations except one—namely, that at Chifley—identified a barbeque as a reasonable outcome of the consultation. So barbeques were not provided at Chifley. They were provided at every other community park upgrade.

The day the Chifley play upgrade was completed, residents contacted my office and said, “Oh, there’s a barbeque at Cook. Our friends are telling us how wonderful it is. There is a barbeque at Holt. Why didn’t we get the barbeque at Chifley?” Because we consulted and, through the consultations, those that attended the consultation at Chifley explicitly decided against a barbeque. I can see the minute the consultation—*(Time expired.)*

Taxation—review

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, on 12 August this year you announced that a review was to be conducted of the ACT’s taxation system and that this review would be headed by a former ACT Treasurer, Mr Ted Quinlan. Treasurer, Mr Quinlan sought to implement a number of tax reforms during his period as Treasurer but many of these failed, in large part because of the approach adopted by Mr Quinlan. Treasurer, why have you appointed as head of this review a person who failed to undertake appropriate research on such proposed tax reforms as a new rating system, a bushfire tax, a loan security tax and a parking space tax?

MS GALLAGHER: It will come as no surprise that we on this side do not agree with the allegations or the assertions just put by the shadow Treasurer. We believe that Mr Quinlan brings very significant credentials to the position of chair of the ACT’s government taxation review panel. Mr Quinlan will chair that panel. He will be ably assisted by the Under Treasurer and also Professor Ann Harding. Mr Quinlan brings with him a range of experience not only from his pre-political background but also his role as Treasurer in this place.

Having a thorough understanding of government and having a very committed career in the ACT—I think that on all of those measures Mr Quinlan stands out as an excellent chair of the ACT’s taxation review committee. He is committed to Canberra, he understands Canberra and he understands government. He will be ably assisted by two other individuals who I believe will bring forward, for the first time in 20 years, an independent review of the current situation with our own-source revenue, ideas for change—if there are ideas—looking at the Henry review, bringing that forward and doing social impact analysis on any proposed reforms that they bring to this place.

I cannot think of a better person to chair the ACT’s taxation review panel. I look forward to working with Mr Quinlan, Professor Harding and the Under Treasurer in progressing this very important piece of work.

MR SPEAKER: A supplementary, Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Treasurer, how can the community have any confidence in the integrity of this tax review when Mr Quinlan admitted in this Assembly, on 12 March 2003, that the only modelling that he had done for such a significant change as a proposed new rating system was “one draft”?

MS GALLAGHER: The Canberra community will have more confidence in Mr Quinlan than they will in the shadow treasurer, as we have seen at every election. For the past three elections, they have voted with their feet down there in Tuggeranong. The terms of reference for this review are very comprehensive. Mr Quinlan, as I said, as a leading Canberran and a high-profile Canberran, will encourage people to get involved. As much as you guys over there do not like the whole idea and are going to make politics out of it for your own gain—

Mr Coe: Are you going to be consulting children?

MS GALLAGHER: This is some of the commentary that goes around this opposition for opposition's sake. Just before a piece of work even starts, they come out, bag the people who are doing it, bag the intention, and create some scaremongering around it—that it is all about doing something which it is not. That is your approach to how you manage these really difficult issues for the future of Canberra. That is your way of dealing with it—just bag it; do not engage; have nothing to do with it. All the other feedback I have been getting, particularly from industry, is “Thank you for doing this. We are looking forward to it. We can't wait to provide you with our submissions and we can't wait to see the draft report when it is released.” Guess what: they care for Canberra and they are getting engaged, which is exactly what this process is about.

MRS DUNNE: Treasurer, how can the community have any confidence in the capacity of this review to deliver outcomes that will be equitable, when Mr Quinlan's proposed new rating scheme—a failed rating scheme—would have been the most inequitable rating system that was ever devised in the ACT?

MS GALLAGHER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mrs Dunne will know this, because she has read all the terms of reference for this, in her desire to come out and bag it so early on—before it has even started. Before it has even started, they come out, and criticise it; not a scrap of work has been done, other than establishing the panel and getting the terms of reference, but the Liberals have already made up their mind. But you will notice from the terms of reference that a social impact assessment of any proposed reforms is also to be conducted as part of the review.

So that goes to the heart of your question, Mrs Dunne, and, if you had read the terms of reference, other than just being handed your mug's question by your tactics group and, as you do every day, accepting it without understanding it, there is a clear term of reference there of a social impact assessment being done on every proposed reform, specifically to look at issues of equity.

And that is at the heart of this taxation review. At the heart of this taxation review has been criticism that some groups in the community are taking on too much of the taxation burden and others are not. So what this review seeks to do is to have a look at that argument—and they vary. Each group that feels that they are bearing the burden does vary, depending on which group you represent. So have a look at those arguments, see if there is any legitimacy to them and then work out a way forward. That is what this review is about. And that is why everyone—other than the Liberal opposition—is interested in actually getting a good quality piece of work done here.

MR SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr Hargreaves?

MR HARGREAVES: Thanks very much, Mr Speaker. My supplementary to the Treasurer is this: which is the more appropriate criterion for the selection of someone to lead such a review—being the former Treasurer in this place and a former accountant of the year or being the manager of a souvenir shop and a paperboy for the Weston newsagent?

MS GALLAGHER: We believe, as I said in answer to my first question, that Ted Quinlan is an excellent appointment. We believe that he brings with him a range of skills and experience. Indeed, I think that on the first morning after the tax review was announced even Mr Seselja had some nice words to say about Mr Quinlan—words which have since evaporated.

Mr Quinlan's commitment to Canberra is unparalleled. He has given years of dedication to this community. He is very happy to come in and chair this review panel for us and move forward in an area of his own interest but on a very significant piece of work. After 20 years, it is time that we had a look at it. Ted Quinlan is an excellent chair of this panel.

Planning—parking

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for Planning and concerns restrictions on innovation in the planning system. Minister, the territory plan currently provides for a parking contribution scheme which allows developers to pay a fee to the government in lieu of building parking spaces, which the government can then use to fund public parking areas. Minister, why is the scheme limited to only three centres in the ACT and why cannot the funds be used for sustainable transport initiatives?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. This is indeed an interesting matter of some contention. I do recognise that the current policy settings may require some refinement in the future. I am certainly looking at the possibility of both expanding the current arrangements to incorporate larger areas of the city and expanding the capacity for money to be hypothecated towards more sustainable transport initiatives in addition to additional car parking spaces.

As in everything in this policy area, it is a case of finding the appropriate balance. There are a series of tradeoffs that are necessary as this city adjusts to a different way of operating over the next 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years. The government have, of course, undertaken some policy decisions and taken some steps in this area and we will continue to examine the matter in the months and years ahead.

MR SPEAKER: A supplementary, Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, why are there minimum parking requirements for dwellings which are located within easy walking distance of bus interchanges?

MR BARR: We have settled upon a policy requiring some parking spaces for private dwellings. Not everyone will utilise public transport and it is important that in the context of again finding an appropriate policy balance here we do not completely eliminate the provision of private parking regardless of its proximity to public transport. Again, this would appear to be a situation where an absolutist position from the Greens hits the reality—

MR SPEAKER: Just a moment, Mr Barr. Members of the opposition, I would ask that you refrain from the loud conversations you are having. You are creating a level of noise in the chamber that makes it difficult to hear the minister. Minister Barr.

MR BARR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point I was making was that, again, it would appear that the Greens are pushing an absolutist position that appears to be quite at odds with the values, aspirations and lifestyles of Canberra families.

MR SPEAKER: A supplementary, Ms Hunter?

MS HUNTER: Thank you. Minister, what is the approximate cost that is added to a dwelling because of the minimum parking requirements placed on developers?

MR BARR: That would depend, of course, on the nature of the car parking provided. Obviously, car parking that goes underground—and the number of levels underground—costs more. And it would, of course, depend on the plot ratios of the particular development. It would be difficult to get an average figure. It would depend on the planning zone. It would vary. In some contexts it is appropriate to have fewer car parks, because there might be located nearby other car parking options. But the suggestion that you would eliminate all private parking requirements from unit developments—

Ms Hunter: There is no suggestion—

MR BARR: That would appear to be the policy direction that the Greens are hinting at through this line of questioning. If that is their position, then put it on the record and we will have the debate.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Bresnan.

MS BRESNAN: Minister, have developers or builders raised concerns with you that the minimum car parking requirements restrict their ability to improve sustainability and affordability of developments?

MR BARR: I cannot say that is the most regular issue that is raised with me by developers. Generally speaking, they are more concerned about the Greens' call for seven-star housing sustainability requirements and they have certainly made that very clear. I know because they have made a series of public statements and they have come to me and said, "We have concerns about what the Greens are proposing."

We have just moved to a six-star environmental sustainability standard through the Building Code of Australia for new dwellings. That has just been put in place. We are

working with industry to achieve that laudable goal. But in terms of issues that the development lobby and the building industry are raising with me in relation to things that might potentially drive up the cost of housing, it is seven stars from the Greens.

ACTION bus service—enterprise bargaining agreement

MS PORTER: Mr Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister for Transport. Would the minister please update members of the Assembly on the progress of negotiations between the Department of the Territory and Municipal Services and ACTION staff to develop a new enterprise bargaining agreement?

MR STANHOPE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank Ms Porter for the question. It is an important issue. I am sure all members in this place are aware of negotiations that have been ongoing for some little time now between ACTION—the management and staff of ACTION—in relation to a new enterprise agreement covering ACTION. It has been of some long standing now, as I say. The degree of progress that I think ACTION management, the government and, perhaps, the community would have liked has not yet eventuated, but ACTION continues to negotiate with the TWU and other unions to seek a mutually agreeable outcome from the negotiations.

At the heart of those negotiations are a number of claims which ACTION provided the unions with in relation to workplace reform, which ACTION—supported by the government, I have to say—believes is appropriate. I think it is important that members do understand the nature of those claims, and I will just go through them quickly, in summary form.

Claims that have been made by ACTION involve or actually propose the removal of a strict or designated 60:40 ratio of full-time drivers to part-time drivers. It is ACTION's view that the ratio represents an artificial restriction on ACTION's construction of current and future transport networks, and it is relevant—and we take this into account—that, in comparing ACTION's proportion of full-time drivers to those of benchmark public transport or best practice operators around Australia, the proportion of full-time drivers employed by ACTION is 2.5 times that of a notional best practice operator.

A second claim that was made relates to the requirements in the current agreement to meet specific establishment ratios or numbers, and it is the view of ACTION that this artificially limits ACTION's capacity to make adjustments to its business. For instance, the current agreement provides that ACTION employ, for instance, a set number of transport officers and that they have a set number—or set ratios—of staff in the ACTION workshops, in a collective agreement covering those in relation to, for instance, mechanics. Again, when we benchmark against other providers and when we look at those aspects of this particular business that do impede management prerogative, having a legislative, essentially, requirement to employ, say, 39 transport officers—when there is a view that as the business develops it is hard to justify those particular ratios for particular employees being set—requires us to seek to do something about that.

An additional claim was to remove the restrictions on the number of hours that part-time workers are able to work. Once again, it is the view of ACTION management,

supported by government that requirements or limits such as that are artificial and do impact quite significantly on ACTION's performance. For instance, here in the ACT on average 67 per cent of driver time is spent on road, compared with a best practice industry benchmark of 79 per cent. A difference between 67 per cent driver time on road as against a national average of 79 is the sort of issue that does reflect quite significantly. There are a couple of others and I will be happy to expand on those.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Porter, a supplementary?

MS PORTER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, do you believe there are opportunities to provide more efficient and responsive bus services to the people of Canberra?

MR STANHOPE: Thank you, Ms Porter. Certainly I do believe that. I certainly do believe that the government's capacity, or ACTION's capacity, to do that does require that we address some of these issues around the industrial—

Mr Hanson: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I believe that the supplementary question asked Mr Stanhope for an expression of opinion and would be contrary to the standing orders. I would ask you to rule on that.

Mr Hargreaves: On the point of order, Mr Speaker—

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Hargreaves.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Stanhope is responding to Ms Porter's question as the Minister for Transport. When he talks about whether he believes something, it is from a factual basis of his command of his subject matter. This is not a hypothetical. "Does he believe something" is not the same as hypothecation.

MR SPEAKER: That is not the—

Mrs Dunne: It is not hypothetical; it is an expression of opinion.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr Hanson, I have spoken to the Clerk about this matter just recently. I think it is the practice of this place that ministers are often asked, from all sides of the chamber, questions that could be considered to be seeking an opinion. I think the practice of this place is to be not excessively strict on that standing order. Questions such as the one Ms Porter has just asked are, I think, within the spirit of the standing orders. I do not propose to rule the question out of order.

MR STANHOPE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is, of course, a matter of enormous regret that the Liberal Party are not interested in public transport or ACTION and would actually seek not to have information in relation to these important issues. The fact is, of course, that I do believe there is enormous room for improvement in the services which ACTION delivers or should be delivering. That is at the heart of the question that Ms Porter asked: is there room for improvement? Do we need to do more? What is it that we need to do to ensure that ACTION does become a more efficient transport operator? What is it that we can do to drive efficiencies? What are the steps that we can take that will create those efficiencies, create a better

management environment and allow us to deliver better, more frequent, more reliable services to the people of Canberra?

That really is at the heart of our aspiration to develop a truly sustainable city, to deliver a fully functioning, efficient ACTION bus network to the people of Canberra. There are a whole range of issues that we need to address in relation to that. There is no silver bullet. Part of the response has to be industrial change. We are seeking to pursue that through negotiations with the TWU in relation to the industrial landscape and the management capacity of ACTION to deliver a more effective and efficient bus network.

The government does have a concern that ACTION management is unduly and unnecessarily constrained in its capacity to run an efficient and effective bus network as we would expect and as the people of Canberra would expect, which I think each of us knows we are not receiving and which we know is not being delivered. (*Time expired.*)

MR HARGREAVES: Mr Speaker, a supplementary?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Minister, is it true that any public transport system is an evolutionary process, and how has the government responded to that evolution?

MR STANHOPE: It is very much an evolutionary process. Indeed, we have seen evolution; to some extent we are dealing with that now. The attitude which ACTION management has taken, which the government supports, is that there are aspects of the industrial landscape that affect and that apply at or in ACTION. Certainly there are outcomes that in their time were believed to be more than appropriate, and it was as a result of that that successive governments—all governments in this place—agreed to them, accepted them and were happy to implement them.

What we are saying now is that the world changes. Industrial relations changes, management styles change and community expectations change. The city has changed. We now aspire to a far more sustainable future. We as a community want better access to more frequent and more reliable services. More of us want to support public transport to deal with issues that we can deal with as a city only if we do adopt and actually engage with public transport. And a great issue which we know—and every government in this place has suffered—is this issue from self-government in relation to the response to the people of Canberra to our buses. Even today, only eight per cent of Canberrans catch the bus.

As we set targets and seek to achieve them, we need to do some quite dramatic things. One of the things we can do is adjust the management regimes to make the system more efficient. The government has a strong role in relation to investment in this current budget. We have identified somewhere in the order of \$100 million directly for investment in our public transport network. There are a large number of pieces of this particular jigsaw, but those affecting management and arrangements within ACTION are part and parcel of that as we strive to resolve all of the issues.

MR COE: A supplementary, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, given the TWU's involvement in the Australian Labor Party and their heckling of you at the recent conference, do you have a conflict of interest in these negotiations?

MR STANHOPE: I am sorry, I did not quite catch the last bit. Do I have a what?

Mr Coe: A conflict of interest.

MR STANHOPE: I do not have a conflict of interest. I certainly have a number of strong friends and colleagues in the Labor Party who are not members of the Transport Workers Union. We are as one on 99 per cent of issues with the party faithful and I am sure as one in relation to our joint commitment to ensure that the people of Canberra have a public transport provider that they can be proud of.

Members of the TWU—ACTION drivers and ACTION staff—are enormously proud of their company, ACTION, as is the government and we share a determination to ensure that we can grow this business, that the people of Canberra will come to use it in far greater numbers and far more willingly than they currently do. Nobody wins in a circumstance where we cannot. This is a business. It is a \$100 million business and—

Mr Coe: Not many businesses run on an \$80 million subsidy, do they?

MR STANHOPE: That is right. That is the nub of the issue. It is a \$100 million business surviving on an \$80 million government or taxpayer subsidy. We need to adjust those proportions and those percentages. It is a hard ask of government. After seven years of Liberal Party government, those proportions did not shift a bit.

It is one of those issues in government where there needs to be some bipartisanship in relation to a major issue facing this community that requires the attention of all of us. Surely if there is an area where there is some room for bipartisanship in relation to seeking an agreed or mutually desired outcome, namely, an enhanced public transport system, then I would have thought the Liberals would have been wanting to be part of the solution and not, again, just oppose for opposition's sake.

Mr Coe: A supplementary, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: I am sorry, we are out, Mr Coe.

Taxation—review

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, on 12 August, you announced that a review was to be conducted of the ACT's taxation system and that this review would be headed by a former ACT Treasurer, Mr Ted Quinlan. On 17 March 2005, Mr Quinlan told a meeting of real estate agents that "the government

would squeeze investors until they bled but not until they died”. Treasurer, why is there no-one with business and investment expertise on this tax review panel?

MS GALLAGHER: The campaign of bagging the taxation review from the Liberals continues. The government is very pleased with the panel that we have put together. It does not represent every industry. We did look—

Mr Coe: We just thought Mick Gentleman would have done a better job.

MS GALLAGHER: Actually, we did look to see if there were any ex-Liberals to put on it, but there was not anyone of quality. That was the problem. We had a look to see what Liberals were sitting around. They did not even make it to the “please consider” stage. We did put in a few hurdles that you had to jump over. You had to be sane. You had to be prepared to turn up and do the work. There were a few of those lower level criteria that we put in place first. Then we considered those that met the other criteria. Don’t worry: we did consider the Liberals; you just did not meet the test. And we did look at a different range of models to put in place for the taxation review before we finalised this three-person panel. We could have broadened out and represented every industry, and I did look at that. The difficulties I anticipated from a model which sought to represent every industry would be that, because every different grouping within the community does not necessarily agree with particular taxes and charges, depending on the industry they represent, meeting—

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clocks. Members, whilst there was clearly some humour around the sallies, I think the Treasurer has moved into answering the actual question. Can we please listen to her.

MS GALLAGHER: We did look at whether a more representative model would be appropriate, but some of the challenges that were identified were that we doubted whether agreement would be reached, in a sense, on a final report. So the option we have intended to go with—you will notice that there is not anyone representing any industry on that panel—is that the panel will sit there as the overarching top three. They will commission pieces of work, depending on submissions that are put to them from industry and other interested people, including government—and maybe the opposition might participate at that stage. Then, once a draft report is released, it will go out to industry groups for comment. I think that we have covered it off as best we can with an issue like taxation reform, which is difficult for everybody to reach consensus on.

MRS DUNNE: A supplementary question, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why have you appointed as head of the tax review a person who has such a bias against the investment community in the ACT?

MS GALLAGHER: Mr Quinlan does not. I think the quote that the Liberals keep pulling out really does go to the depth of Mr Quinlan’s understanding of the need and

the challenge, the understanding and the knowledge that he has of the need to grow your revenue base to match the demand for government services. The opposition come in here continuously, every sitting day, and ask, “Why aren’t you doing enough? Why hasn’t this been done?” You understand the need to increase government service outputs. What you do not do is match up the puzzle with how you are going to deliver that and how you are going to pay for it.

When you look at the challenges that are ahead for the ACT and the fact that only 30 per cent of our budget is funded through own-source revenue and the fact that our health system is growing, our education system is growing, our transport system is growing—all of those challenges—I think Mr Quinlan is very well placed, with a very thorough understanding of government and the community, to lead this work, ably assisted by independent expert advice.

MR SMYTH: A supplementary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Treasurer, what assurances have you obtained from Mr Quinlan that his bias against the investment community will not influence any recommendations that he might propose?

MS GALLAGHER: That question is just silly, Mr Speaker. Mr Quinlan will approach this piece of work with the professionalism and skill that he has displayed in his many years of political and community service to this town.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—women’s and children’s program

MS BRESNAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Attorney-General and is about the AMC’s women and children’s program. Minister, I understand that, while there is now a finalised policy regarding this program, there are physical impediments presented by the AMC that will prevent a mother from having her child with her, even if it is in the best interests of the child and all housemates are signed up to a care plan. Minister, given that in recent months there have been applications made to the women and children’s program, why hasn’t the AMC been made physically ready for any potential baby or child?

MR CORBELL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am not aware of any physical impediments that would prevent a female prisoner from having her newborn child with her, should that be approved under the existing policies and procedures—in fact, quite the opposite. The advice I have from AMC is that all necessary physical facilities are in place and equipment is in place that would permit that to occur, should it be approved through the appropriate policies and procedures.

MR SPEAKER: A supplementary, Ms Bresnan?

MS BRESNAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, why has it been implied to the women at the AMC that there was potential for a woman to have her child with her when, in actual fact, the AMC is not ready for this?

MR CORBELL: Again, Mr Speaker, Ms Bresnan presents no evidence to back up her claim. I have very clear advice from ACT Corrective Services that AMC has all the necessary facilities and equipment in place to permit a child to reside with her mother—a new-born child to reside with their mother—should that be approved under the necessary policies and procedures. There is no evidence to the contrary. If Ms Bresnan has evidence to the contrary, I would invite her to provide it to me.

MS HUNTER: A supplementary?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Hunter.

MS HUNTER: Minister, is it true that there were concerns raised that there was no outside fenced area for a mother with a baby or young child to be able to play outside or to push a pram outside in the safe area?

MR CORBELL: I am not aware of any such claims.

MS LE COUTEUR: A supplementary, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, is the location of the women's cottages within the AMC or the number of female prisoners preventing the delivery of any other services and, if so, what services?

MR CORBELL: That is a very broad question. I cannot recall any such advice suggesting such a problem. However, I am happy to review the circumstances, and if there are any issues of concern I will certainly advise the Assembly accordingly.

Canberra Hospital—alleged bullying

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, you have consistently said you have no role in the bullying review under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, yet on 2CC on 11 August you said, "I may well be briefed on the outcomes of that review." Minister, exactly what role will you have on the outcomes of the bullying review and will you be briefed or have you been briefed about the outcomes of the review?

MS GALLAGHER: No, I have not been briefed on the outcomes or, indeed, on the review itself. My comment on 2CC related to when that process is finalised. I imagine I will get a briefing and that would relate to whether any further action is being taken post the Public Interest Disclosure Act review being completed. I have not been so far.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, a supplementary?

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, will the Chief Executive for Health be consulting you or your office about the review and what is released?

MS GALLAGHER: About the review and when it is released? No, I do not imagine so. The chief executive is the delegate under the act. As I understand it, once the review is completed, the chief executive in that role will then consider whether further action needs to be taken. That is as I understand the end of the process. As to what is made in terms of a public statement, it is over to the chief executive to determine.

MR HANSON: A supplementary, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, how will you be assured that the appropriate response is taken by the department if you do not what the outcomes of the review will be? And what action will be taken?

MS GALLAGHER: Once it is all completed, as I said, I imagine I will get a briefing on “this is what the review found and this is the action that we are going to take” or “there is no further action required”. It is a bit hard to predict that before you actually get to the end point. I have not been briefed in any way about this public interest disclosure investigation. I do not know when it will be finished; I do not know if it has finished. I imagine, when it has concluded and if further action is taken—for example, if disciplinary action is taken—then I will be briefed along the lines of “this is the action we have taken”, not “this is the action we are considering taking” and then opening it up to me for discussion about whether I think that is appropriate or not. Those decisions will have already been taken before it comes to me. I imagine that if there are outcomes that require further action then I will be briefed on those, but only post the decision being made.

MR HANSON: Minister, how will the community be assured that the appropriate response is taken, if the outcomes of the review are to remain secret?

MS GALLAGHER: Well, I do not know if the outcomes of the review will remain secret. I cannot answer those questions, because I have not been briefed and I do not know what that review has found, if it has found anything or if it is even completed. I guess the public confidence I sought to address through the clinical services review—and all of that information has been made public and we are having a very public process around consulting on the recommendations. As to whether the public need to pore over the individual detail of the Public Interest Disclosure Act as a way of measuring the clinical performance of a system, I do not know that that is required. I imagine—

MR HANSON: An assurance that you are taking action against bullying within your department—

MS GALLAGHER: Well, it is not up to me to take action. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, it is the chief executive. I have no doubt that the chief executive will act in accordance with her obligations under the law and as leader of ACT Health as an organisation. I think I have seen a comment from the chief executive of ACT Health indicating that she understands there is public interest in this matter and that she will have that at the forefront of her considerations about what information can be made public, if any.

Mercury 10—counter-terrorism exercise

MR HARGREAVES: My question is to the Attorney-General. Minister, can you please advise the Assembly about the important counter-terrorism exercise taking place in the ACT today and what benefits it will have for ACT government agencies and local emergency services?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Hargreaves for the question. Today the ACT is participating in a multi-jurisdictional counter-terrorism exercise known as Mercury 10. Mercury 10 involves a large number of jurisdictions, including the ACT, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory, as well as relevant government agencies and New Zealand. Mercury 10 is funded through the auspices of the national counter-terrorism committee, auspiced by the commonwealth.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR CORBELL: It is not a joke. In the event of a serious terrorist incident, Canberra is not immune and Canberra could face the prospect of terrorist activity should terrorists choose to use high-profile targets in the national capital to further their cause.

For that reason, the ACT is intensely involved in this exercise. The exercise is designed to evaluate whole-of-government, high-level decision making between participating governments and within them. It is also designed to test the accurate deployment of our police and emergency services and will also involve the operational deployment of the Australian Defence Force to resolve a terrorist-related incident in the ACT.

It is a very important test for our emergency services. Steps have been taken to ensure that the existing operational capacity of our police and emergency services is not compromised during the exercise period which will run on the ground today and tomorrow. Rostering arrangements have been put in place to ensure that normal operational response is maintained and that there is no compromising of that to respond to calls for assistance and help from the Canberra community during the exercise period.

What is particularly valuable about this is that it allows our emergency services to work together. It allows them to test operational response on the ground, through things such as forward command, communications, logistics and control. This is valuable regardless of whether or not our emergency services ever have to face this type of terrorist-related incident into the future.

It is equally valuable in terms of their on-the-ground deployment should they have to face other large-scale emergencies. It allows them to test how they work together, how they coordinate their activities, and it also allows the government to test its whole-of-administration arrangements, particularly in terms of public information and coordination, recovery and a range of other relationships and activities that do need to be tested from time to time.

I would like to thank the work of our police and emergency services. Very extensive planning has gone into putting together this exercise today, including officers from my department, through the security and emergency management branch, as well as Chief Minister's Department, ACT Policing and all of the agencies of the ACT emergency services. This is an important exercise and one that I trust will be accommodated by members in this place and, indeed, by the broader public for the sake of improved emergency preparedness in the Territory.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hargreaves, a supplementary question?

MR HARGREAVES: Thanks very much, Mr Speaker. My supplementary is to the minister. How will the people of the ACT benefit from this exercise in terms of local safety and security for possible future incidents?

MR CORBELL: As I have highlighted, obviously the operational deployment of a large number of police, fire, ambulance and other emergency services personnel pays real dividends in terms of their preparedness to work together in times of a real emergency. Police forward command posts will be established. Fire and emergency services will work closely with police in dealing with these types of emergencies. And in the context of this particular exercise, the engagement of the Australian Defence Force is also going to occur, which will allow state and territory officers and authorities to work with the commonwealth in what is a complex and testing emergency scenario.

This has benefits whether it is a bushfire, a flood or another emergency. It allows our emergency services to work together and to test our channels of communication with the commonwealth. Indeed, when it comes to a large-scale emergency, the assistance of the commonwealth and other jurisdictions will be necessary and it is appropriate that we engage and test lines of communication with them as part of the exercise process.

MR SPEAKER: Ms Porter, a supplementary?

MS PORTER: How well placed are emergency services in the ACT to deal with a major emergency like the one that is being tested today as part of Mercury 10?

MR CORBELL: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank Ms Porter for the question. Again, this is not the first time that an exercise of this nature has been undertaken in the territory. One occurred about two or so years ago, if I recall correctly, and again police, fire brigade and other emergency services were deployed as part of that exercise. So it is an important testing and refreshing of these skills, and it is appropriate that we continue to do that, and that is why the territory is pleased to be involved through the NCTC and the funding provided by the commonwealth to test our capabilities and to make sure they remain up to date.

MR HANSON: A supplementary, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, in light of your concerns that a serious terrorist event may occur in the ACT, was it appropriate that the Chief Minister therefore released in-confidence material on his website that related to anti-terrorism legislation?

MR CORBELL: It was entirely appropriate that the Chief Minister brought out for public scrutiny laws that had an impact on the liberty of citizens in our country. I would challenge any member to suggest that it was not appropriate for the Chief Minister to disclose proposals to change laws that would impact on the ability to be detained without charge for extended periods of time by the—

Members interjecting—

MR CORBELL: That material was not in-confidence. It did not disclose any confidential material. It did not compromise the intelligence status of any government agency and it was entirely in the public interest.

Members interjecting—

MR SPEAKER: Order, members! I understand the Assembly will now break in order to enable the government to participate in the Mercury 10 exercise.

At 3 pm, the sitting was suspended until the ringing of the bells.

Canberra Hospital—obstetrics unit review

MR COE: Mr Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the recent review of service delivery at public maternity units. It found:

The re-credentialing process of clinical staff at the Canberra Hospital maternity unit does not appear to be robust.

Why is the re-credentialing process of clinical staff in the Canberra Hospital maternity unit not robust?

MS GALLAGHER: The credentialing system at the Canberra Hospital for all clinical staff is robust. I think what the review goes to is issues that are outside—

Mr Hanson: The quote is “does not appear to be robust”.

MS GALLAGHER: It goes to issues outside the normal credentialing process for any clinical staff. We are consulting about whether or not that needs to be changed. It is not a normal part of credentialing to look at a number of other issues—from my memory, they were things such as performance management—as part of the credentialing process. Credentialing traditionally looks at an individual’s clinical skills—whether they can actually perform the job. It does not look at a whole range of other issues which have come out through this review. The credentialing process is robust as credentialing processes go. What the report brings in is a process that I understand is being trialled in a couple of hospitals in New Zealand but is not standard as part of the credentialing process in any hospital in Australia. It does raise a new

way of doing things. We are going to look at that. But as part of the credentialing process—I do not accept that the credentialing process at the Canberra Hospital, or at Calvary Hospital for that matter, is not robust, because it is a very thorough analysis of a clinician's clinical skills.

MR COE: What other areas of ACT Health lack robust recredentialing processes?

MS GALLAGHER: I think I answered that in the first part of the question. Our credentialing processes are robust. The review has identified other processes that should be part of a credentialing process that is not standard as a way of credentialing clinicians at the moment. I think a number of clinicians will have a view about whether credentialing should incorporate non-clinical aspects to their performance overall, and we are consulting with clinicians over that.

MR HANSON: Minister, do you therefore disagree with the findings of this report?

MS GALLAGHER: I saw Mr Smyth ask that question, and then you get up and ask it, and it is a typical Brendan Smyth question, trying to—

Mrs Dunne: Answer the question—do you disagree?

MS GALLAGHER: Thanks, Mrs Dunne. I know enough to know that I can answer the question and that I have two minutes in order to do it, without taking advice from you. Mr Smyth asked Mr Hanson to ask me a supplementary; I was merely drawing that to the chamber's attention. No, I do not say that the review is wrong, or whatever the words were that you used. I am saying they have identified additional issues which they think should be part of the credentialing process, which are not standard and which clinicians will have a view about. And, you know, we need to talk to the doctors. We have to talk to the doctors about what that means. If credentialing no longer just focuses on clinical expertise or clinical capacity, then that is fine and good, but we need the doctors to agree to that in the first place. So it will be a discussion we have with clinicians. We are having it with them at the moment as to whether issues outside of their non-clinical skills should be part of whether or not they have access or rights to practise at a hospital.

MR HANSON: A supplementary, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, is there anything in the report that you actually agree with?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes. I have said a number of times that there are a number of recommendations on which there are mixed views and I am trading carefully about how we manage that process. There are mixed views between the midwives, the public staff specialists, the private obstetricians. We have allowed six weeks to consult further with staff. As part of that, I will have a number of meetings with different individuals as part of working our way forward.

But what I am very keen on doing is using this clinical review—and I sense there is a willingness from the AMA and the private obstetricians and the public obstetricians

to build a territory-wide maternity service that everybody is happy with—to leverage from.

Canberra Hospital—obstetrics unit review

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, the review of public maternity units in the ACT released on 5 August 2010 provided a report into obstetric services at the Canberra Hospital. Minister, are you aware of any ACT Health staff, you or any of your own staff who recommended or suggested changes to this report that sought to alter or remove any part to the report and, if so, what changes were sought?

MS GALLAGHER: I can certainly say that not me nor my staff in my office had any discussions with anybody about the review other than my normal briefings with ACT Health. I can confirm that there was a draft report that was provided to ACT Health, as there always is in these matters, and that there was discussion between ACT Health and the reviewers, particularly around areas of fact, and those were resolved at that level. I did not see the draft report so I cannot comment any further.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, a supplementary question?

MR HANSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, would it be appropriate for ACT Health to attempt to suggest or recommend changes to this report for any other purpose than factual errors?

MS GALLAGHER: Through any review there is always dialogue between the agency and the reviewer. It is the normal way of progressing—

Mr Hanson: It's a non-answer. She seems to be avoiding answering this question.

MS GALLAGHER: No; I am not avoiding it.

Mr Hanson: In answer to the first question, you said it was just factual errors. In the supplementary you have changed your story.

MS GALLAGHER: No, I have not. I have said that it is not abnormal for there to be dialogue between parties through the course of a review. That is what I am saying. If there are errors of fact—I understand another area was individuals being named—then I think it was quite appropriate that Health raise those concerns with the reviewers and that the reviewers respond.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Seselja, a supplementary?

MR SESELJA: Minister, will you provide to the Assembly a copy of any changes which were suggested, recommended or made?

MS GALLAGHER: I will look at what I can provide to the Assembly but I am not going to accept, I think, a line that is being put by the opposition or a case that is attempting to be built by the opposition. We have released the report. We have released it in its entirety. It has raised a number of issues with the maternity services

that we are currently working on resolving and recommendations which we are consulting with staff over. I will have a look at what I can provide the Assembly in terms of further information.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, a supplementary?

MR SMYTH: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister for Health, will you also look at whether or not you can provide a copy of the draft report to the Assembly?

MS GALLAGHER: I presumed that was part of Mr Seselja's question, but, yes, I will have a look at that.

Mr Stanhope: I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice

Canberra Hospital—surgery cancellation

Hospitals—ambulance bypasses

MS GALLAGHER: (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Health and Minister for Industrial Relations) (4:08): I just have a couple of matters from question time last week, in relation to whether any elective surgery cancellations had occurred in relation to any surgery because of the activity levels at the hospital. In July 2010, I understand there were two postponements, but they were due to non-availability of an intensive care bed, not just a general hospital bed. It was the lack of availability of an intensive care bed for their operation—so there were two instances of that.

In relation to Mr Smyth's question on bypass, from May to July 2010, there has been bypass for 0.8 per cent of the time. It has occurred 19 times for a total of 34 hours.

Committee reports—government responses

Papers and statement by minister

MR STANHOPE (Ginninderra—Chief Minister, Minister for Transport, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Land and Property Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for the Arts and Heritage): For the information of members, I present the following papers:

Climate Change, Environment and Water—Standing Committee—Report 3—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009.*

Education, Training and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009.*

Health, Community and Social Services—Standing Committee—Report 3—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009.*

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009.*

Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services—Standing Committee—Report 5—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009.*

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009*.

Gungahlin Drive extension—bridge collapse Paper and statement by minister

MR STANHOPE (Ginninderra—Chief Minister, Minister for Transport, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Land and Property Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for the Arts and Heritage): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Gungahlin Drive Extension Stage 2—Bridge collapse—Structural Engineer's Report on the Collapse of Falsework, prepared by SMEC Australia for Roads ACT, dated 23 August 2010

I seek leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

MR STANHOPE: Mr Speaker, the technical report which I have now just tabled has been provided to WorkSafe ACT by Mr Tony Gill, Director of Roads ACT. I am tabling the report in the Assembly for the information of members. It has been released on the Department of Territory and Municipal Services website earlier today.

Following the collapse of the bridge on the Barton Highway, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services commissioned engineering consultants NEC Australia to undertake an independent investigation of the incident. The report will be considered, along with other information and reports collected by or prepared for WorkSafe ACT in undertaking their broader investigation of the incidents that led to the collapse of the Barton Highway Bridge on Saturday 14 August 2010.

While neither I nor the department will be publicly commenting on the report pending the WorkSafe investigation, we have thoroughly reviewed the processes covering the construction of similar works and had an independent engineer review the bridge being constructed using a different method at Belconnen. This NEC report identifies the possible cause of the bridge collapse, reviews design documentation and provides recommendations into the safe method of demolition work.

The independent report is now being presented to WorkSafe ACT, as one of the documents required to release the prohibition notice on the site. The other documents—a safe work methods statement and a demolition plan—have also been prepared by the bridge contractor Abergeldie and provided to WorkSafe ACT for approval for our demolition works to commence.

Subject to approval, it is expected that demolition work will commence on Wednesday 25 August and take up to seven days to complete. Works will focus on the removal of the collapsed bridge deck, with additional supports installed during demolition to avoid further collapse.

Abergeldie will undertake the work at their own expense, in conjunction with local demolition contractor Irwin and Hartshorn. A detailed inspection will then be required

before the Barton Highway can be reopened to traffic, hopefully by Saturday 4 September.

I have been advised that it is likely the bridge collapse has resulted in a four to six-month delay for the construction of the bridge, with a revised completion date of mid-2011. However, this is still well within the overall completion date of June 2012 for the GDE project. Mr Speaker, I provide the report for the information of members.

Papers

Mr Corbell presented the following papers:

Revised explanatory statement to the Liquor Bill 2010.

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Adoption Act—Adoption Amendment Regulation 2010 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2010-32 (LR, 2 August 2010).

Betting (ACTTAB Limited) Act—Betting (ACTTAB Limited) Rules of Betting Determination 2010 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-190 (LR, 12 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act and Financial Management Act—

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-180 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-181 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-182 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-183 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-184 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-185 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2010 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-186 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Crimes (Sentencing) Act—Crimes (Sentencing) Amendment Regulation 2010 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2010-35 (LR, 12 August 2010).

Education Act—

Education (Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2010 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-177 (LR, 29 July 2010).

Education (Non-government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2010 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-176 (LR, 29 July 2010).

Environment Protection Act—Environment Protection Amendment Regulation 2010 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2010-31 (LR, 2 August 2010).

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act—

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Exemption 2010 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-187 (LR, 5 August 2010).

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Exemption 2010 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-188 (LR, 5 August 2010).

Health Act—Health (Fees) Determination 2010 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-179 (LR, 5 August 2010).

Housing Assistance Act—Housing Assistance Public Rental Housing Assistance Program 2010 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-189 (LR, 9 August 2010).

Planning and Development Act—Planning and Development (Transitional) Amendment Regulation 2010 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2010-34 (LR, 12 August 2010).

Road Transport (General) Act and Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act—Road Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation 2010 (No 4)—Subordinate Law SL2010-33 (LR, 5 August 2010).

Utilities Act—Utilities (Consumer Protection Code) Determination 2010 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2010-178 (LR, 29 July 2010).

Housing—older persons

Statement by member

MR COE (Ginninderra), by leave: Mr Speaker, last week, on 19 August, Ms Porter asked a question of Ms Burch in the chamber, and it was this:

My question is to the Minister for Ageing. Can the minister inform the Assembly about the progress in the development of the stimulus funded older persons accommodation?

Ms Burch went on to talk about the 297 mainly two-bedroom homes properties or dwellings that will be constructed. She also said:

The first site in Macquarie, with some 13 homes, is completed and is currently being allocated.

Now I, for one, thought that perhaps that information was incorrect. She said:

The first site in Macquarie, with some 13 homes, is completed and is currently being allocated.

I asked her a question:

Minister, you referred to a couple of developments that have been finished. On what date were they handed over from the developer to Housing ACT ...

She said:

The completed homes I refer to were in Macquarie and Curtin. The Macquarie applications are being assessed and letters will go out to those who are deemed suitable and acceptable.

She then, very confidently, very arrogantly—and perhaps being quite cocky as well—said:

I can get back to you on the exact date on the calendar with a red circle around the handover ...

I did ask for it to be taken on notice, and she then said: “It is envisaged that construction will be completed by the end of September 2010.” That is in stark contrast to what she said on 19 August. “It is envisaged that construction will be completed by the end of September 2010 and the homes will be handed over to the department from 2010.”

On 19 August, she said:

The completed homes I refer to were in Macquarie and Curtin.

She is treating the place with contempt. She had an opportunity today to come into the chamber and to correct the record. She had an opportunity, but she did not take it. She very arrogantly told the house that it was definite. She told the house she would give me a calendar with a red circle around the date, yet she was wrong.

Now I want to know why the minister has not corrected the record. The usual convention is to do so at the earliest opportunity, if not at the end of question time. She had that opportunity today, and I would like the minister to respond—we will happily give her leave to do so—as to why she still has not corrected the record.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services, Minister for Children and Young People, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Women), by leave: I did put in a response to Alistair’s questions in this morning.

Mr Smyth: “Mr Coe”, please.

MS BURCH: Sorry; to Mr Coe’s question. I put that through this morning to the Clerk, because I was not quite sure about this afternoon, given that we were breaking at 3 o’clock. But, in regard to the question, I made comments about how work on sites had commenced. I also made comments about assessment processes and allocation processes so, if that has caused confusion, I do apologise.

Mr Coe: You were wrong. You misled the house.

Mr Hargreaves: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Mr Coe's interjection was that Ms Burch has misled the house. That has to be withdrawn or a substantive motion brought on.

Mr Seselja: Well, it appears she has, and she is going to have to explain.

Mr Hargreaves: There has to be a substantive motion.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Coe, I invite you to withdraw.

Mr Coe: I withdraw.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: Without the *Hansard* in front of me, I do know that I was talking about the sites that had construction that had commenced, but I was also, in my response, focusing on the assessment and allocation process. I think it is a very good thing to have these sites in Macquarie and Curtin going through final stages of allocating 13 people to move into those units. That is a very good thing to celebrate.

Perhaps Mr Coe thinks that it is a bad thing to have these units come on line. I also made mention that Curtin is going through the assessment and allocation as well, so perhaps the language was not clear. Why would I say something is completed when, as Mr Coe would know, you could drive past that and see it is still a construction site? My reference was around the assessment and allocation process.

MR SPEAKER: Order. That matter is now finished.

Mr Smyth: Or maybe not.

MR SPEAKER: Well perhaps not, but for now it is. We now move to a matter of public importance.

Sport and recreation—junior sports Discussion of matter of public importance

MR SPEAKER: I have received letters from Ms Bresnan, Mr Coe, Mr Doszpot, Mr Hanson, Mr Hargreaves, Ms Hunter, Ms Le Couteur, Ms Porter, Mr Seselja and Mr Smyth proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, I have determined that the matter proposed by Mr Seselja be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of junior sports in the ACT.

MR SESELJA (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.19): I am very pleased to hear that there is a lot of keenness for the MPI today. We do often talk about the fact that Mr Coe never seems to get the MPI. We are not quite sure why. The odds suggest that others have had many more than he has, but I do not know.

Mr Coe: One in 65, I think.

MR SESELJA: Pretty bad odds here. You would not buy a lottery ticket if you were Alistair Coe—or perhaps you would, because they would just say, “You are not getting it.” I should not digress, Mr Speaker. I return to junior sports. Junior sports are critical, not just here in the ACT but right around the nation and around the world. We want to talk about the importance of junior sports to the health and wellbeing of our young people and its importance to the sense of community that flows from the wonderful participation in sports.

I also want to talk about some of the wonderful community organisations who make such a contribution to community sport right around the ACT and the wonderful volunteers who put in countless hours for their passion, for their sport, for their community and for their children, and also about some of the challenges faced by junior sport in the territory.

There is no doubt about the preventative health benefits of participation in junior sports. Participation in junior sports has preventative health benefits, particularly in the context of rising childhood obesity rates. It also contributes to the prevention of chronic disease. Junior sport is an important tool in which to involve kids and parents in the community.

According to ACTSport, studies that have examined the impact of participation at the society level, and specifically the association between organised activity and social inclusion, support the fact that participation in sport and active recreational activity also increases levels of social cohesion in the community, diverts youth from antisocial behaviour, including crime, improves the individual’s mood and self-esteem, promotes positive social values and assists in the development of life skills. There is absolutely no doubt about this. There are countless studies to back this up. Common sense tells us that it is indeed true.

I think the other point to make in relation to the importance of junior sport as we move forward as a community is that there will be increasing challenges for sporting facilities. What we are seeing is a changed model of housing. We are seeing less private open space for families. Many of the standard block sizes these days are a lot smaller than they were 15, 20 or 30 years ago. The standard quarter-acre block for many people is no longer a reality. Given that, the ability to participate at your local oval or your local sporting facility in junior sport becomes even more important. Unfortunately for many families, the space in the backyard just is not there as it once was.

I want to talk a little about some of the issues faced by some of our junior sporting clubs. Leading up to estimates, there was a sentiment expressed from clubs and sports such as football, AFL, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, basketball, tennis and volleyball associations representing approximately 95,000 Canberrans. Some of the sentiment expressed included that community sports facilities are running at capacity and are being stretched to meet demand.

This has several implications. Firstly, an increase in demand would lead to an increase in the cost of participation. It is worth pausing on that for a moment. Anyone who has children who play sport would know that the costs can be very significant. They can be very significant if your child plays more than one sport. There are not just the registration fees; there is the gear that goes with it every year. If they are successful at sport and they travel, the costs grow exponentially.

For many in our community it is a real challenge to meet the costs that go with sport. I think that is something we should keep in mind as policy makers. Sport is a great leveller, and we want to keep it that way. We want to make sure that a kid from any background can get in there and have a go in their local sporting competition.

There is a role for clubs. I know that many clubs work with families, including low income and vulnerable families, in this regard. But there is also potentially a role for government down the track to make sure that it facilitates making sure that people can access sport.

We know that with the drought and with water restrictions, there has been more pressure placed on our sporting facilities. Since 2002, 41 fields have been taken offline due to stage 3 water restrictions and have not yet been fully brought back online. 2002 is also the last year the government conducted any review of its tri-annual funding program. Industry groups have also expressed concern to the Canberra Liberals that there is a lack of indoor facilities for junior sports. Indeed, that is the case for many sports.

The issue of declining volunteerism is one that has been raised by ACTSport. They cited it in their 2010-11 budget submission, where they said:

Involvement by volunteers in community sport and active recreation builds families as well as a vibrant community ... Parents provide positive role models for children for engaging in an active community. Organised recreational sport is the biggest contributor to the voluntary sector in the ACT, with 23.6 per cent of all volunteers involved in sport. As importantly, the parents who are involved in their children's involvement through general volunteering send a powerful message about the importance they place on sharing and valuing the efforts and interests of their children and their community.

They said earlier in their submission:

Increasing participation requires strong local organisations, which in turn are built on the hard work of volunteers, whether they are carers, instructors, coaches, officials, administrators, or many other smaller roles that are integral to the fabric of the industry.

For those of us who head out to the ovals on cold Saturday mornings—in my case down at Mawson, where it always seems about 10 degrees cooler than anywhere else in Canberra in winter—

Members interjecting—

MR SESELJA: Well, there are also other places. Calwell and Gungahlin have their special moments as well, but there is no doubt that these ovals are special places to be on a cold winter's day. In fact, I was talking with some of the administrators at Woden Valley Soccer Club the weekend before last about some of the challenges they are facing. They are seeking some assistance which we hope we can provide. These are the volunteers; these are the people I see every week out there putting things together. Some of them are in formal administrative roles. Others are just coming and putting out the witches hats, they are coaching or they are in some other way serving the community. They do an outstanding job. I think that it is something that really adds to the fabric of our community.

I want to mention a couple of the great sporting clubs. I do not have enough time to go through the many and varied sporting organisations in our community, but I did want to pay tribute to a couple of them, particularly the Gungahlin United Football Club. I know that other members in this place have had a bit to do with Gungahlin United. Gungahlin United Football Club is an incorporated community organisation that services Gungahlin and its surrounding suburbs such as Nicholls, Palmerston, Ngunnawal, Amaroo, Harrison, Forde and Franklin.

GUSC started as the Gungahlin Junior Soccer Club in 1997. It focused on junior soccer in the Gungahlin area and it was home-based at the Nicholls playing fields. Field capacity at Nicholls meant a move to Palmerston playing fields as a second base. In December 2005, the association's name was changed to Gungahlin United Football Club to reflect the change in direction of national naming and the introduction of a broader playing base, including state league seniors and masters, both male and female.

GUFC currently has a player base of over 1,100 players of all ages and teams in competitions, including state league, junior competitive and non-competitive, north-side rooball and locally organised peewees. The club is the largest sporting association in Gungahlin and growing at a rapid rate. It is one of those organisations that are limited only by the number of ovals that are in the area. I think it will continue to grow provided the facilities for Gungahlin United Football Club continue to grow and thrive.

I mentioned before the Woden Valley Soccer Club, which I have had some involvement with. It is a well-respected junior soccer club in the ACT. It was founded in 1989. I think it is the biggest in the ACT. I am told that it is one of the biggest football clubs, if not the biggest, in the country. It has 1,900 players in 200-plus teams.

It is a fantastic organisation. I think it would be the biggest in the ACT. As I said earlier, it has some wonderful volunteers, who I come into contact with on a weekly basis, who do a sensational job. It is also worth mentioning that the Woden Valley Soccer Club has as its major sponsor the Hellenic Club. I think it is worth paying tribute to the Hellenic Club for their backing of soccer in the Woden Valley. Of course, they support many other community organisations, but Woden Valley Soccer Club is one of the important organisations which they back.

The Woden Valley Soccer Club is so large because it represents the merging of a number of clubs. It is a real institution in the Woden Valley. There are literally tens of thousands of kids who have been through the Woden Valley Soccer Club over the last few years.

I also want to say something about what is happening in another way in terms of junior sport down at mpowerdome near where I live. Some of the work that is being done there by Gail and her team I think is sensational. I think they provide a really unique facility in the ACT. There is the capacity there for indoor tennis and a lot of other indoor sports. They particularly focus on an innovative way of helping children to develop really good skills.

The mpower minis program is for three and four-year-olds to develop fundamental movement skills to prepare children for participation in all sports and physical activity. Special equipment is used to introduce striking skills. This is done through a variety of fun activities. This is some of the great work that is being done with the mpower minis. It is about really empowering a lot of children.

I think that mpower generally has a holistic view. It is not just about sport; it is about a lot more than that. It is about empowering young kids and giving them some of the skills that they need. Getting some of those motor skills is critical to development. It is critical to how kids function at school; it is critical to how they function within their communities; it is critical to some of the issues that I talked about earlier—issues around health and wellbeing, issues around childhood obesity.

As I said, at a time when we are seeing growing rates of childhood obesity, at a time when, for many families, it is difficult to have the space for the kids to run around and play sport at home, these organisations and these sporting facilities become even more important than they have been in the past.

We can go through some of the other sports—the mass participation sports in Canberra. I refer to softball, netball, rugby league, rugby union, touch footy, basketball and the whole range. I did want to pay tribute also to the Tuggeranong Buffaloes. I know, Mr Assistant Speaker, that you have a long association with them. Michael and Joel Monaghan, amongst others, have come through the Tuggeranong Buffaloes program. The Buffaloes have been around for almost as long as Tuggeranong. They are now 35 years old. Of course, Tuggeranong was only really established in the early 1970s. So Tuggeranong Buffaloes Leagues Club has been a great contributor to the Tuggeranong community over many years. We have seen some really good footballers go on to bigger and better things from Tuggeranong Buffaloes. They have made a great contribution to Tuggeranong and the ACT.

I did want to pay tribute to one more team that was my nemesis when I played basketball. I refer to the Weston Creek Woden Dodgers Basketball Club. The Weston Creek Woden Dodgers are one of the oldest basketball clubs in Canberra. People do not realise what a massive participation sport basketball is in Canberra. It is still amongst the largest participation sports.

It is one of those sports that you can play mixed. You can play in men's and women's teams. It is something that many people play well into their maturing years. Basketball is one of those sports that you can continue playing for a long time. The Weston Creek Woden Dodgers, when I played for Wanniasa Eveready, were one of those teams that were always very professional, always very hard to beat, because they had such a fantastic program.

In summary, there are a lot of challenges for junior sport in the ACT. We acknowledge those. We as policy makers need to be conscious of those. We need to work hard to work through those for junior sport, but we should also acknowledge that this is about the community. The community makes these things happen. It is up to government to get behind them as best it can. (*Time expired.*)

MR BARR: (Molonglo—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation and Minister for Gaming and Racing) (4.34): I thank Mr Seselja for bringing on this MPI. It is, indeed, a very important topic. As Australia's only minister for sport and minister for education, I am in a unique position to appreciate the importance of getting young Canberrans into physical activity and into sport. There is a massive body of research that shows that physical activity in all forms is good for kids. It shows that physical activity has an immediate impact on the students' ability to learn. We all know that kids who are physically active are more likely to grow up into healthy, active adults.

That is why I launched the minister's physical activity challenge. That is why I established the Children's Physical Activity Foundation. The ACT government has provided \$650,000 in funding towards the physical activity foundation, and the foundation is, in turn, providing schools with financial support to access sporting equipment and to provide sporting programs.

That is why, also, as minister for education and minister for sport, I funded a special team of physical education consultants to work with schools to deliver high-quality PE programs. The physical activity challenge this year is having its biggest year ever, with 19½ thousand students across 51 public, 11 Catholic and six independent schools taking part. Schools which successfully complete the challenge will share in total prizes worth up to \$110,000. Individual schools can win packs of sporting goods worth between \$600 and \$1,200, depending on the size of the school and the proportion of students taking part in the challenge.

To successfully complete the challenge, students need to find an extra 30 minutes a day on top of their daily PE lesson. I have been doing my best to encourage students and schools to take part in the challenge by going along and being part of it myself. I visited a number of schools—St Clare of Assisi, St Monica's, girls grammar, Red Hill primary school amongst a large number of schools—and I hope to get to about 15 during the course of the challenge. I will keep on doing that each and every year that I am minister for sport and minister for education.

I believe the challenge is important, as it incorporates sport, but it also shows young Canberrans that they can build physical activity into their daily lives. Activities such as walking or riding to school, playing games at lunch-time or after school, or even

walking the dog can help students meet the challenge goals. I think there are few better ways to encourage young Canberrans into sport and physical activity than through school as part of a well-rounded education.

Before I move on to other areas of government policy supporting junior sport, I would just like to take this opportunity to wish all 19½ thousand students involved in this year's minister's physical activity challenge the best of luck in completing the challenge. There are still a number of weeks to go, but as I go around schools and see the wall charts in classrooms and see the level of participation in the challenge, it is, indeed, terrific to see.

The most obvious way that the government supports junior sport across the territory, though, is by providing quality public playing facilities. As Mr Seselja mentioned in his contribution, this has become a particular challenge in recent times in the face of ongoing drought and water restrictions. However, in response to these challenges, since taking office, the government has invested around \$30 million, including \$8 million in last year's budget, to upgrade and make our facilities drought-proof.

There are numerous examples of projects that have been funded under programs responding to the drought, and I would just like to mention one particularly good partnership with Capital Football. We invested together with Capital Football in a FIFA-rated synthetic pitch at Hawker. I had the opportunity to play a game or two on that facility, and it is world class. It is but one of many examples where the government has partnered with community-based sporting organisations to respond to the challenges of drought.

Despite the drought, we have successfully developed and maintained our community sporting facilities. When it comes to encouraging junior sport, community facilities are vital. That is why, as we have been able to bring online more ovals under our existing cap of water restrictions, we have focused on areas that require that additional sporting capacity. Six new ovals have been brought online this year, and there are two new major facilities in Gungahlin and Throsby that are in the forward planning stages. These new ovals will add to the more than 256 hectares of irrigated, fully maintained sports fields that the ACT government manages.

Harrison neighbourhood oval, the northern end of Harrison district playing field, and the Ngunnawal neighbourhood oval were all made available for sport this winter. Phillip oval and the new pavilion were completed in July. The Nicholls synthetic oval is due for completion in September. That is a facility funded by the federal and ACT governments under the schools working together program, so Holy Spirit and Gold Creek primary schools in Nicholls are involved in that project. I can advise the Assembly that the southern end of the Harrison district playing field is due to be available for summer sports from October, and the Bonner neighbourhood oval will be available for sport in the summer of 2010-11. New playing fields at Throsby and Gungahlin will increase the number of sports ground locations managed by the ACT government to 105.

Construction of the \$12.5 million enclosed oval and associated infrastructure in the town centre is expected to commence mid next year. It will cater for all major football codes, from junior through to senior level and will provide grandstand seating for

580 people and open seating for 850. It will feature officials rooms, change rooms, public toilets, a first aid room, a kiosk, a function room and storage.

Members would be aware that in this year's budget the government committed half a million dollars for the further design of the Throsby multisports complex in Gungahlin. Members who drive around the inner north would be aware that work is now underway to deliver on Labor's election commitment to progress development of the Lyneham sports precinct. Anyone who has been anywhere near Dickson on a Saturday morning knows that this Southwell park precinct is junior sport central, so an investment there is a clear investment in junior sport.

This project will include the redevelopment of the existing National Sports Club with construction of underground stormwater piping between the existing National Sports Club and the Lyneham hockey centre, the creation of a formal entry road as well as much improved parking arrangements and additional sporting fields. I can confidently say it will be a great asset for Canberra's sports people of all ages when complete.

Our investment in Stromlo Forest Park is also a major investment in junior sport, with facilities available for many activities—horse riding, mountain biking, running and bushwalking. Certainly, many junior cross-country running championships are now held at Stromlo Forest Park.

Of course, as we head into the warmer months, our aquatic centres will become very popular again, especially with younger Canberrans, and the government is committed to ensuring that Canberrans have access to quality aquatic centres. Work is progressing on a new centre for Gungahlin, and I am sure when it is completed it will be very well utilised by the whole community, but especially younger people.

In October last year we reopened the refurbished Active Leisure Centre in Erindale after a \$3 million upgrade, adding two extra lanes for swimmers in the south side of the city. The upgraded leisure centre is available to the entire community, and particularly students at Erindale college. The government also invested \$4 million in upgrading the Lakeside Leisure Centre in the Tuggeranong town centre and, through the ACT Planning and Land Authority, it has reached agreement with the private owner of the former Oasis pool in Deakin to construct some new swimming facilities there. That DA has now been approved.

The backbone of junior sport is community sporting groups and their peak bodies who spot talent in young Canberrans and help them develop their talents. That is why I was very pleased to announce that local peak sporting groups will be able to apply for additional ACT government funding as part of the 2011 sports grants round. This funding will be up to \$60,000 a year, which is an increase of up to \$18,000 a year for some organisations. I committed more than a year ago to review the amounts that were available for peak organisations under the sports grants round, and we have this year announced a significant increase.

We recognise that increases in salaries, insurance and facility hiring costs are placing pressure on ACT community sporting organisations, and that is why we have boosted this funding. From 2011, large category A sporting organisations—for example, Basketball ACT and Hockey ACT—will be able to apply for up to \$60,000 per year,

an increase of \$18,000. Category B organisations can receive up to \$38,000, up \$12,000. Category C organisations can receive \$22,000 per year, an increase of \$8,000 per year, and category D organisations can receive \$14,000 per year, an increase of \$5,000 per year.

Community sporting groups not only provide opportunities for young people to get fit and to stay healthy, but they also enable Canberrans to develop new skills as sports people and sports administrators. The particular program that I am very proud of through the training portfolio is an investment of \$225,000 over four years to give 15 young Canberrans each year the opportunity to complete an Australian school-based apprenticeship, or ASBA, in the sport and recreation industry.

ASBAs are an important investment in young people and in sport, both now and into the future. ASBAs are a part-time and flexible option that fits within the students' study program whilst at school, and can count towards their year 12 certificates. High school and college students combine part-time work at their chosen sporting organisation with structured industry-approved training. ASBAs provide young Canberrans with the chance to gain skills as sporting administrators and officials and skills that will see them, in many cases, supporting junior and senior sport in the years to come.

Junior sport delivers many benefits. It draws visitors to Canberra, helping our economy, and that is why the government invested in hosting the Pacific School Games in 2008 and why we invest through the tourism events assistance program each year in supporting the Kanga Cup. Our elite clubs provide role models to get young Canberrans active in sport, and that is why we provide elite-level support for teams like the Capitals, the Darters, the Raiders and the Brumbies. Part of their performance agreements involve junior development programs.

That is why we work with these elite teams to bring high-quality fixtures to Canberra and why we invest in world-class facilities such as Manuka Oval and Canberra Stadium. That is why we have been pleased to work with the AFL on a range of deals that see the elite players from AFL clubs not only playing matches at Manuka Oval but, most importantly, being involved in community camps and visiting schools and providing young Canberrans with fantastic sporting role models. That is why we teach physical activity in school and why we back our local sporting groups with grants and quality facilities.

I can say confidently that independent research shows that this suite of policies is working. The ACT is the most active state or territory in Australia—a fact confirmed by the annual exercise, recreation and sport survey. The 2009 report on children's participation in cultural and leisure activities estimates that 1.7 million Australian children, or 63 per cent of those aged five to 14 years, participated in at least one organised sport outside school hours. In the ACT though, the story is even more positive, with 71 per cent of children participating. We are the top-ranked jurisdiction on that measure. To put this in practical terms, that equates to almost 30,000 children in Canberra participating in at least one sport outside school hours.

There are many benefits of junior sport and physical activity, and these are generally well known. That is why this government has always invested and will continue to invest in and support junior sport.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.49): I thank Mr Seselja for bringing on this topic today. I think it is a very interesting one, and I have certainly enjoyed listening to the discussion so far. It has already been well touched on that physical activity is vitally important for young people, and increasing participation in physical activity has been identified as important for addressing most of the health problems identified in the national health priority areas. Sport and physical activity programs provide an effective vehicle through which personal and social development in young people can be positively affected, as well as having obvious physical benefits. This is particularly important for children and young people who are deemed to be at risk.

When it comes to participation, we know that factors such as gender, parents' employment status, country of birth and the relative socioeconomic status of the neighbourhood are found to be strongly associated with children's participation rates in sporting activities. And children who spend more time watching television and/or using computers are found to be less likely to participate in organised sporting activities.

Sport offers many benefits, including physical fitness and wellbeing, as I already touched on. But the impact on the mind is something which we need to promote in times of increasing mental health concerns for children, young people and adults alike in Australia.

In the ACT, many youth services are using sport as a means of engaging young people by providing access to equipment, playing fields, support and an opportunity for social development and the formation of positive relationships. Of particular note is the work done by Multicultural Youth Services; programs such as the Junior World Games were used as a way of engaging young people from a range of cultural groups and newly arrived migrants in the Canberra region.

The Australian Sports Commission's campaign "play for life ... join a sporting club" has been launched right around the country, with enthusiastic support and endorsement not only from the sporting community, but also from schools, health professionals, child psychologists and counsellors, and the media. Recently, Australian Sports Commission CEO Matt Miller said

... the campaign is a whole of sport initiative, involving state, territory and Commonwealth agencies working together to deliver long-term benefits to families around Australia.

He went on to say:

This campaign, which aims to highlight the benefits of club sport and increase participation, is already achieving remarkable outcomes at a community level ...

Mr Miller said:

... an estimated one million children—or 37 per cent of children aged between five and 14—do not participate in any organised sport. This is in a country where one quarter of children are overweight or obese.

With this knowledge, we need to find ways of increasing the pathways to sport in an effort to engage more children and young people.

The key for families is to find a sport that the child enjoys. We need to ensure that we encourage parents, carers and families to persevere and find the right fit for the child or young person. Within the ACT and surrounding region we have many options available. Some of them are perhaps not so familiar or not so obvious, but they include bowls, softball, cycling, swimming, archery, golf, handball, volleyball and dance through to the more traditional sports we associate with children such as cricket, tennis, football, basketball, hockey and netball.

When it comes to finding a sport that a child enjoys, the approach to the game by adults is an essential ingredient. In that context, I was particularly interested in the AFL Auskick policy. This policy refers to the philosophy, guidelines and requirements in conducting football for children in the primary school age group—that is, from five to 12 years.

There are three core elements which make the AFL Auskick program successful. The first of those is that it is fun and safe. The idea here is that football needs to be fun for all, especially for this age group. Research has established that a developmental program for children that is sequential and appropriate and extremely safe, particularly when involving appropriately accredited coaches, can improve skill development, and that there needs to be an emphasis on skill development as a priority, providing challenging match programs and specifying a logical transition from introductory level through to competitions at club and/or school level.

The second element is for children and parents. The premise again is that both parties play a fundamental role in the AFL Auskick program. Auskick documents say:

Parents must ensure a smooth progression from one level of involvement to the next based on rules and procedures appropriate to the children involved.

The third core element is that the program should be managed by the community. The environments at centres, clubs and schools are managed and controlled by the community, and the importance of community ownership and management must not be underestimated. This results in participant costs for the program being kept to a minimum. This last point is a particularly interesting one, because costs would be even higher for parents if not for the volunteer contribution. Sporting organisations and clubs are administered in many circumstances in a not-for-profit environment; if every parent was paying for that volunteer, the costs would skyrocket.

The last two points lead me to the second area I would like to discuss. My focus so far has very much been on health and wellbeing, but I would like to focus on volunteers and officials. The Auskick principles note the importance of volunteers and the community in the success of junior sport, and anybody who has had any link to junior sport will attest to this. But crucial to any sport, particularly junior sport, is the provision of referees and umpires to enforce fair play. Without a referee, there is no game. I would like to take the opportunity to commend all those who take the time to take up this important role in junior games across Canberra every weekend. With my

role as Speaker in this place, I am developing every day a greater affinity for those who seek to ensure fair play.

Despite the importance of referees and umpires, there are frequently shortages of volunteers for games across Canberra, and the turnover amongst referees is often high. This can be for a range of reasons, but the one that concerns me is the issue of abuse from parents on the sidelines. Of course, most parents are wonderfully supportive of their children playing sport and understand that it is, after all, a game for enjoyment. But the minority of poorly behaved parents can damage the experience for everyone.

Leagues across Canberra in each sport have taken steps to reduce the unfortunate incidence of official abuse, and I commend them for doing so. I believe that the government can also take steps to support the officials and encourage people in the ACT. I would ask the government to consider the commendable program by the Queensland government titled "Positive or it's pointless", which worked in conjunction with sporting clubs of all codes to embrace the principles of integrity, respect, fun, responsibility and excellence in junior sport.

I would like to finish on this section by acknowledging the volunteers, both those that umpire and those that play any other roles that are essential to keeping clubs going, because it is a critical role. I am always particularly inspired by those people who remain in a sport long after their kids stop playing. You often see that in people who have been around for a long period of time. They say, "Yes, my kid played up until such and such year, but then I just stayed involved." I always think that is a particularly significant contribution.

In my own sport of triathlon, I am aware of particularly the coaches of the juniors who themselves do not even have kids in the sport but are dedicated to providing that really clear opportunity and the hours and hours of dedication they put into it, taking leave to take the kids away to national competitions or to run training camps up at Thredbo and the like. It is a tremendous contribution that is mirrored across many sports in the ACT.

The last area I would like to touch on in my remaining time is facilities. Again, they have been much discussed today. The minister took a great deal of his time to list the facilities that the government has been involved in delivering. That was a good list. I still am concerned, and this is a discussion we have been having for some time now, that I do not have a really clear sense that there is a particular road map or a particularly clear understanding of the sporting facilities we have in the ACT and where the gaps are, both in terms of particular facilities and in terms of geography. This is an issue that is coming up right across sports, not just junior sports, and it is one that I will continue to pursue.

I noticed that last week in the paper there was a report about a range of stakeholders getting together at Canberra Stadium to discuss the future of sport in the ACT, and I look forward to catching up with some of those stakeholders when the sitting week is finished to find out what discussions went on in that meeting and what resolutions they came to. My sense from the report in the paper is that it is an ongoing process, but I would be interested to see where the discussions have got to so far.

In my last little bit of time, I would like to talk about the importance of informal facilities. We saw the very unfortunate reports in the media last year of the dirt jump facility out at Watson being bulldozed because of a range of concerns by the government. I think that informal recreational and sporting facilities are an important part of the fabric of our community and an important opportunity for young people to express themselves and perhaps sometimes have the things they want as well as the things that are provided. The creativity and the cooperation that goes with these facilities is something that we should not lose sight of in the context of more official and organised activities.

MR DOSZPOT (Brindabella) (4.59): I thank Mr Seselja for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the Assembly and giving the opportunity for us all to address the importance of junior sport in the ACT.

As some of you are aware, I have been involved in numerous sporting organisations in Canberra. As President of Soccer Canberra, and especially in my role as the President of the ACT Olympic Council, during my term, I became a strong advocate of the Pierre de Coubertin awards and the opportunities they presented to ACT high schools and colleges. Baron Pierre de Coubertin said:

The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.

Over 100 years later, de Coubertin's words are still particularly moving and relevant. His objective was not the transitory glory of a few medals and broken records by highly trained sporting elite, but the development of strong and healthy young men and women brought up on the highest principles of sport and fair play.

I am certainly not advocating that every junior that comes through the multitude of sports available to our youth today in the ACT should become Olympic athletes or champions at their chosen sport. I am speaking only about the benefits of participation, both from a health perspective and from the social contact—learning how to get on with team mates as well as the opposition, learning how to win with dignity and, at times, learning how to lose and to learn from the experience.

As an educational theorist, Pierre de Coubertin was convinced of the importance of sport for the development of the individual. He believed that the qualities of initiative, teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play should be encouraged in all young people who participate in sports and competitive games.

From the many years that I have been involved in junior sport, I can tell you that at this very moment our future leaders are being shaped at our local ovals, courts, tracks and fields. The lessons we teach our youth today will last them for the rest of their lives. And what better classroom to teach them about life than through sports? In this light, sport is not merely about winning or losing; it is about learning how to win with humility and at the same time be gracious in defeat. Through sports, our youth learn that competition is good and promotes respect for one's opponent and team mates. Translated into productive adult life, teamwork and a willingness to work with others

towards a common goal are valued workforce traits. Equally, sport teaches our youth many things that cannot be as easily learnt anywhere else.

Many of you here in the Assembly are parents and can appreciate the fact that you can teach your children perseverance, to look in the face of adversity, to fight the good fight and to never give up. That said, anyone can say that they are going to see something through. But until they actually do it, it is just talk. Sports give children a chance to express themselves, to test themselves to their limits and to achieve their goals. Junior sports are opportunities to engage our youth in physical activity that provides the foundation for healthy lifestyles as adults.

A case in point is a study report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* which found that children involved in youth sports were 40 per cent less likely to be cigarette smokers, with the likelihood of picking up the smoking habit further decreasing if a child played more than one sport. Simply put, sport teaches our youth the value of teamwork and people skills, discipline and responsibility, a sense of accomplishment and focus, and how to make good choices—for example, eating properly, taking care of their health and giving respect. Equally, members of the community who support junior sports serve as positive role models. We need to acknowledge the asset we have as a community in the fact that the largest segment of volunteers in Canberra—approximately 23.6 per cent—are in sport-related activities.

Yet, to quote ACTSport, the ACT government's current system for providing sport and recreation services needs to be reshaped. Mr Barr, it needs to be reshaped. And greater investment is necessary to meet the new and emerging challenges of the local environment that have already been touched upon by Mr Seselja and Mr Rattenbury. The challenges include maintaining and increasing levels of participation in organised community activities; decreased volunteerism; the cost of compliance; the cost of participation; ageing infrastructure; the availability of local facilities; and changing demographics.

Over the last several years, there has been an emphasis by the government on elite sports. This is not an either/or proposition, as both elite and community sports play an important role together. However, I feel it is time to consider how we can improve on community sports in the ACT. It was telling to note the minister's unpreparedness with regard to community sports during estimates, as clubs representing a total of 95,000 Canberrans voiced their dissatisfaction with what was available. Their message was simple: community sports facilities are running at capacity and driving up participation costs.

It is also quite instructive to note that since 2002, 41 community fields have been taken offline and have not yet been fully brought back. We also learned that 2002 was the last year the government conducted any reviews on its triennial funding programs. Today's motion highlights the importance of junior sports in the ACT. In this context, sports and education are inextricably linked. As Mr Barr has touched upon, with our respective portfolios in education and sports, Minister Barr and I are well placed to take advantage of this fact. We could also bring disability into that category—the importance of including more emphasis for children with special needs in these categories.

Speaking for myself, I affirm the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, a belief that education systems must assign the requisite place and importance to physical education and sport in order to establish a balance and strengthen links between physical activities and other components of education. As Australia is a member state of UNESCO, and with our legendary status as a sporting nation, coupled with the ACT's proud reputation of being one of the most sporting participative communities in Australia, we should ensure total commitment for the aims of the UNESCO charter.

In this regard, we hope that the ACT government seriously examines its support for and commitment to its own physical education and sport unit and enhances its partnership and support of not just the elite sporting teams of our territory but also the many junior grassroots sporting organisations that are desperately trying to cope with continued increasing demand for playing facilities, despite the ever-shrinking number of playing fields that are available for our youth here in Canberra.

I commend Mr Seselja for introducing this timely matter of public importance, the importance of junior sports in the ACT.

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (5.07): I am pleased to speak about this important matter today and to thank Mr Seselja for bringing the matter forward. As we have heard, engagement in sport and recreation contributes to the wellbeing, health and skill development of young people, as well as giving the opportunity to develop team values and social skills. Obviously, it has a significant capacity to contribute to their overall development. As I said, participating in team sport gives young people the chance to work in a cooperative fashion, whilst working towards a common goal.

For most, sport is an enjoyable activity. Participation in sport also develops healthy habits in young people, which obviously leads to health benefits, as Mr Seselja was saying earlier. The health benefits associated with junior sport and physical activity include building strong hearts and bones, strengthening muscles and developing good posture, building the basic movement skills, improving concentration, enhancing social skills and maintaining a healthy weight.

New figures from Western Australia, expected to be echoed across Australia, show that obesity has overtaken smoking as the leading cause of premature death and illness in Australia. The contribution of excessive weight to ill health has more than doubled in six years. By 2006, it accounted for 8.7 per cent of all disease. Therefore, we cannot emphasise enough that sport has the potential to contribute positively to the health of young people in the area of physical fitness and weight control and also in the promotion of healthy eating habits.

Maintaining a healthy weight from a young age, driven by love of organised sport, provides a springboard for lifelong engagement, as there is strong evidence to suggest that physical activity patterns are established during childhood and tend to continue into adulthood. The early years are also important for the development of fundamental motor skills and cognitive growth.

Engaging in active play assists children to develop the balance, strength and coordination needed for everyday tasks. Regular movement and play challenges children, stretching their ability and imagination. The confidence developed through play assists children to feel good about themselves and enables them to look forward to future opportunities and activities. Sport can also help recently arrived members of our community become part of their new community and settle into their new home and make new friends. Whether a young person is moving to Canberra from interstate or coming to Australia from the land of their birth, the finding of common ground to socialise with peers is critical. It also helps them gain recognition and acceptance with their peers.

An example of this is a new project, aimed at building confidence among young males at risk, which was launched by senator for the ACT Kate Lundy at basketball earlier this year. The Harmony Players project engages 25 young males aged 16 to 25 from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly from new and emerging communities, in positive social activities—further evidence of the important role sport can play in a young person's life.

Active play allows a young person to learn about what they are capable of achieving. They also learn to engage with others, to lead, to work as a team and to learn self-advocacy. Through active play, children develop respect for others—and it provides them with an understanding of socially appropriate norms and expectations. Engaging in play and team sports provides a wide range of opportunity for social interaction that assists in the development of social skills and relationships, to assist children and young people engaging with others now and into the future. These skills prepare our young people to participate actively in the community as they grow into adults.

Mr Rattenbury talked about the involvement of parents. The majority of parents support their children's involvement in sport in positive ways, many seeing it as a way of addressing their children's sedentary lifestyle and, hopefully, embedding lifelong values that will benefit their children in life and work. Sport addresses a number of other parental concerns, such as supervised out-of-school activities, organised leisure and development of healthy values and positive use of time. Sport makes a positive contribution towards addressing several social problems, such as antisocial behaviour, low self-esteem and youth suicide. It can assist children at risk, through activities which, if sustained over a long term, can positively divert young people away from undesirable behaviour and towards more beneficial activities.

A key factor in the facilitation of junior sport and recreation in the ACT is the provision of adequate facilities, as other members have been saying. The ACT boasts over 270 hectares of maintained sportsgrounds and a number of aquatic facilities. In addition, a number of privately owned indoor and outdoor grounds support participation rates in the ACT. However, we do know that local sporting clubs at a community level experience some challenges in relation to these facilities. This is the reason I proposed an initiative in this place last November that promoted an exchange of resources between local schools and sporting clubs. I conducted a broad process of consultation earlier this year, and Minister Barr has since written to the department of education to see whether this initiative may provide a workable additional avenue through which we can enhance the level of sport participation in the ACT.

I congratulate the many community sporting clubs that we have in the ACT and also add my thanks to those already expressed before—to the volunteers who work with these clubs and contribute so much. Not all, of course, are parents; many of these are grandparents, other relatives and other members of the community.

In recent years, the ACT government has committed more than \$16 million to drought-proofing our facilities in order to ensure all Canberrans have access to quality facilities. In 2008, the “where will we play” vision committed that by 2013, no ACT government sportsground would be solely reliant on potable water. This aim is to increase the sustainability of facilities in the face of future droughts or other impacts of climate change.

Sport and recreation facilities are considered an important part of the planning process for new schools. Sports halls, ovals and playgrounds are key elements to encourage physical activities. The minister mentioned the wonderful synthetic surface in Hawker, and the Nicholls neighbourhood oval, also being upgraded to a synthetic surface—and also the Ngunnawal neighbourhood oval being upgraded to a drought-tolerant surface. This facility is accessed by Ngunnawal primary school and junior cricket and AFL.

The central task of sports in schools is to prepare students for lifelong participation in sport and physical activity. The rationale is universal access, and it is organised to meet educational outcomes. School sport is the only sport program with access to every child in Australia. It is a major force in junior sport. School sport offers students opportunities to try new or different sports. It meets school needs in terms of class and school spirit and students’ needs through the development of self-esteem and peer respect. The ACT has a number of advantages that, combined with effective levels of government support, have enabled us to punch above our weight in sport.

These include the comparatively small size of the ACT, which means that teams and squads can get together easily for training and coaching; short distances between centres; access to a range of national and international standard playing and training facilities—many coaches in the ACT have international experience and have been trained by coaches at that standard—an education system supportive of sport in schools, particularly in representative areas; and the presence in Canberra of many national league teams, in a variety of sports, that have enjoyed success and ensured that sport has a high profile in this city.

As I said before, junior sport is an integral part of the development pathway in sport. It is a vital part of the process for children to learn gross motor skills and the basic elements of fundamental movement. These vital skills help children and young people to further progress to elite levels of sport. The combination of coaching as a junior athlete, the provision of facilities to support participation, organisations to deliver participation and the support of families—these are key elements for the recipe of athletic progression.

Most ACT sports have representative programs or programs to identify those who have above-average skills and to provide those selected with high-level training and coaching. Some limit these programs to older participants, but some begin in earlier years. For some sports, their talent development program is conducted solely through the ACT Academy of Sport.

Some have two programs, and others run development squads only. A pathway from the ACT—from that point—then leads to programs run by national sporting organisations and international federations. There are countless examples of ACT junior athletes who have progressed to the international stage. These include: cyclist Michael Rogers; basketballer Alex Bunting; Socceroo Karl Valery; hockey player Nicole Arnold; the captain of the Australian men's volleyball team—and dual Olympian—Ben Hardy; and BMX rider Carolyn Buchanan. It is athletes such as these that have become role models and inspire the participation of many other participants frequenting the grounds, courts and pools of the ACT. Along the way, they not only develop into athletes, but secure health and social benefits, as many members have said before, improving their health and wellbeing into the future. I commend the matter of public importance.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (5.17): In the 73 seconds left to me, I simply want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this motion on. It is very important. Having been at many of those ovals for Aussie rules, rugby union, netball or cricket over a number of years, let me say that to get our kids out there is a fantastic thing. And there is a once in a lifetime opportunity in front of us at the moment, with the Greater Western Sydney bid. I would urge members, if they have not joined the Greater Western Sydney bid, to do so. We need lots of sponsors. The minister is here, and it is great, because I can say to him that not only is this good for sport, but it is a really big tourism opportunity as well. We know that a quarter of the Brumbies crowds come from interstate, so having the GWS playing some of their games here will bring the tourism dollar into the ACT, and we can then perhaps put some of that dollar that we make back into sport.

Ms Porter finished on a really good note in terms of saying that we have got to give the young ones something to aspire to. In terms of GWS, the level that they play in the VFL is the highest level at which you can play Aussie rules in the world, and it is important—sorry, the AFL, there you go. My deep-rooted memories of under-nines at Woden and Manuka and on the Hughes oval on a Saturday morning back in the 1960s come back to haunt me. But it is important we get the bid right, and perhaps the minister might take the time at some stage to update the Assembly on the progress of the bid and what the benefits of it to the people of the ACT will be.

That aside, there are other links between sport and fitness and the ability of our young ones, in terms of social cohesion, in terms of better outcomes at school, in terms of keeping kids out of the criminal justice system. Given that the Assistant Speaker is now about to cut me off, I commend the motion to the house.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Hargreaves): The time for the discussion has expired.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Canberra Versailles Association

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (5.19): On Sunday I had the opportunity to wind down, after a freezing day on the polling booths and a few celebratory but not premature triumphalism drinks that resulted after polling day, and enjoy a wonderful musical afternoon at the Wig and Pen, a fundraising event for the Canberra Versailles committee. I was pleased to see my colleague Ms Porter at the event as well. I have had the opportunity over the years to share a number of dinners and fundraising events with the Canberra Versailles committee. I would like to commend the Canberra Versailles committee, under the presidency of David Dickson, for the strength and purposefulness of their endeavours over the years when creating ties with Versailles was not particularly fashionable. It was pretty much a victim of left politics in this town when the formal associations between Canberra and Versailles were severed.

Over those years, the Canberra Versailles committee has continued and has raised considerable funds for cultural and educational exchanges, mainly between the ANU and the university in Versailles. Over the years, the Canberra Versailles committee has established an endowment called the John Kirby memorial scholarship, which is now essentially self-funding through the work of the committee. That provides, in memory of the first chairman of the Canberra Versailles Association, a scholarship to allow ANU students to go on exchange to Versailles and to study abroad. In addition to that, the funds that were raised on the weekend go to the Canberra Versailles committee's travelling fellowships, which are aimed mainly at musicians from the School of Music who have the opportunity to travel and study their music in France.

We were treated to a splendid afternoon of singing and strings and exquisite flute music from various ages. I pay testament to the Canberra Versailles committee and its fantastic hosts at the Wig and Pen, Lachie and Janie McOmish, for a splendid afternoon. I encourage members to put aside the 1970s, 1980s-style antipathy towards this great community organisation and support an organisation which, over the years, has raised tens of thousands of dollars and furthered the education of Canberrans and students at the ANU solely through private endeavours. Its work is to be encouraged.

Canberra Versailles Association Hall village Canberra Raiders

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (5.23): As Mrs Dunne said, it was great to be at the Canberra Versailles Association fundraising event on Sunday. It was a very pleasant afternoon. I am very pleased that my discussions with the Chief Minister about recognising that association and the relationship it has with Versailles—it is an important and longstanding relationship—have borne some fruit in that he will be sending a letter, via that association, to the mayor of Versailles. I hope that we can continue to build on the relationship that this organisation has established over so many years. The work it is doing in sending these young people across to study is fantastic, and we heard about the fruits of that on Sunday.

On Sunday, I had the great pleasure to officially launch, on behalf of the Chief Minister, the refurbishment of the historic pavilion at the village of Hall, the refurbished headmaster's cottage and the all-weather tennis courts. I have been

working with the Village of Hall and District Progress Association on plans for the restoration of the important historic community facilities for some time. I was pleased to see the result of this work. I thank Alastair Crombie, the president of the association, and his fellow members for the work they have undertaken to research the history of these and other facilities in Hall and the way they have worked with the Labor government to achieve this outcome.

The afternoon was made all the more enjoyable as the official launch was immediately followed by a concert by the award-winning Hall village band. The band well deserves the accolades it receives. Mr Coe was at the launch and enjoyed the concert too. I think he would agree that it was a really fine performance by that band.

Another event that was taking place, of course, on Sunday afternoon that maybe reduced the number of people that might have come out to Hall to enjoy the fantastic brass band was the all-important rugby league game that was going on at Bruce, which was of course the Raiders versus St George, in front of a crowd, I believe, of 20,000 strong. Of course, the Raiders trounced St George. I congratulate them on their fine record of success not only on that day but also in recent games and wish them all the best for future games.

Vietnam Veterans Day Federal election

MR HANSON (Molonglo) (5.25): Last week I had the opportunity to attend a ceremony at the Vietnam veterans memorial on Anzac Parade for Vietnam Veterans Day. It was a truly splendid occasion, as it is every year. We had the great honour of it being the last year when we welcomed home the remaining two missing-in-action members from that war, two members of the No 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, who had been lost in Vietnam and had been recovered. That was a very special moment for the families and it was a very special moment for their colleagues from the squadron. I would like to congratulate Pete Ryan from the Vietnam Veterans Association and all of the others who were involved in organising a terrific event once again.

I would also like to mention some activities that occurred on Saturday for the federal election. I was working on a booth in Curtin. I would like to pass on my congratulations to the booth workers from the Greens party, the Labor Party and, of course, our own supporters from the Liberal Party, for the very good conduct of everybody there and the collegiate manner in which everyone behaved. It really was a great thing to see democracy in action. Although we have our political differences, obviously, and it was a very unpleasant day in terms of the weather—

Mr Barr: They had a good barbecue though, didn't they? I found my egg and bacon roll there was very good.

MR HANSON: The food was very good from the P&C at the Curtin primary school. They put on a good bacon and egg roll. I would just like to mention John and Patrick from the Labor Party, who were there early, and John's wife, who turned up later, and Carl, who was scrutineering with me—all in a very good fashion. We had Michael

from the Greens putting up his tent very early in the morning and Robert—unfortunately he is a Bulldogs supporter, so I guess he might have been happy with some of the Greens’ results but probably not the football results that day. The daughters of the independent, John Glynn, were also there. I think they had a good day, but my guess is that they probably will not be rushing back to do it again.

I would like to commend all of the workers from the various parties for their great contribution on the day. It really was uplifting to see what a great democracy we have when fierce adversaries in a political sense can all work hard in the interests of what we consider will make Australia a better place.

Australian Football League in Canberra Greater Western Sydney football campaign

MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.28): I rise to commend AFL Canberra and also give a plug for the ACT for GWS campaign. AFL Canberra is, of course, an extremely professional sporting body in the territory that has 23 clubs in the region with competitions in both male and female categories ranging from junior Auskick right through to senior division 1.

In particular, I would like to commend the football operations team, led by Rowan Johnstone; the senior football operations manager, Russell Taylor; and Tamarah Knox, the junior and female football operations manager. They do a superb job. I think the interest in Aussie rules in the territory and indeed across Australia is due in large part to the very professional organisation of the regional AFL committees and AFL professional staff.

I would like to give a plug to the board of directors of AFL Canberra—in particular Gerard Rees, the chair; Gary Buchanan; Paul Walshe; Peter Woods; Linda Muir; Matthew Cossey; Geoff Gosling; John Fleming; and Ross Lawler—the AFL Canberra junior advisory committee: the chair, Linda Muir; Ross Norgate; Tony Stubbs; Lara Hayes; Mark Ackland; Tamarah Knox; and Cameron James—the AFL Canberra female football advisory committee: Linda Muir; Melissa Backhouse; Bronwyn Fagan; Christine Wallace; Chris Rourke; Melinda Kershaw; Erin Molan; and John Love—and also the AFL Canberra representative football advisory committee which is chaired by Paul Walshe, with Keith Miller, Tamarah Knox, James Ceely and Geoff Gosling on the board.

The AFL’s campaign for a team in Greater Western Sydney is one that I think presents some very exciting opportunities for us in the ACT. Whilst there are doubts about whether the ACT could support a football team on its own, I think the opportunity to have a franchise based in Sydney with a strong presence in the ACT is something that is very exciting indeed. I was fortunate enough to go to a breakfast earlier in the month where Kevin Sheedy was the guest speaker. The role that he is playing with GWS is very exciting and is one, I think, that all Canberrans should get behind.

Whilst many of Canberra’s AFL fans will already have their own allegiances, I think getting behind the GWS for ACT campaign will help build the base here and will be good for football everywhere. Team GWS is giving Canberra the opportunity to play

a meaningful role in the AFL. The success of this campaign will give junior players in the ACT better chances of playing competitive Aussie rules. The success of the ACT for GWS campaign will also ensure that the ACT sees a meaningful presence of an AFL club and promote the sport more thoroughly in the region. I commend Peter Taylor, who is heading up the ACT for GWS campaign.

I have got a pledge pad here where people can come to my office and join up to ACT for GWS. The more people we get, the better, of course. They are looking at getting 5,000 people pledged. At this stage I believe it is around the 1,550 mark, so there is still a bit of a way to go, but I am very confident that we will get there. Again, I commend all of the people at AFL Canberra. I ask all Canberrans to get behind the ACT for GWS campaign.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.32 pm.