



Debates

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Wednesday, 6 August 2014

Paper	2039
Planning—Yarralumla brickworks	2041
Asbestos—loose-fill insulation	2065
Asbestos—loose-fill insulation	2085
Questions without notice:	
Canberra Hospital—medical wards	2085
Transport—light rail	2086
Budget—north Canberra infrastructure	2087
Transport—light rail	2091
ACTTAB Ltd—tax revenue	2092
Parking—fines	2092
Health—cancer treatment	2094
Disability services—transition schedule	2097
Kangaroos—cull	2098
Emergency services—Gungahlin	2100
Supplementary answer to question without notice:	
Health—antenatal visits	2101
Housing—homelessness	2102
Women—pregnancy discrimination	2115
Health—obesity	2127
Adjournment:	
Alcohol marketing on Facebook	2142
Canberra Gang Show	2143
Taylor Primary School	2144
St John Vianney’s Primary School	2144
Hiroshima Day	2145
Health care	2146
Canberra Ornithologists Group	2147
University of Canberra Chorale	2148
Capital Cycling	2148

Wednesday, 6 August 2014

MADAM SPEAKER (Mrs Dunne) took the chair at 10 am and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Paper

Mr Doszpot, by leave, presented the following paper:

Petition which does not conform with the standing orders—Canberra Brickworks and environs—Redevelopment—Mr Doszpot (4,181 signatures).

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo): I seek leave to make a brief statement in relation to the petition I have presented.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Madam Speaker, I have presented a petition signed by 4,181 Canberra residents calling for current plans for the development of the Canberra brickworks and environs to be withdrawn and reworked. The petition asks for the reworked plan to be in harmony with the existing dwellings and layout of the suburb; address the significantly increased traffic flow within Yarralumla and the neighbouring suburbs of Deakin and Curtin; provide detailed and fully costed plans for the immediate preservation of the brickworks; provide extensive public reports and costings for the safe removal of asbestos and other contaminated materials; explain and illustrate how existing utilities will cope with the doubling of demand; and provide detailed information on improved public transport options, community facilities and new amenities.

The Canberra brickworks and environs planning and development strategy prepared by the ACT Land Development Agency for the government was released in May this year. As proposals go, its promotion has not gone well. In response to this, local Canberra communities in the inner south and even further afield have come together to let the government know that their strategy has not been well received for a number of reasons.

This petition has its genesis in the 2010 plan for the redevelopment of the brickworks. At the time concern was expressed about the number of new dwellings, the need for restoration of the historic brickworks and the traffic infrastructure that would need to support such development.

We move forward four years and there is now a plan that not only does not address any of the concerns raised in the previous consultation but moves to further over-develop this inner south region. It now proposes increased housing, removal of established forests, seriously insufficient detail about traffic infrastructure and traffic flow and vague references to what might actually be the future for restoration of the brickworks.

Genuine community engagement has clearly not taken place, given the number of signatures on this petition. 4,181 is not an insignificant number. That number far exceeds the population of Yarralumla. The petition makes it clear that the concern for this development is not just from within the suburb of Yarralumla. Mr Barr was making this point quite strongly on television on Monday night. He said that this was a development for all of Canberra—in a rather terse interview, if I recall correctly. Yes, Mr Barr, you are quite right. This is a development that will have an impact on all of Canberra.

Signatories to this petition show that it is not just of concern to Yarralumla. We have people from Charnwood, Weetangera, Fraser, Evatt, Latham, Harrison, Fadden, Campbell, Theodore and Hackett as well as Yarralumla, Deakin, Forrest, Narrabundah and Curtin. And Mr Barr is right. It is not just a Yarralumla issue and Canberrans recognise that.

The impact of this proposed strategy has far wider implications which are all noted from residents of other suburbs. In recent weeks residents in Yarralumla and surrounding suburbs have taken a commendable and appropriate course of action to provide genuine feedback to the ACT government. They have held several public meetings and advertised them widely. They have set up information stands at local shopping centres. They have also attended the one open day that the government conducted at which, I might add, there were no representatives from Roads ACT to answer questions in relation to the significant changes proposed for roads within the Deakin and Yarralumla areas.

Nor, might I say, were there any government MLAs for Molonglo present, namely the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister, the Minister for TAMS, Mr Rattenbury, and Mr Corbell. None of them were there to listen to their own constituents' issues over the reworked plan.

This petition highlights to the government where Canberra residents believe the government has failed to protect those essential elements that are uniquely Canberra. The petition asks the government to consider carefully the ramifications of doubling the size of a Canberra suburb that already has traffic congestion issues, that already has ageing roads and utilities infrastructure. The petition is seeking answers and calling for better, more considered planning from its government. I hope and trust that the government is listening and taking note; 4,181 signatories indicates serious concern.

I commend the petition to the Assembly, and in doing so I wish to acknowledge the hard work done by numerous people in the community including the Yarralumla Residents Association and many members of the community who have assisted the association. We also welcome a lot of these people from the association and the community here this morning.

On a cold early Monday morning, just this Monday morning, over 80 people came with Marea Fatseas and her Yarralumla committee to present the petition to me to pass on to the Assembly. That demonstrates clearly the level of concern this issue has caused to so many people.

I urge those on the government benches opposite and their directorates to take careful note of the level of anxiety, the points of objection and the suggestion to progress these issues to a satisfactory outcome. No-one I have spoken to in the inner south on this issue is opposed to development. However, all are opposed to bad planning and inappropriate development.

I commend the petition to the Assembly.

Planning—Yarralumla brickworks

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (10.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that the Yarralumla Brickworks and Environs Planning and Development Strategy was released by the ACT Government's Land Development Agency (LDA) in May 2014, and replaces an earlier draft published in 2010 but not progressed;
- (b) the ACT Government has provided in-principle support for development of the Brickworks area including restoration of the historic Canberra Brickworks;
- (c) the 2014 Strategy proposes an increase in the number of dwellings to 1600, including a number of eight storey apartment blocks, a 4 hectare quarry parkland space, a 2.72 hectare Denham Street park and a Railway Heritage park;
- (d) the Strategy only provides for an initial "make safe" modification of the Brickworks and assumes private sector investment for further development;
- (e) that the staging plan is not contingent on the Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue being upgraded;
- (f) the existing traffic congestion on streets included in and adjacent to the proposed development which will be made worse both during redevelopment and when the new housing areas are completed;
- (g) the uncertain extent of asbestos on the site and the costs of its containment and/or removal;
- (h) the high level of community interest and the numerous submissions provided to the LDA during its recent community consultation period;
- (i) that a revised traffic study is currently being conducted by SMEC and will be made available to the public in August/September 2014; and
- (j) that the LDA has committed to responding to feedback and comments raised during the consultation period via newsletter by September 2014; and

- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) take careful and considered note of the degree of concern in the community about both the strategy itself and the consultation process;
 - (b) provide a full community consultation process on the revised traffic study to ensure that community concerns have been fully addressed;
 - (c) provide detailed and fully costed analyses of the full traffic implications of this development for both the local area, West Deakin and Yarralumla, and the wider Canberra community including Curtin, Hughes, Woden and costs of upgrades to existing roads and construction of new roads and overpasses;
 - (d) provide, when available, a detailed asbestos removal and remediation plan, including where the asbestos and any contaminated materials will be disposed;
 - (e) provide details of what impact the numerous truck journeys will have on the condition of the existing ageing road infrastructure in the designated areas; and
 - (f) provide a detailed response to questions of traffic, building heights, community facilities and parklands, all of which are listed as major concerns in submissions to the LDA.

I welcome the opportunity to bring the issue of development in Canberra's inner south to the attention of the Assembly. Redevelopment of the Canberra brickworks area has been subject to discussion in this place for over 15 years. Successive governments have put forward proposals for a range of housing, heritage and commercial opportunities and there has been much community commentary on them all. So it is somewhat frustrating, and not just for the residents in the region, to once again be presented with a development plan that ignores previous preferences and concerns.

The current Yarralumla brickworks and environs planning and development strategy is flawed in three very significant areas. It has not been well communicated, it has not been thoroughly costed and it is incomplete.

It is no surprise that a motion criticising the government's lack of communication with ratepayers over a planning issue is the subject of discussion in this place again. When it comes to effective consultation, transparent process and listening to the needs and wishes of the community, this government does not have a good track record.

While this motion is directly related to current planning proposals for the Canberra brickworks and environs, the concerns listed could easily apply to any of a number of projects and activities this government has managed to mangle, and mangle badly.

Pick up a newspaper any day since the last election and you are likely to see a negative story about a botched government project, whether it be the Majura parkway, the Gungahlin Drive extension, the Cotter Road or the Cotter dam. The anguish is endless.

Mr Rattenbury interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Rattenbury.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe!

MR DOSZPOT: The list is endless but the criticisms are consistent. Poor planning, even poorer consultation, lack of proper costings that lead to cost blowouts on just about every project you can name are almost hallmarks of this government.

So when Canberra residents are presented with yet another glossy brochure on a major development within a suburb, is it any wonder that their suspicion levels rise and they want to see the detail? As one letter writer to the *Canberra Times* said recently:

The ACT Government is in danger of getting a reputation for thinking that glossy artists' impressions of their latest project will make do, rather than providing hard facts, figures and analysis from independent experts.

He was referring, in this case, to the light rail project, but he went on to say:

... unfortunately the light rail project is not the first or the last attempt at community consultation by pretty pictures. The latest of these has been foisted on Yarralumla and Deakin residents ...

This level of cynicism and distrust from the community should be a worrying concern to the government but it clearly is not, because it is a mistake they make over and over again. The current plan has a number of obvious flaws and, not surprisingly, they have been well and truly identified and exposed by various submissions and at numerous meetings of residents. When I say "residents", I am not only referring to residents in Yarralumla but to residents in all areas of the inner south suburbs who know and appreciate what good consultation is and should be.

Effective consultation is not just being presented with a document, a limited explanation and little opportunity for dialogue, which was what the ACT government has offered. For example, the Land Development Agency had only one information half-day at the brickworks site on the latest proposal and there was no representative from Roads ACT to discuss and explain road infrastructure, a major bone of contention, as the numerous submissions indicate.

By comparison, residents of the inner south have consulted widely and personally with everyone and through their various associations. For example, the Yarralumla Residents Association, the YRA, has engaged widely with both Yarralumla and Deakin residents as well as those from other affected suburbs. They have letterboxed every Yarralumla household. They held a public meeting with Yarralumla residents and co-sponsored a wider forum with the Inner South Canberra Community Council and the Deakin Residents Association.

They have developed a website with significant information resources for community use. They have doorknocked, they have held information stands at the local shops and, as we saw earlier, they have collected an impressive 4,181 signatures from all around Canberra on that petition. They also attended the one-day open that the ACT government conducted, which I have already spoken about.

I have to say that Mr Rattenbury did attend one of the community consultations but, apart from that, he did not come back for any others, nor was he there on that first open day. And it will be interesting to see today, during debate on this motion, what Mr Rattenbury, through you, Madam Speaker, says. Initially when Mr Rattenbury and his Greens came into the Assembly, they were counting themselves as third-party insurance for the community. Mr Rattenbury, you have the test in front of you today to show whether, indeed, you are third-party insurance for the community or whether you are just third-party insurance for whatever this government puts up.

If we take a look at the LDA's own brochure, it lists a commendable number of entities in the project team: urban planners, landscape architects, transport consultants, economists, analysts, property development companies and environmental assessors. It suggests it has conducted a broad process of community consultation from April 2010 to February 2011 on a preferred draft master plan. And according to the LDA's own brochure, the draft planning strategy was finalised from December 2010 to February 2011.

We know that LDA consulted widely with the community during that period through key stakeholder interviews, community consultation workshops, a community feedback session, a project newsletter published at regular intervals, a project website, telephone surveys and six meetings of the project reference group which included members of the local community and wider Canberra interests in design, health and planning. The community were of the understanding that development would proceed with 900 to 1,100 dwellings, no eight-storey development, a commercial area of approximately 25,000 square metres, adaptive reuse of four kilns and some parkland. That was in 2011.

The government are now trying to suggest, through the LDA, that after a lapse of some three years they are simply resuming the consultation and planning. Their time line shows that is just a minor gap in communication of some three years. After a gap of three years, inner south residents and the wider community are being asked again to consider merely a later draft of an earlier plan, a draft that is significantly different to the earlier plan. It deletes much of what was previously included, such as housing heights. It only provides for a make-safe status for the brickworks instead of adaptive reuse and, in response to suggestions for a smaller footprint, they accede but increase the density.

This has not been a variation; this is a complete rewrite. We know that the government could claim that heritage factors interrupted the process but that does not excuse the lack of communication in the intervening period, the abandonment of protection for the brickworks and the serious misinformation in highlighting a smaller footprint while adding another 500 dwellings to the reduced size.

Residents voiced their concern in 2010 in relation to the size of the development. The government's response was to reduce the size from approximately 60 hectares to 42 hectares but increase the density by almost 50 per cent to approximately 1,600. The remaining 18 hectares are still earmarked for future staged development. This is simply misleading on behalf of the ACT government.

Perhaps the last word, and by far the most authoritative comment on housing density, belongs to the chief executive of the National Capital Authority, Malcolm Snow, who recently told a parliamentary committee:

We have indicated some concern about the issue of building heights, particularly the encroachment of taller buildings onto things like Adelaide Avenue, which are specifically within the remit of the agency for protection in terms of amenity, as well as the approach to Government House, Dunrossil Drive, and about buildings that are above the tree line, which really then start to have an impact upon the broader landscape setting.

He went on to say:

Yarralumla is identified because of its particular tree coverage, and I think we are concerned that some of the heights that are being discussed might well be excessive.

That is the end of the quote from Malcolm Snow. Federal Labor MP Gai Brodtmann has also expressed concern about building heights. She said:

... the maximum height has gone from six storeys in the previous proposals to eight storeys in the current proposal without any explanation.

But the many queries and concerns over housing density and buildings heights pale into insignificance when you start to look at what is essentially a disaster in the making, traffic planning. The plan suggests that there will be improved access and better-managed traffic. It says traffic flow will be managed through minimising street connections into the existing suburb of Yarralumla.

A traffic and transport study undertaken by SMEC in 2013 recommended traffic improvements including extension of the Dunrossil Drive axis as a linear, tree-lined street and provision of a new formal approach and entry from Cotter Road to the Governor-General's residence and to the brickworks. It talks about a future upgrade of Cotter Road between Yarralumla Creek and Tuggeranong Parkway being built. Proposed road duplication and a new interchange at the junction of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue will be required due to increasing traffic volumes associated with the new district of Molonglo.

That is about the only reference to the new suburbs yet to come. Suburbs such as Denman and Wright are already underway but the new roads to cater for all these new commuters are not, Mr Barr, and there is possibly a reason why they are not. If you read what Hill Thalys have said in their document, transport is a key principle but clearly not for anyone wanting to drive a car.

They refer to their transit-oriented design that underpins the layout and connects into a regional and local transport network and promotes the use of public transport. We know that LDA traffic studies show the intersections with the main linking roads of Adelaide Avenue and Cotter Road are already over capacity. The same studies show that these traffic volumes will be unsustainable for undivided, two-lane suburban streets.

But apparently all these concerns will be addressed by building a major new bus stop on Adelaide Avenue costing over \$3 million. Provided you do not get run down by a car trying to rat-run through the local streets, you will be able to access a bus. Of course, if you are wanting to head towards Woden, then it may require a little more traffic dodging.

But we should not be alarmed even if we drive a car, apparently. As the Treasurer advised me at a recent estimates hearing when pressed about whether sufficient work had been done on traffic flow in the area with the proposed 1,600 new dwellings:

Steve, do you think these guys and all of these professionals are going to completely ignore all of the transport issues?

Mr Barr, it does not really matter what I think. What matters is what the 4,181 signatories to the petition tabled earlier today think. And yes, minister, they do think traffic issues will be ignored and they are concerned.

The traffic impacts through Yarralumla, Deakin and Curtin will be immense because they already have congestion issues. We know that Kent Street in Deakin is already severely congested. The Deakin west Equinox development is not even fully occupied yet but it has already increased traffic as has the Ambassador development and apartments in Hampton Court.

We know the mini roundabout at the junction of Dudley and Novar streets is gridlocked on weekday mornings and will need traffic management measures even without any development in the area and, from the number of complaints my office receives about deteriorating road surfaces and ageing infrastructure, poor street lighting and uneven or absent footpaths, encouraging pedestrian traffic to access public transport is unlikely to be taken up with much enthusiasm.

There is no point in commissioning traffic plan after traffic plan, Mr Barr, each of which highlights the congestion issues that already exist, if the government is not prepared to take notice and act. The current congestion issues need to be addressed and have not been. So what hope is there for better traffic management when the area doubles in size? To put all hope on people catching public transport is just a fanciful pipedream and, in any event, it would need to be more reliable and more accessible to be even considered an alternative for current residents of the area. Given the area has a high number of retirees, consideration for elderly residents using public transport needs to be factored in.

In considering the need for road infrastructure upgrades, there is just as important a need to improve utilities: water, sewerage, power. The inner suburbs are our oldest

and they cannot easily accommodate an increase in capacity without major upgrade. Again, on these issues, the plan is lacking detail. Again, the community is wanting reassurances their current services will not be compromised.

The question of restoration of the brickworks has both heritage and commercial considerations. While the current plan allows for a make-safe arrangement, it is not really good enough to just patch them up and wait for something to come along. In fact, the LDA's latest information update says:

The brickworks is on the National Trust's "most at risk" sites ... due to its ongoing neglect. To do nothing is no longer an option.

These are the LDA's words, Mr Barr. But that is exactly what they are proposing. The current plans do not include any funding model that would allow restoration or conservation of the brickworks. The recent focus on asbestos has not assisted any future consideration of the area, but asbestos remediation is a major concern not only to residents but for Canberra itself. The safe removal of containment is of utmost importance.

In summary then, the motion outlines a range of concerns, issues that have come from numerous sources and certainly not contained to Yarralumla. Minister Barr says this is a Canberra issue and the commentary, concerns and questions indicate clearly it is. While cheap, pejorative accusations have been directed at Yarralumla residents, those that make them show their own ignorance of the deep-felt concerns a wide cross-section of Canberra feel about poor planning and arrogant non-listening governments. This affects all of Canberra and if the government gets it wrong, all of Canberra will suffer. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events) (10.23): I thank Mr Doszpot for bringing this important matter before the Assembly today. It is an important discussion, obviously, in terms of the future development of Canberra. I have circulated an amendment to Mr Doszpot's motion that I move now:

Omit all words after "(1) notes", substitute:

- “(a) that the Canberra Brickworks and Environs Planning and Development Strategy was released by the ACT Government's Land Development Agency (LDA) in May 2014, and replaces an earlier draft published in 2010;
- (b) the ACT Government has provided in-principle support for development of the Brickworks area, including restoration of the historic Canberra Brickworks, subject to relevant statutory approval processes;
- (c) the 2014 Strategy proposes 1,600 dwellings, including two to eight storey developments, a 4 hectare quarry parkland space, a 2.72 hectare Denman Street park and a railway heritage park;
- (d) the Strategy provides for an initial 'make safe' conservation of the Brickworks, in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan endorsed by the ACT Heritage Council in 2010;

- (e) that traffic management planning for the development should include consideration of the intersection of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue;
 - (f) there are concerns that existing traffic on streets included in and adjacent to the proposed development will be made worse both during redevelopment and when the new housing areas are completed;
 - (g) that a range of contamination studies have been undertaken on the site since 2001 and have been used to determine indicative containment/remediation costings;
 - (h) the high level of community interest and the numerous submissions provided to the LDA during its recent community consultation period;
 - (i) that, in response to community concerns, the ACT Government commissioned a revised traffic study which is currently being conducted by SMEC and will be made available to the public in September 2014; and
 - (j) that the LDA has committed to responding to feedback and comments raised during the consultation period via newsletter by September 2014; and
- (2) calls on the Government to:
- (a) take careful note of the issues raised during the consultation process;
 - (b) publicly release the revised traffic study detailing the full traffic implications of this development;
 - (c) provide detailed and fully costed analyses of the full traffic implications of this development for both the local area, West Deakin and Yarralumla, and the wider Canberra community, including Curtin, Hughes, Woden and costs of upgrades to existing roads and construction of new roads and overpasses;
 - (d) provide, when available, a detailed asbestos removal and remediation plan, including where the asbestos and any contaminated materials will be disposed;
 - (e) publicly release the Traffic Management Plan associated with the proposed remediation at the Canberra Brickworks Complex including, to every extent possible, the details about the impact of trucks on the existing road infrastructure in the designated areas; and
 - (f) provide a detailed response to questions of traffic, building heights, community facilities and parklands, all of which have been raised as concerns in submissions to the LDA.”.

Clearly, the delivery of this and other urban infill projects is an important part of the broader ACT government planning policy framework that is set out in our planning strategy of 2012 and the transport for Canberra policy of that same year. It responds to

a range of issues that emerge through the 2010 time to talk community engagement process, and this included addressing some of those significant long-term issues for the city, including appropriate management of future population growth, environmentally responsible development and recognising and growing our city's regional economic role.

Before I talk about the details of the brickworks project specifically, I think it is worth spending a moment touching on why urban infill projects are important for the city. Over the past couple of decades, there has been a significant shift in population and climate trends. Resource security and environment protection have become much more pertinent issues. There has undoubtedly been a change in community values and living patterns within our city.

For some people, Canberra cannot change fast enough; for others, they want no change at all. Both are legitimate and are perfectly reasonable opinions to have, but there are opinions at both ranges of the spectrum. Because of these changes, the ACT government determined in early 2011 that planning strategies of the past and long-term planning principles and policies that have been set out in the city's development in its first century needed to be reviewed.

This was a considered a priority to ensure that we continued to plan and manage the city and our landscape wisely, using our natural resources, particularly the finite resource of land, in a more responsible manner. It is very clear as we plan for the long term and consider the environment that generations will inherit that choices need to be made to address those challenges ahead. By using our land and our resources more efficiently we have a unique opportunity to build a more prosperous and sustainable city and a more prosperous and sustainable national capital.

The delivery of the Canberra brickworks and environs precinct is contributing to a key target within the new ACT planning strategy that articulates a goal of 50 per cent of new housing for the city being within the established urban area of Canberra. The implementation of this target across all of Canberra certainly creates opportunities for increased density and dispersed employment by capitalising on the existing structure of our town centres and our inter-town transport connections. It provides new opportunities for lifestyle choices by providing more choice in housing location and type. This, I think, is an important point to stress, because there is very strong demand, not surprisingly, to want to live in the inner south and to live near Yarralumla. I have no doubt at all that you could sell every property five times over, such is the desire for people to live in this area.

Providing new opportunities for lifestyle choices is clearly an important goal for the city in the longer term. Improving our resilience by investing in improvements in the development and management of our city's physical infrastructure is also important, as is improving mobility and creating more choices in travel through integrating investment in our transport networks and the land that our networks serve, and building the capacity for everyone to participate in community life by improving the quality of our public realm, by improving access to services, infrastructure and community facilities.

The proposal the LDA have put forward seeks to respond to a growing trend in our society to provide more housing diversity in a variety of neighbourhoods that meet the needs of people of all ages, abilities, lifestyles and income, to provide diversity of housing choice through sustainable and universal design of apartments and townhouses and importantly to enable ageing in place and to build stronger and more diverse communities.

It also seeks to answer the community's call for well designed infill housing in locations that support services and sustainable public transport in order to encourage a greater social mix and add to the richness of neighbourhoods. It builds on an understanding expressed that many people would prefer to stay in the suburbs or areas that they currently live in but be able to downsize and continue to support their local shopping centres, schools, transport and services.

Turning now to the detail of the brickworks development, this project seeks to provide a vibrant and compact new community adjacent to a strategic transport corridor in Adelaide Avenue and seeks to develop an elegant extension to the suburb of Yarralumla. Through the adaptive reuse of the brickworks, key heritage infrastructure and facilities are to be conserved and high quality public realm and urban parklands are designed to enhance the amenity, both for existing residents but also for future residents and, indeed, for the broader Canberra community.

The strategy formalises the access of Dunrossil Drive through the delivery of a boulevard extension towards Adelaide Avenue, celebrating the significant role of access to Government House and it provides housing diversity within this area. It supplies an opportunity, as I have mentioned, for existing Yarralumla residents to age in place, as well as clearly delivering housing options for a wider demographic of Canberrans and Australians.

The LDA, as Mr Doszpot indicated, commenced an initial engagement through a draft strategy in early 2010. Since then, a broad and comprehensive engagement strategy has followed. As Mr Doszpot again alluded to, the first of what will be a number of information sessions was held on the site on 31 May. It commenced a six-week consultation period on this element of the delivery of the project.

Comments and feedback are still being received—and that is important—and this is being collated by the LDA. I can advise the Assembly that information has been gathered from a telephone survey of 1,400 participants, including 500 people in Yarralumla, Deakin and Curtin and a further 900 people living in the rest of Canberra. Some 136 feedback forms have been completed by members of the public, 92 from residents of Yarralumla, 18 from Deakin, and eight from Curtin. This has provided important feedback in relation to the draft proposal.

The aspects of the proposal that were most supported by this group included the restoration of the brickworks, 63 people; the public spaces and parks, 35 people; and the diversity of housing options, 16 people. The development aspects that were least supported by respondents related to traffic concerns, 83 people; the level of residential development proposed, 51 people; and the type of residential development proposed, 43 people.

The main findings from the telephone survey are that a majority of people across Canberra are in favour of the overall proposal, with 65.8 per cent in support and 32.5 per cent opposed. However, people living in Yarralumla, Deakin and Curtin are more evenly divided, with 48.6 per cent in favour, and 48.9 per cent opposed, the small balance yet to make up their minds. Of the 162 written submissions received by the LDA, 75 per cent were from Yarralumla residents, nine per cent from Deakin residents, and six per cent from Curtin, with the remaining 10 per cent from the rest of Canberra.

The feedback that has been received can be grouped into a number of key themes. Regarding traffic, transport and parking, the LDA is currently reviewing the proposed traffic and transport solutions, and this work is being coordinated with Roads ACT and the Economic Development Directorate's capital works area. It includes a review of the intersection of Adelaide Avenue and Cotter Road and design options that will reduce rat-running through Yarralumla whilst also improving connections between the major group centres of Molonglo, Woden and the city.

Additionally, further parking opportunities around the local shops are also being investigated, as well as solutions for the more localised issues in relation to street connectivity between existing residential streets of Yarralumla and the proposed development.

Regarding development density and building heights, those proposed in the current draft strategy respond to a range of key strategic planning priorities included in time to talk, as I mentioned earlier, and the ACT planning strategy and transport for Canberra. The strategy offers an alternate range of dwelling mixes across the site to complement the existing low density housing in Yarralumla and Deakin. Building heights have been developed to minimise impact on dwellings directly adjacent to the development, with increased building heights towards the more strategic transport corridors of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue where higher densities are deemed to be more appropriate and would support public transport usage.

The LDA has had a range of meetings and received advice from, amongst others, the NCA in regard to the broader proposal, and their suggestions for building heights related in particular to the tree heights along Dunrossil Drive. I can indicate today that further review of the building heights and densities will be undertaken in response to the feedback that has been received today.

The LDA is also undertaking additional visual analysis from the key views and vistas to further assist in the refinement of the proposal and will bring a range of new options forward as part of ongoing discussions with the broader community and with the NCA.

Regarding community services and retail capacity and zoning, the current strategy includes 15,000 square metres of commercial and mixed use floor area. Initially it was intended that this would be located in west Deakin to support the growth of this important employment hub along the Adelaide Avenue transport corridor. However, in response to the community's comments, the LDA is now undertaking a community

services and retail needs analysis in order to facilitate reappropriation of the commercial and mixed use areas between developments on both sides of Adelaide Avenue, including areas in close proximity to the brickworks.

Regarding the preservation of the brickworks itself, the current program of works to deliver the proposed strategy includes the stabilisation and upgrades to the brickworks buildings and structures in order to make them safe for public access. This is expected to be completed in 2016-17 at a cost of \$1.5 million. In addition, the LDA has committed \$10 million to the development of the heritage-listed quarry as a park that will open up this space for all Canberrans to enjoy. The heritage railway remnants will also be conserved and incorporated into any future development proposals.

This initial restoration work is expected to facilitate further heritage rehabilitation initiatives for the brickworks and allow public access to the site whilst also providing a range of commercial opportunities with some important discussions underway already with Thor's Hammer. The site contains contamination, including asbestos, and TAMS has received \$3.2 million in capital funding to undertake remediation and to upgrade the perimeter fencing around the complex. The LDA has also allocated a further \$2.1 million for remediation of the remainder of the site. All remediation will be endorsed by the Environment Protection Authority and an EPA-accredited auditor.

From here, any development proposal will also require a range of further approvals from both commonwealth and ACT government agencies, including an Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act referral through the commonwealth Department of Environment, an amendment to the national capital plan through the National Capital Authority, a variation to the territory plan through the ACT Environment and Planning Directorate, environmental clearances through the ACT Environment and Planning Directorate, and development application approval for the estate development plans again through the planning directorate. Each of these processes will be subject to further community consultation.

In closing, as with all important infill projects, it is important to have a long-term engagement process, and this will take a number of years. (*Time expired.*)

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (10.38): I welcome the fact that Mr Doszpot has brought this topic forward for discussion today because it is certainly one on which I have received a lot of feedback, and it is very topical in the community. The number of signatures on the petition demonstrates that level of interest. Many people in Yarralumla and, indeed, across Canberra are interested in the fate of the brickworks and the proposed residential development that has been put forward by the Land Development Agency—

Mr Doszpot: Why aren't you supporting the motion, then?

MR RATTENBURY: Oh my God, Steve; I have been speaking for 20 seconds!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Doszpot. Ignore the interjections, Mr Rattenbury.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, this is not really a point of order, but I will point out that Mr Rattenbury interjected immediately when Mr Doszpot spoke. So if there is going to be some level of interjection, it needs to be consistent.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, generally speaking this debate has been conducted in a general amount of silence, and I am not going to be lenient because somebody else interjected on another occasion. Tit for tat—

MR RATTENBURY: You have lost the plot, Steve. You have lost the plot.

MADAM SPEAKER: Sit down, Mr Rattenbury! You more than anybody in this place should know the forms. When I am dealing with a point of order, you sit down. If you have an issue to raise with the conduct of a member, you raise it through a point of order. Stop the clock, please.

I am not in the business of allowing tit-for-tat interjections. I have called Mr Doszpot to order and I expect he will comply with that. Do you have something to say, Mr Rattenbury? Do you have a point of order for me?

MR RATTENBURY: No, I just wish to continue.

MADAM SPEAKER: Okay. The question is that Mr Barr's amendment to Mr Doszpot's motion be agreed to. Mr Rattenbury.

MR RATTENBURY: Madam Speaker, as I have the floor, I will now apologise. I was not meaning to undermine you or interfere in your proceedings. I was just so gobsmacked by Mr Doszpot's rudeness that I did have some loss of focus on the rules and forms of the place.

I am aware of the nature of the community's concerns about the development. A number of constituents have written to me on the matter, and I did attend a public meeting of the Yarralumla Residents Association on 3 June, which around 150 people attended, and discussed their concerns about various aspects of the proposal. It was a very useful meeting for me. I certainly got a lot of insight into the key areas of concern that people had. For the benefit of other members I am going to reflect on some of what I heard that night.

The key area of concern is around the overall scale of the development and the way it will integrate with the existing suburb of Yarralumla. The proposal is for an additional 1,600 dwellings, which is a substantial increase given that the current population of the suburb is around 3,000. A point of contention for many is the difference between this proposal and the earlier version that was put on the table in 2010, in terms of both the number of dwellings and the maximum building heights.

People have questioned how the influx of residents would be serviced by existing facilities, including shops and roads, and essential infrastructure such as stormwater, water and sewerage systems. Certainly, one of the key issues that people raised concerns about was the lack of commercial space in the proposed new development and the pressure this would place on the existing Yarralumla shops, which is already a very popular spot, both for residents of Yarralumla and for people from other suburbs.

There are concerns about the overall impact on the amenity of the suburb, including the loss of trees and green space, and the visual impact on Dunrossil Drive and the ceremonial entrance to the Governor-General's residence. There are concerns about the impact of the development on the critically endangered golden sun moth, which is known to be found in the remnants of natural temperate grasslands near the brickworks between Dudley Street and Lady Denman Drive.

The remediation of the brickworks site is of concern. There is a desire for more information about the extent of the contamination and the scope of the remediation works, and the impact of trucks coming and going through the area during the clean-up process.

I believe that these are all very reasonable questions, and I support the community raising those concerns and having their questions answered in a full way. I am looking forward to seeing how these concerns are addressed as the government responds and modifies its plans. Clearly, we are still in the early planning stages, so now is the time to sort some of these issues out.

I am pleased that at least in one area we are already working through some of the issues, and that is the key concern about traffic impacts. As the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Roads ACT sits within my portfolio, and people are asking about the new street layout and whether it will be able to deal with the additional vehicle traffic generated by the additional dwellings as well as the traffic passing through Yarralumla from other areas. There are concerns about the congestion within Yarralumla itself in terms of access to the local shops, entry and exit points in and out of the suburb, and also access to west Deakin from the Cotter Road.

The original plans for the brickworks included a raised roundabout at the intersection of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue, and that is not contained in the current plan. Some of the roads have been blocked off, presumably to address concerns about rat running, but in doing this, other problems may be created by diverting traffic back through the suburb.

These are valid concerns and questions that need to be addressed early on in the planning stages. Street layout is a crucial part of any development, even more so for an infill development such as this in which connectivity with the surrounding road, public transport and cycle network is critical. The last thing that anyone wants is for the development to become a drive in, drive out kind of place. It needs to be integrated with the rest of Yarralumla to include some services to support the new residents, to have good pedestrian and cycle access, so that it can become the kind of vibrant community that would be fitting for such a location, which is close to the city and transport corridors.

I am really pleased to say that this issue of traffic is on the government's agenda, and we are listening to community concerns. As I said earlier, as the minister responsible for roads, after attending that public meeting I actually had Roads ACT come to my next catch-up with TAMS and I sought their advice on the questions that had been raised. They came back to me and indicated that, yes, they also had concerns about

the impact of the proposal on traffic management in the area; therefore they had started a new process of engagement with the Land Development Agency to address these concerns. They are now working actively with the Land Development Agency to investigate other traffic options and have engaged a consultant to look at different designs for the street layout, including the intersection of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue.

I do not have any definitive changes at this point, as the work is still taking place, but I am pleased to inform the Assembly and the community that work is progressing on the very valid questions that the community has raised. I look forward to the result of the traffic management review, and I support this review being made public so that the community can respond.

I would also like to take the opportunity to talk about the brickworks site itself. It is something that I am quite passionate about. I think that, to a large degree, the success of this residential development will depend on the way that it integrates with the brickworks site, and in turn the way that the brickworks site itself is redeveloped. I understand the need to secure the heritage values of the site and to make it safe as a preliminary step, but I think it would be a great shame indeed if it went no further than that.

The community response to the initial proposal showed that local residents do want something to be done with the brickworks site. With the residential development back on the table, now is the time to start thinking about how we might revitalise the brickworks so that they can become an active and vibrant site enjoyed by the Canberra community as a whole.

At the moment the brickworks site is managed by ACT Property Group, which was previously part of TAMS until the new administrative arrangements came into effect with the ministerial reshuffle last month. Property Group now sits with Minister Barr.

There are currently a number of small creative businesses located at the brickworks, including the timber recycler Thor's Hammer, and a couple of industrial-scale artists' workshops. In April this year I visited the brickworks site and had a walk through the site with some of the tenants. It is a wonderful place. It is full of history, full of rich stories, and an important part of this city's heritage. It really is very apt that it is being used by craftspeople and artists who are in many ways carrying on the tradition of the original purpose of the site—building and creating materials that shape our city.

The tenants have some creative ideas about how the brickworks site could be revitalised. As minister responsible, I asked Property Group to work with them to develop these ideas further, and meetings subsequently took place. I am pleased that the Land Development Agency is now also engaged with this process.

It is easy to fall into the assumption that the only way to revitalise a heritage site like this is with a big, expensive redevelopment. We have seen from other places around the world, like Christchurch and the way it reinvented itself after the devastation of the earthquake, that there are other ways of doing things if we can think outside the box.

We need to allow creative new ways to resolve the inherent challenges of the site—challenges which are also its best assets, I might say. How can we protect the heritage of the brickworks and ensure it has a viable future? How can we take advantage of its unique features without losing its special magic? And how can we allow the space to improve organically by building on the strength of its creative past and present?

I do think we have the creative energy and entrepreneurship in this town to answer some of those questions, and I would like to see the government engaging with the community and the private sector to make this happen. There is some sense that the government needs to spend a vast amount of money to make this happen, but I am very mindful of the fact that what is very popular at the moment is things that perhaps are a little more “grungy”, if that is a word I might use in this place—things that are a little more organic, and which have a feel about them which is not necessarily all polished and glass and modernised in some way. I would like to think that we can progress the work at the brickworks in a way that allows for some of those rough edges perhaps to be retained.

In summary, I actually want to thank Mr Doszpot for bringing forward this motion on the Yarralumla brickworks. If he had given me more than about 15 seconds to open my mouth, he would have heard me say that I support the direction of his motion. Mr Barr has moved an amendment. I think that makes a couple of adjustments to Mr Doszpot’s motion which reflect some of the work that is going on inside government. I think it is appropriate that some of those points be picked up, so I will be supporting Mr Barr’s amendment.

Mr Doszpot: What a surprise.

MR RATTENBURY: Before you roll your eyes and make obnoxious comments, Mr Doszpot, through you, Madam Speaker—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Rattenbury!

MR RATTENBURY: Sorry.

MADAM SPEAKER: I am calling you to order. Address your remarks through me and reflect on whether “obnoxious” is appropriate. I am not quite sure whether it is. I am not going to make a ruling on it.

MR RATTENBURY: For the benefit of Mr Doszpot—and I must take a deep breath because I should not let him get under my skin—if he actually reads the text of the amendment, he will find that a large part of the text is exactly the same. The government has just made a few adjustments to the text to reflect work that is actually going on. So before Mr Doszpot stands up in this place and undoubtedly gives me a free serve, and before he sends an email out to a bunch of people saying that the rest of the Assembly did not support his motion, I would encourage both Mr Doszpot—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, desist. You are not helping.

MR RATTENBURY: This is not about being partisan about it; it is actually about trying to get the right thing done on this space. I think all members of this place agree that it is appropriate to have some level of redevelopment on this site. The trick is to get it right. This is currently in the public consultation phase, and what we are seeing is that changes are being made. That is the important point to recognise today. There has been very clear community feedback. Certainly, I am very keen to see that feedback taken on board.

We have just had a couple of good examples in TAMS where we have been able to do that. There were things like the school buses, where parents approached us and asked us for more time in terms of notifying the change in the timetable, and we did that. With network 14, we got 2½ thousand pieces of public feedback, and we have actually delayed the implementation of the network until 1 September, to allow time for adjustments to be made to the network based on that feedback.

You have to start somewhere. I think valid concerns have been raised by the community. I have attended those public meetings to make sure that I have a good read of some of those issues, and we are now working on making changes. I think there is still work to be done. I think that the actual calls that have been made in Mr Doszpot's motion are good ones, and I agree with them—things around ensuring that information is provided about the revised traffic study, that details are provided on asbestos removal and remediation and that there is public release of the traffic management plan. I support all of these things. They are all contained in the amendment and I look forward to the further discussion on these matters.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (10.52): I am pleased to speak in support of Mr Doszpot's motion about the Yarralumla brickworks and environs planning and development strategy. As Mr Doszpot has already outlined, there are several major problems with the government's proposal. The strategy does not incorporate the community feedback from previous proposals for the brickworks. There are also significant details missing from this strategy, most notably details about traffic. Further to this, the consultation surrounding the strategy is yet another example of this government doing consultation poorly.

Mr Doszpot has already spoken about the fact that the strategy does not adequately take into account community feedback on previous plans for the brickworks. Clearly, the government thinks that the community has a short memory, because this strategy includes many of the same issues that the community was concerned about in previous iterations. In some cases, the strategy is even worse. The community has previously raised concerns with the proposed density of the development of the brickworks site. The density of the 2010 plan was considered too great, and yet the density has increased in the current strategy. The community is not fooled by the government saying the size of the development has decreased. The footprint of the proposed development may have decreased, but the number of dwellings included has increased. Obviously, the density of the development has therefore increased.

The current strategy includes approximately 1,600 dwellings. That reflects an increase of about 3,000 residents in the area. The increase in residents will put pressure on

roads, the local shops and other local infrastructure. These residents will be travelling on the already congested roads in Yarralumla and Deakin, and of course they will want to go to the local shops. Any new development will put pressure on the current infrastructure in the suburb. However, with careful planning the government could minimise the negative impact of a new development. Careful consideration of the impact of the proposed development is conspicuously absent from the government's strategy.

In order for the development to be a success, it needs to be supported by appropriate infrastructure. Road access to the development must be designed so that the new residents do not find it impossible to get around or out of their suburb. No-one wants to be stuck in a bottleneck trying to get out of their suburb onto the main road. Access to Adelaide Avenue from Yarralumla and west Deakin is already difficult on weekday mornings. Kent Street is becoming congested, and Dudley and Novar streets are already heavily congested. There is no way that an increase of a couple of thousand more vehicles will be absorbed by the current infrastructure. A significant increase in the amount of traffic on these roads will be dangerous unless something is done.

If the government were serious about developing this area well, they would ensure the appropriate road infrastructure was in place and part of the strategy. The importance of upgrading road infrastructure was emphasised in the December 2013 SMEC Canberra brickworks and environs options evaluation report. The update said: "Ultimately, the construction of the Cotter Road-Adelaide Avenue interchange should be considered to be necessary to support the viability of the development, by diverting through traffic away from local streets."

Mr Barr's amendment is in contradiction of this expert advice. Despite the update saying that the Cotter Road-Adelaide Avenue interchange is necessary for the success of the development, the interchange has been removed from the government's plan. So before community consultation was even over, the government made changes to the strategy that will make it unworkable. Before going any further with the project, the government must seriously consider how the increased traffic will be managed. Doing nothing is not an option. The government continues to provide an example of how not to consult with the community on such projects.

Developments such as this are always controversial, and community members on all sides of the debate are passionate. It is not possible to please everyone, but everyone should have an opportunity to get the facts and have their voice heard. If this development is as good as the government claims, it will stand up to rigorous community scrutiny.

Good governments are not scared of community consultation. They do not hide away from the community they allegedly represent. Instead, they are open and give community members the opportunity to evaluate proposals and provide feedback. After the community has provided feedback, the government should take the suggestions into consideration and develop a plan that improves the area rather than creates more problems.

Proposals to develop the brickworks are not new. The successive proposals over 15 years have included various housing, commercial and heritage developments. The community has been involved in the process, with numerous submissions, meetings and much commentary on the proposals. After all this time and so many submissions, you would think that the government could bring forward a plan which reflects community preferences. Of course, it is not possible for one plan to please everyone, but now we have a plan which seemingly pleases nobody—well, nobody outside cabinet. Perhaps it is not surprising that the government has not listened to the community's previous feedback when you consider what they count as community consultation.

The government's consultation about this proposal consisted of some glossy brochures and a half-day information session at the brickworks site. Members of the community wanted to use this opportunity to ask questions about the proposal. The LDA went along with their glossy brochures, and a diorama was used, but there was no representative from Roads ACT to explain the traffic implications of the proposal, and the diorama did not include any road upgrades. The community was confused about this because they believed that upgrades to the roads were part of the project. Of course, it turned out that the diorama was not wrong. The government was not planning to upgrade the roads. But there was not anyone there to answer people's questions about the information, and the information only came as a result of further work done by community members and, primarily, Mr Doszpot.

The level of community concern with this project is obvious from the number of people who signed the petition presented earlier today. Over 4,000 people are concerned that this government has not provided adequate information about the proposal. They are concerned about the impact on traffic and they believe that the government has not properly considered this before bringing the proposal forward.

If this were an isolated event, the government could be forgiven for making an error or two—or many. However, the government's behaviour on this issue is part of a pattern of behaviour on planning issues and many others.

I have spoken at length in this place about problems with the planning system and this government's arrogant and misguided view of how the city's planning regime should be governed. In opposition, some 15 years ago, Minister Corbell was an activist in favour of preserving green space and empowering the community. Now, 14 years into government, the complacency and centralisation have grown enormously.

The government seem to see neighbourhoods and the community at large as a hindrance. They seem to think that residents of Canberra get in the way of the government doing what they like.

We have had many examples of this arrogance. Perhaps it was the government's implement of variation 306, which was opposed by the Institute of Architects, the Institute of Landscape Architects, Master Builders, the HIA, the Property Council, the Planning Institute and others, yet the government rammed it through.

Or there is the ill-conceived Planning and Development (Project Facilitation) Amendment Bill, which was the bill to give the Katy Gallagher government the power to build anything anywhere if they simply called it a special precinct. It was a bill that every single witness and every single submission slammed, yet the now Minister for Planning, Mr Gentleman, gave the green light when he was the chair of the planning committee. And then it is likely he tipped off Minister Corbell about the private and confidential deliberations of the planning committee and brought into doubt the integrity of the Assembly's committee system. This is the new planning minister. We have gone from Minister Corbell, twice removed as planning minister, to Mr Gentleman, one of only eight people in Canberra who thought the Planning and Development (Project Facilitation) Amendment Bill was a good idea.

Of course, there is the overall complexity of the territory plan. It is a document which is inaccessible. When architects cannot understand it, how is a family planning an extension or a neighbour keen to learn about their rights able to comprehend the document? It does not have to be this way. We should have a simplified territory plan that still gives adequate advice and protection. At present, all the power is in ACTPLA's hands, because they are the only people who can understand the territory plan. And even then I have my doubts about whether ACTPLA staff are able to keep on top of the document.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I brought a copy of the territory plan with me today. As you can see by the 2,500 pages attached to this territory plan document, it really is an unworkable document. How can you possibly expect the community to be informed about their rights in the ACT planning system when you have a document as complex as that?

I commend Mr Doszpot for his work, representing his local electorate, his local community, and doing the things that all local members should be doing. I hope that the four members of cabinet who are also representative of Yarralumla will do their part in representing their community.

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (11.02): It is important to note that during this debate all those who have spoken so far—possibly not Mr Coe—have agreed that the brickworks are in fact the Canberra brickworks. It is of interest to all the community that we emphasise that and be aware of that. As I said, most people have referred to that.

Of late, though, the commentary in the media, and indeed in Mr Doszpot's first clause in his notice on the notice paper for this motion, refers to the Yarralumla brickworks. It does not assist in the message getting out there, as we proceed through the lengthy and thorough phases of continued referral and consultation that must of course proceed. We are in fact talking about the Canberra brickworks, and we welcome—in fact, desire to hear—commentary from the wider Canberra community on this matter.

I am pleased to see that in Minister Barr's amendment, he takes care of this issue. Clearly he speaks about the Canberra brickworks throughout. If many people whose homes were built around that time look at their bricks, they will find stamped on their bricks the words "Canberra Brickworks."

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.04): Firstly, I would like to commend Mr Doszpot for bringing this motion before us today; it has been a very interesting debate. You have led the charge on this issue in the Assembly; it is clear from the debate that this is an important issue and that the efforts you have made will, regardless of where this ends up, result in an improvement to this development.

It is great to see members of the Yarralumla community in here today; I welcome you all. I note that a former Speaker, Mr Cornwell, was here previously; I think he has had to duck away. But it is great to see members of the community coming in here to listen to these debates and getting involved—not just here today, but getting involved in the planning process and being advocates for your local community. That is a terrific thing.

I commend Mr Coe. The points that Mr Coe has made about the territory plan and about the planning process provide an important context for this debate. It is quite clear that what is going on in Yarralumla is flawed. The reason it is flawed is that it sits within a flawed planning process. Ultimately we can do what we can in this place to fix up isolated planning failures, but what is needed is a systemic change to the planning process; then we will see fewer incidents like those we are debating today relating to Yarralumla.

Yes, we will fight on Yarralumla; we will continue to work with the community. But broadly, unless we provide the sort of review and changes that we need in relation to our planning process, this is never going to win. Today it is Yarralumla. Tomorrow, who knows?

We have had some interesting speeches from those opposite, I must say. Ms Porter, I am not quite sure of the point you were trying to make other than—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Dr Bourke): You will address your remarks through the chair, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I am not quite sure of the point she is trying to make but—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, you will address your remarks to the chair.

MR HANSON: Yes, I am, Mr Assistant Speaker. Through you, I am not sure what points she was making, but I imagine they would be very different if this was an issue relating to development in Hawker. I imagine that then, in Ms Porter's global view of Canberra, it would all of a sudden be more interesting to her community. This is what Mr Doszpot is doing as a local member—representing his community, as is right and as is proper.

Yesterday, Mr Assistant Speaker, I reflected that all of the Ginninderra members were asking questions about Tuggeranong. So maybe you do not share that same view. You just seem to ask questions and have an interest in anywhere but your own electorates.

Maybe that is just an indication of a difference in approach. We on this side actually represent our communities of interest rather than just doing what our ministers tell us to do.

I am not sure if Mr Rattenbury's speech was made in his role as a Green or in his role as a member of the government; I do get confused. But it is quite clear that Mr Rattenbury is not having a good day. I am not sure what the problem is, but this has got under his skin. He should probably recognise that we have members of the community in here. Losing your cool, losing your temper on a repeated basis, does not do you any favours.

Let me go to the broader context. Let me make it very clear that the Liberal Party support urban infill and the Liberal Party support growth. But we support good planning and we support good development. It is clear from what we have heard here today that this is not it. It does not mean that we oppose development at the Canberra brickworks site—far from it. But we want to make sure that it is sympathetic to the Yarralumla community and that the development that we have when we grow our city, when we grow our town centres and when we grow our suburbs, is consistent with those suburbs and does something to enhance our amenity and not cause problems for people that live in Yarralumla or any other suburb.

Mr Barr's speech, the minister's speech, makes it clear that there have been failures here, there have been problems, and there is a long way to go. This is not the end of the process. But I am increasingly concerned that we have a perspective from this government that is to try to get as much money out of any development as they possibly can—in the words of Mr Quinlan, Mr Barr's mentor, to squeeze until they bleed but not until they die. You are trying to squeeze every drop, every dollar, out of this at the expense of good planning and at the expense of the community.

The problem is that when you have a budget laden with debt, when you have a budget laden with deficit, when you have projects that are unaffordable, like hundreds of millions of dollars for light rail, or when you are pursuing an agenda to put a big, shiny stadium in the city and put in other developments, you need the money. That is what we are seeing here—the desire from the Treasurer to fill his debt-ridden coffers with as much money as he can, ultimately at the expense of the community.

Mr Coe: It is a cash grab.

MR HANSON: It is a cash grab, as Mr Coe says, in this case at the expense of the Yarralumla community.

Let us have this development go ahead; let us make sure it is done well; and let us make sure that the community's interests are heard as we move forward with the Yarralumla brickworks, the Canberra brickworks, development.

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (11.10): I wish to address Mr Barr's amendment, but before I get on to that, I must start by apologising if I have got under the skin of Mr Rattenbury. I must apologise if Mr Rattenbury cannot quite handle the truth, because what happened, in fact, was that Mr Rattenbury's office gave us the courtesy of calling us before we came down into the chamber to tell us that there was an

amendment from Mr Barr and that Mr Rattenbury would be supporting the government's motion. That is the reason I spoke the way I did. If you cannot handle that, Mr Rattenbury, I suggest you have a talk to us earlier—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Doszpot, please address your remarks through the chair.

MR DOSZPOT: I thought I was, Mr Assistant Speaker, and I am addressing them through you. Just to go back to Mr Rattenbury, you can actually correct the current stance that you have taken. You have admitted that the motion that we brought before this Assembly, through you Mr Assistant Speaker, carries a lot of the wishes that the community has brought to our attention. And that is correct. Our motion is based very much on community consultation and what the community has identified. We as an opposition have to keep the government under scrutiny. That is our task. That is all we are doing, but we are doing it with the knowledge of what the community wants.

There are eight members of the government in this chamber and there are eight members of the opposition. Mr Rattenbury stands across this divide as a member of the government. He has often had the opportunity over the last two years to actually keep the government accountable, which was his promise as third-party insurance that his party offered to this chamber.

Mr Rattenbury has the opportunity this morning to actually back a motion that he agrees with, but it appears that he agrees more with the government which actually has deleted some very minor parts of the motion. Through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, the ball is in Mr Rattenbury's court and I invite him to change his mind. I think it is a measure of a man that he can see that the community has voiced their concerns. We have simply repeated the concerns of the community.

We ask you to join us in supporting the motion that we are putting before this government, which is not all that different to what Mr Barr is trying to amend. I express no lack of surprise that Mr Barr has seen fit to offer an amendment which is more semantics and theatre than substance. Equally, it comes as no surprise that Mr Rattenbury, as the ninth member of the government at this stage, is supporting his fellow travellers.

I do note, however, that in all the semantics there are some slippery non-committal words that the residents of Molonglo should take careful note of. Their own Labor MLA is not committing to improved traffic management, but that should come as no surprise. As Mr Barr indicated to me in estimates, and if I may paraphrase through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, "There, there, Steve. Don't you worry about any of that. We will look after it."

We see today how he intends to look after traffic management issues. He is suggesting that traffic management planning will give consideration to the intersection of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue. Mr Coe has already discussed this avenue quite extensively. As we all know, giving consideration to the intersection of Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue is code for, "We will not commit, but we will pretend we are listening." However, I do thank everyone who has spoken on this motion today. I thank Mr Hanson for his constant support of our work in this area.

I particularly want to thank my colleague Alistair Coe, who is without doubt the most knowledgeable person in this Assembly on Canberra planning and development matters—more than any other member here. He does not live in Molonglo. Indeed, he does not live anywhere on the south side of Canberra. So he cannot be accused of being a nimby as those on the other side of the chamber and their supporters in the Canberra press are so willing to sledge when anyone dares to question flaws in their magic pudding arguments.

Mr Barr is at pains to tell us that this is not a Yarralumla issue. It is an across-Canberra issue. I could not agree with him more. His own constituents would want to point this out to him in person. If only he found the time to come to any of the many local community association meetings in his own electorate, Mr Barr would hear this for himself. Mr Barr is confident that his plan is the plan we need to go with. But equally his predecessor in the portfolio, Mr Corbell, was of the belief that the earlier plan was the plan. Mr Barr said he has no doubt the proposed housing could be sold “five times over”.

Let me draw your attention again to the current vacancy rates in the inner south. There are 3.4 per cent higher vacancy rates in the south of Canberra than Canberra overall and the national average. That is before Lawson, Wright, Moncrieff and Denman housing comes on the market. This plan, as it currently stands, does not even follow the advice of its own consultants in respect of necessary road infrastructure, the need for preservation of the historic elements of the area and the building density and height.

Is it any wonder then that there is such cynicism and such concern about what might be next? Is it any wonder that residents have been so diligent in seeking out more information? It is this lack of transparent consultation that has driven their thirst for knowledge. Mr Barr, when community groups have lodged FOI requests to access information that should be easily and openly available, one has to wonder what it is the government is trying to fudge or avoid by not granting these FOI requests.

None of the community groups that I have spoken to is opposed to development. They know Canberra needs to grow. They just want to be sure that it grows appropriately and that their concerns and issues are taken into account. I received recently a letter that underscores what the community is seeking on the issue, and that is balance. I will quote from the correspondence that I received:

As a long time resident of ... Yarralumla, I am writing to express ... my interest and concerns re the proposed development plans ... This development proposal provides a unique opportunity to use the land resources wisely, to be an attractive healthy living space for the future ... Residents strongly wish to be part of this planning process. Many of us have a love and special connection to this place.

“Strongly wish to be part of the planning process”; that is no nimbyism. That is love for and pride in one’s community. Canberrans regularly suffer through the slings and arrows of people outside the territory. They do not expect it from their own representatives.

In closing, we cannot support Mr Barr's cosmetic alterations to the motion—his amendment to the motion—and we certainly commend the motion that we put before this Assembly as is. We ask Mr Rattenbury to consider supporting what the motion stands for and what the community is asking for.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9		Noes 8	
Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher	Mr Coe	Ms Lawder
Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman	Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth
Dr Bourke	Ms Porter	Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	
Mr Corbell		Mrs Jones	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Asbestos—loose-fill insulation

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.23): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) between 1988-1993, the Commonwealth inspected approximately 65 000 Canberra homes for the presence of loose-fill asbestos and identified 1049 had loose-fill asbestos insulation sprayed into ceilings by a building operator called Mr Fluffy;
- (b) in a \$100 million program, the Commonwealth removed loose-fill asbestos from the ceiling cavity of the identified Mr Fluffy houses;
- (c) it was believed at the time that the remedial action taken by the Commonwealth had removed any potential future health impact from loose-fill asbestos installed by Mr Fluffy;
- (d) it is now known that some Mr Fluffy homes were not identified and not remediated in the 1990s;
- (e) it is now known that asbestos fibres are still in the wall cavities and sub-floors of a number of remediated properties and, in some cases, have been detected in living spaces, on furniture and on clothes;
- (f) ACT WorkSafe have issued prohibition notices meaning some families have been forced out of their homes immediately and indefinitely;

- (g) on 25 June the Canberra Liberals called on the Chief Minister and government to allocate \$5 million for families who are facing crisis situations as a result of having to leave Mr Fluffy affected properties;
 - (h) with the support of the Canberra Liberals, the ACT Government has approached the Commonwealth Government to attempt to negotiate a comprehensive solution to the on-going financial and health risks posed by the Mr Fluffy houses and the ACT Government has now allocated up to \$10 000 per household in emergency funding for affected households in addition to waiving certain fees, and has established a Taskforce to administer the program;
 - (i) the Taskforce is falling behind on their published deadlines for contact and follow-up of residents;
 - (j) many homeowners and residents are in very difficult and distressed circumstances; and
 - (k) the effective and determined efforts of Ms Brianna Heseltine and the members of the Fluffy Owners and Residents' Action Group; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) adequately resource the Taskforce to enable it to contact residents and progress programs within the Taskforce's own stated timelines;
 - (b) report to this Assembly on progress with updates quarterly from 25 September 2014; and
 - (c) continue to support a bi-partisan solution to provide compassionate support for affected home owners.

Before I start, I make the point that there have been discussions about this motion between me, the Chief Minister's office and Ms Porter, because her motion appearing on the daily program is very similar. The intent is very much the same. In the spirit of cooperation on this issue we have had discussions, and we will just be dealing with my motion today. There will be an amendment moved by Ms Porter which will reflect essentially the intent of both motions and then we will be, as I understand it, supporting that amended motion but not moving Ms Porter's. I think it is a good thing for the people involved in this issue and for the broader Canberra community that we have essentially one voice coming out of the Assembly on this issue. I certainly thank the Chief Minister's office and Ms Porter's office for their cooperation in that regard.

I will start with a bit of history about what has happened and what has caused us to be at this point today. Before 1979 over 1,000 homes had loose-fill asbestos insulation sprayed into the ceilings by an operator known as Mr Fluffy. The form of asbestos used was ground into a powder and could easily become airborne, and it then becomes a serious health risk if it is inhaled or ingested.

Between 1988 and 1993 the commonwealth inspected approximately 65,000 Canberra homes built before 1980 for the presence of loose-fill asbestos, and certificates of

inspection were issued for those homes. The commonwealth loose-fill asbestos insulation program identified 1,049 so-called Mr Fluffy homes.

In a \$100 million program, the commonwealth then removed or attempted to remove the loose-fill asbestos from ceiling cavities, under the houses and from accessible wall cavities of those identified houses. It is known that at least four homes were not identified as part of that process and were not remediated in the 1990s, including the house known as the Downer house.

The problem was believed by the general public to have been fixed and that the remedial action taken by the commonwealth had removed any potential future health impact of loose-fill asbestos from Mr Fluffy. Certificates stating that properties had been treated and cleared of asbestos by the commonwealth program were then taken as an assurance that those properties were safe. Since the 1990s owners and tenants have relied on those government-issued certificates. Despite the commonwealth-funded clean-up program, asbestos fibres are still, however, in the wall cavities and subfloors of most of the remediated properties, and in some cases asbestos fibres are now in household living spaces.

The ACT government has evolved its understanding and become aware of this emerging problem. In 2005 the ACT government commissioned the ACT asbestos task force report. As a result of that report Mr Fluffy home owners were sent a letter by ACTPLA co-signed by that task force. In that letter home owners were advised regarding undertaking additions or alterations.

There was then the issue of the Downer house, which is one of those houses that had been missed. In the demolishing of that house inspections were done. They were done forensically, and identified that the loose-fill asbestos would have essentially got into the cavities and would not have been removed adequately through the commonwealth program.

On 18 February this year the government sent letters to most affected home owners as a reminder that it was likely that some insulation material remained in the Mr Fluffy homes. I would note, though, that those letters were sent to generic addresses. Not all letters reached home owners, or particularly tenants—those who were renting the properties. After February many home owners continued to live in houses, unaware of the health risk posed by the loose-fill asbestos.

During 2014, as a result of inspections of some Mr Fluffy houses, ACT Worksafe have issued prohibition notices, which means that some families have had to be forced out of their homes after being told asbestos had made it unsafe for them to stay. Affected residents have been trying without success between 18 February and June to get a substantive hearing from the government.

I commend Mr Smyth for the work he did in liaising and engaging with the affected residents. Indeed, I would like to take this opportunity to commend Brianna Heseltine, who I think all of us know now, on the work she has done with the Fluffy Owners and Residents Action Group. Her efforts in lobbying both sides of this chamber, and, indeed, the federal government, have been very effective in making sure that we as politicians have responded to the needs of those affected by Mr Fluffy.

On 24 June the Canberra Liberals called for the Chief Minister and the government to allocate \$5 million to families who are essentially in crisis situations as a result of having to leave Mr Fluffy affected properties. We also called for a freeze on rates and land tax for those affected properties. Later that day—coincidentally, I am sure—the government created the asbestos response task force. It has allocated—this was later in June—up to \$10,000 per household in emergency funding for affected households, counselling services, waiving of certain fees on building file searches and so on, and some other support. Certainly, from this side of the chamber, we welcome that support. It is good to see that that is now rolling out to affected families.

The other issue, as I mentioned before, was that not everybody had been informed of what was going on. On 29 June we called on the government to inform everybody who was a home owner by certified mail that they had an affected property. The government has now done that, and as far as I am aware everybody affected has now been informed. I welcome the government's response to that. I have met with the head of the task force, Mr Kefford, on this issue and there is a good line of dialogue so that we can approach that task force to let him know where there are gaps in information or where residents are not getting everything that they need.

The commonwealth clearly has a role here. I think that is a unanimous view within this Assembly. The reasons for that have been outlined pretty comprehensively. We will need the support of the federal government to resolve this issue permanently, and that is certainly what we are all seeking. The federal government has a significant role to play. There is indeed an MOU dated from 1991. Although its legal status is unclear, it is clear that there is, without question, a moral responsibility with the federal government to come to the assistance of the families who have been affected.

I note that the Chief Minister has met with Senator Abetz on this issue. All of our federal members, Liberal and Labor, have met with Senator Abetz. Brianna Heseltine has met with Senator Abetz. Certainly, I have spoken to Senator Abetz. I think it is a very good thing, and a very important thing, that the ACT community, those from the houses affected and all of us from all three parties in this place have the same consistent message for the federal government, because this is a community problem. This is not a problem on which any of us has any desire to play politics. We need an outcome for the families.

Let me now turn to that, because it is important that we recognise the impact on the families. I am sure that many of us have received representations from people who have been affected. Certainly, in my case, I know personally half a dozen or more families who have been affected by this. I think all of us can probably say, "We are only through luck not in their shoes." I bought a home in Weston Creek that would have been right in the zone for Mr Fluffy. If I had seen a certificate from the commonwealth saying it had been cleared, I do not think that would have stopped me buying the property I am in. Equally, any of us in this building here could be in the same circumstances as many of the affected families.

At this stage about 400 houses have been inspected out of the 1,049 and, to date, as I understand it, 27 families have been displaced from their homes. You can understand

the enormity of being displaced from your home. Potentially, now, your house is going to be demolished. You will not be able to return to that home. You are moving into temporary accommodation with only the clothes that you stand up in. All of your possessions in some cases may have been lost, and you are now living in cramped conditions in a motel, perhaps, or staying with friends and family while your house is being treated or demolished.

All of the families affected are concerned about their health impacts—what this means for themselves, what this means for their family, what this means for their children. All of them are concerned about the financial impacts. What does this mean for them financially, because for most Canberrans, their home is also their financial future?

More broadly, and not just for the ones that have been displaced, I think these issues affect everybody still in their homes. Indeed we have been told so many different stories about people who are living in these homes now while not knowing what the future holds for them. That is a very disturbing situation.

That is why the Chief Minister announced the counselling support. I think that was a great initiative, because many of the people I have spoken to are under tremendous stress. They are not clear about what their future holds or what repairs they can do. What about the tradespeople that have visited, what about extensions that have been done and what about people living in and renting a Mr Fluffy house? What does that mean? What is the issue with the resale of that house? Will their house be demolished, and so on? We have all had conversations with people, so we understand what the implications are.

Ms Gallagher yesterday said that it would appear that these houses will need to be demolished. I support that view. That probably is what is going to have to happen if we are going to resolve this in the longer term. I certainly share the Chief Minister's view that we need to resolve this once and for all. This is not something that we want future residents and future parliaments to be having to deal with.

There are issues with the rollout of support through the task force. I understand that this is a complex, difficult issue and that the task force are working extraordinarily hard. They are doing everything they can to support those families. But it is clear, based on my conversations with a number of families and, indeed, from some of the messages, such as message No 4 that was put out by the task force themselves, that they are falling behind in some of that work. In particular, as I have outlined, families are at a point where they are needing information in a timely fashion, they are worried, they are confused and they want as much certainty as we can provide them.

There are instances where the task force have said, "We will get back to you in a couple of days," and they have not. It has been a couple of weeks, and in some cases not at all. I am not in any way criticising the task force. What I am saying is that we would support the government with respect to the resources provided to that task force. Particularly during this surge period when a lot of families are registering and when there is an information vacuum, if the government can support that task force by providing extra personnel, I think that would be a good thing and they would have the opposition's full support in doing that.

I would like to refer to some of the personal stories that we have heard to put a human face on this, but in closing I commend my motion, indicate that I will be supporting the amendment and say that I think it is important that we all continue to work together to get a resolution for the affected families.

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (11.39): I thank Mr Hanson for moving the motion about this very important matter today As Mr Hanson said, I will move an amendment to Mr Hanson's motion. That amendment has been circulated, and I move:

Omit all words after "(1) notes", substitute:

- “(a) that over 1000 ACT homes are affected by a particularly dangerous form of loose fill asbestos which was pumped into roof spaces between 1968 and 1979 by a firm known as ‘Mr Fluffy’;
- (b) the enduring legacy of this action, which took place while the Commonwealth was responsible for the ACT;
- (c) that many affected homeowners and residents are in very difficult and distressed circumstances;
- (d) the unsuccessful attempt at remediation under the Commonwealth designed program which crossed over the period during which self-government was instituted;
- (e) the pressing need to deal with this legacy of the Commonwealth's management of the ACT, which led the Government to establish the ACT Asbestos Task force on 25 June 2014; and
- (f) that, since the establishment of the Task force, there has been a coordinated response to focus on:
 - (i) supporting the families who have found that they are living in a ‘Mr Fluffy’ home by administering the Government's financial assistance package, including support for emergency accommodation and other expenses for those forced to leave their homes;
 - (ii) providing affected home owners and residents with up-to-date information about health risks and how to access support services;
 - (iii) building an information base to share with affected households, tradespeople, the property industry and the broader Canberra community; and
 - (iv) preparing advice on sustainable and practical long term solutions to the ‘Mr Fluffy’ legacy;
- (2) notes that the Chief Minister met with the Commonwealth Employment and Public Service Minister, Senator Eric Abetz, on 10 July 2014 and reached agreement that the Commonwealth Government would work with the ACT to respond to the issue of ‘Mr Fluffy’ within the ACT community;

- (3) acknowledges the support extended to the Government to resolve this issue from the Canberra Liberals, the ACT Greens and all ACT Federal members of parliament;
- (4) acknowledges the effective and determined efforts of Ms Brianna Heseltine and the members of the Fluffy Owners and Residents' Action Group;
- (5) calls on the Chief Minister to continue to work with the Commonwealth Government on an urgent basis to reach an agreed long term and collaborative solution to this issue, examining the expert advice of both governments' agencies to determine what measures are required to render affected houses safe;
- (6) provide this Assembly with regular updates; and
- (7) provide adequate resources to the Task force to enable it to provide the support and technical advice required to achieve a lasting and permanent solution for affected home owners."

There can be no doubt as to the personal, emotional and financial impact that over 1,000 families in our community now find themselves dealing with, as Mr Hanson outlined in talking to his motion. There can also be no doubt as to the serious challenge that faces our government to determine the dimension of the health and safety problems posed by Mr Fluffy homes and the need to work with the commonwealth government to find a lasting solution to this extremely difficult issue.

From the outset, I think it is important to note the government has made it clear it is committed to finding a long-term solution for the owners and residents of Mr Fluffy homes, and this is our goal and our focus. Following the Chief Minister's statement to the Assembly yesterday, members are aware that before they were banned asbestos-containing materials were routinely used in the construction of Canberra homes and are commonly found in areas including eaves, roofs, wet areas, fences and pipe lagging. However, there is a subset of some thousand Canberra homes that are additionally affected by a particularly dangerous form of asbestos that we have all come to know about. Unfortunately, this is pure, raw asbestos pumped into roof spaces between 1968 and 1979 by a firm known as Mr Fluffy. This issue presents a continued threat to the affected families, and is a complex social, economic and logistical challenge to solve.

It is now clearly evident that the commonwealth's original attempt at removal and remediation of these houses in the 1980s and early 1990s that Mr Hanson outlined did not work. Two decades on, Canberra families still have raw, pure asbestos fibres inside their homes, as we heard from the Chief Minister yesterday—in their wardrobes, on the tops of their fridges, and in their heating ducts, living rooms, and bedrooms.

For a thousand families in the ACT, their houses have transformed overnight from homes where memories were created and life savings spent to contaminated buildings. Older Canberrans are asking is it safe for their grandchildren to visit them in their houses and how they explain that to them if they cannot. It is a very difficult situation, I think everyone will agree.

Many middle-aged Canberrans are questioning what exposure they may have unwittingly subjected themselves and their children to when they did their DIY renovations over the years. Many homebuyers are now asking what they have gotten themselves into and how they will get out. As Mr Hanson says, all of us could have been affected in this situation. We cannot underestimate the impact on our community, and I think we all agree.

As we know, a key and important response in addressing the complex challenges raised by Mr Fluffy homes has been the government's creation of the asbestos response task force. Current home owners and tenants who have registered with the task force are being assisted to arrange asbestos assessments, understand the ramifications of positive asbestos assessments, organise remediation work, access the government's assistance packages, and liaise with other government agencies and industry.

In addition to the practical support and advice the task force is providing to affected families, the ACT government is providing an emergency support package for those who are forced to leave their homes following advice from the asbestos assessor. Assistance payments are being received by affected families and are making a difference.

As outlined previously, the purpose of these funds is to cover costs of emergency accommodation and other necessities such as food and clothing as well as remedial work. The emergency support package is a grant, as the Chief Minister said yesterday, of up to \$10,000 per household for those people advised by an asbestos assessor to leave their homes, and the package cap is increased by \$2,000 for each dependent child residing in one of these homes.

For those people who have left their homes on the advice of an assessor, the ACT government is also deferring rates for the period of time the owners have had to vacate. For people who are still residing in the house but who, following the advice of the asbestos assessor, have been required to destroy contaminated items such as clothes and soft furnishings, \$1,000 will be available.

In addition to practical impacts on affected families, there are health impacts, of course, both physical and emotional. Distress and anxiety are an understandable and normal response to finding out about the presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in homes. This anxiety may be due to concerns about the health impacts of exposure or it may be related to other issues, such as current accommodation or financial concerns.

While most people may find themselves able to adapt in some way to this initial, very real emotional distress and manage their initial response with the support of family and friends, there is obviously a need for extra help and support. That is why the task force has been working closely with the Chief Health Officer, the ACT Medicare Local and ACT Health to ensure that people are provided with up-to-date information about health risks and how to access support services.

Members will be aware that as part of the ACT government's emergency support package the Chief Minister announced a partnership between the ACT government

and the ACT Medical Local to ensure there are no out-of-pocket expenses for affected families accessing psychological and emotional support. This support includes access to the new access program to offer support from trained coaches for those who are experiencing mild anxiety or depression and access to the health in mind program through the family doctor with any gap fee for the GP visit reimbursed to those registered with the task force.

One of the most vital and urgent tasks of the government is to provide access to experts and to provide up-to-date information to support owners and residents of Mr Fluffy homes, as Mr Hanson outlined. This communication has included hosting two community forums, most recently this past Sunday at Hawker College. A previous forum was held on the south side, at Namadgi School, on 17 July 2014.

These forums jointly held by the task force and ACT Health provide an opportunity for the community to discuss health issues relating to asbestos. The community has had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss specific health-related concerns associated with asbestos exposure with panel members, including; Dr Peggy Brown, Director-General of ACT Health; Dr Andrew Pengilly, Acting Chief Health Officer; Dr Mark Hurwitz, respiratory physician; Dr Jeffrey Fletcher, Clinical Director of Paediatrics at the Canberra Hospital; and Mr Andrew Kefford, head of the ACT asbestos response task force. Approximately 250 people attended each forum, and it is pleasing that these people were able to get along. Of course the government is continuing to provide information and will welcome inquiries.

More than 1,700 people are now registered with the task force, and are receiving the weekly newsletter updates with key information. The task force regularly update their webpage and Twitter account and actively engage with the media.

This does not replace the one-to-one support that the task force is providing to those in our community greatly impacted by these issues, because nothing replaces that one-to-one communication that we know is very important, especially in times like this. This includes close to 30 families who have left their homes, often with little more than the clothes on their back, as Mr Hanson said.

It is also important to acknowledge that there has been and I believe will continue to be a bipartisan approach to addressing and resolving the issues confronting our community through the presence of Mr Fluffy homes. Mr Hanson outlined in his speech his desire that this continues to be a bipartisan approach and his support of the government in the way it is handling this matter. The bipartisanship, I am pleased to observe, not only extends to those in this Assembly but also to our federal members. Faced with such a confronting issue, it is clear we are all prepared to work together.

Finally, I would like to add my support for the work of the Chief Minister as she pursues the commonwealth government in obtaining support from them and an agreement with them about the long-term and collaborative solution to this issue, which all of us in this place agree is extremely important. I commend my amendment to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (11.49): I thank both Mr Hanson and Ms Porter for raising the very important issue of loose-fill asbestos and the difficult challenge it presents for many people in the Canberra community, for the Assembly, and, indeed, for the federal government. I want to put on the record as the representative of the ACT Greens my strong support for a comprehensive program to address the serious problems caused by the legacy of loose-fill asbestos. I also want to put on record my sympathy and concern for the people in our community that have been affected by this legacy—individuals and families who face upheaval from their homes and who are worried about their health and finances.

Unfortunately, more than 1,000 families are currently impacted by the issue—that is the current residents in the homes—as well as an unknown number of people who have lived in these homes since the asbestos was installed. Currently 27 families have been displaced completely from their homes due to the danger that the presence of loose-fill asbestos presents.

We also should remember that loose-fill asbestos issues have also been disruptive to a range of other people in the ACT. This includes tradespeople and those working in the property sector. The impact may not be as severe as it is for those living in or displaced from the contaminated homes, but it is important as well that these people are assisted where required and certainly that they are kept informed of progress.

The issue of loose-fill asbestos has been an issue of concern for the ACT Greens for some time. It is an issue we started raising in the last Assembly through some questions put on notice. My former colleague Amanda Bresnan, for example, asked a series of questions on notice in December 2011 about Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos which revealed some early information to the Assembly. She asked, for example, if all residences in the ACT were covered by the federal asbestos remediation program and, if not, how many residences were not covered. She asked whether the minister could provide information about how many and which buildings in the ACT still contain Fluffy asbestos, and if the ACT government would proactively assist any residents, businesses or community groups occupying buildings that were not covered by the Fluffy asbestos removal program.

At the time, the ACT government said it considered the commonwealth removal program extremely reliable and that it provided a high level of assurance that properties identified as containing loose asbestos insulation had been remediated. Of course, we now know that this is not the case. New evidence has come to light which clearly shows the previous remediation program did not deliver a lasting solution.

In recent months, as we know, the government has developed an active response to the Mr Fluffy issue, and in my dual role as a minister in the government, I have been aware of and agreeable to that approach. The key response of the government is the establishment of the asbestos response task force, reporting to the Chief Minister and led by Andrew Kefford. I met with Mr Kefford recently to discuss the Mr Fluffy issue, and I believe the centralised task force approach is the right one in terms of coordination, administration and providing information to those who need it.

As others have outlined already, the task force is administering a financial assistance package to help affected families. It is providing community information and, of course, it is providing advice on a longer term solution to this crisis. I also want to note the counselling support that the task force is providing to affected families that might need psychological and emotional support during this difficult period. ACT Medicare Local is assisting, and families will not have to pay to access relevant support programs. I believe this is an important addition to the package, as sometimes people underestimate the mental and emotional anguish and toll that people can suffer from an incident like this. The stress of displacement from one's own home or the fear and uncertainty that the family could be facing an unknown health risk can be severe.

It is clear that the federal government needs to play a major role in responding to this issue. I think it is clear to all stakeholders that the commonwealth is a key part of the legacy. It administered the ACT during the time Mr Fluffy was operating, and it was responsible for administering the remediation program which, we now discover, was inadequate in various ways. It has an obligation, most likely legal and certainly moral, to help the affected people and to help the ACT in dealing with the problems it handed down to us.

Just as my colleagues in the Liberal Party and Labor Party have done, I have taken the opportunity to update my Greens colleagues in the federal parliament on the Mr Fluffy issue and the need for the federal government to be involved. I think it is important that the Greens senators and member are apprised of the issue and are aware of the necessity of commonwealth involvement in assisting the ACT to deal with the significant legacy with which we find ourselves.

As we know, the asbestos legacy left by the commonwealth also extends to large amounts of bonded asbestos buried underground around Canberra. It is unmapped, so the territory constantly discovers it and must deal with it as it develops and builds around our city. That is another issue that would benefit from commonwealth cooperation and is an ongoing area of negotiation.

A range of very important decisions are still to be made to find good solutions to this toxic legacy, and I have no doubt that the wait for answers is torturous for those involved. However, the ACT government has made clear that it is committed to providing long-term support to affected families. It has established a community and expert reference group, similar to the one established for the bushfire task force in 2003.

I assure the Assembly and the community that in my roles as an MLA and as a minister I will be following the issue closely and doing all I can to ensure an appropriate and just outcome. I have seen the amendment that Ms Porter has proposed to Mr Hanson's motion, and I agree that it combines the two motions appropriately. I understand we have agreement across the Assembly that this is a good way to proceed, and I welcome both that collaboration and the spirit of the discussion today.

In closing, I simply observe that we have much left to do on this issue and that we all need to keep a very clear focus on it so we can deliver a fair outcome, a just outcome and certainty for those people who are affected by this issue.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (11.55): I rise to speak in support of the motion and the amendment moved by Ms Porter and, again, thank other members for working collaboratively on this, particularly Mr Hanson and Ms Porter's office, to reach agreement on a motion that all members in this place can support. As I said yesterday, I think the fact that the Assembly stands united on the response from the ACT government to the Mr Fluffy issue puts us in good stead to deal with it across the community and also in our representation to the commonwealth.

Yesterday I placed on the record a comprehensive ministerial statement updating the Assembly on the actions the government has taken to address the issue to date. I do not need to repeat the detail contained in that statement but I do want to canvass some of the issues that have been raised around capacity which confront the asbestos task force. I would like to emphasise that the government is facing a challenge we inherited on loose-fill asbestos in much the same way as we confronted the 2003 bushfire emergency. Emergencies place significant strain on resources, they require quick responses, rapid expansion of skilled capacity, surges in demand and support for people with shattered lives in shock, in distress, and an eye to the long term, the rebuilding and reshaping of hopes and dreams which have been damaged and changed.

This is why the asbestos response task force's work is so crucial. The task force exists to bring the full weight of government experience and expertise to deal with loose-fill asbestos across the community, in the homes that it has been found in. In forming the task force, expertise was drawn from across government. As I mentioned yesterday, it has staff who have experience in managing the impacts of asbestos, staff who understand the planning system and can help with the assessments and building and remediation work and staff who have great skills in supporting the community through times of stress and crisis. It is a whole-of-government response and I believe this is already providing a comprehensive and compassionate response to the needs of those people who are using it.

But members are right when they acknowledge it is a huge task and one which every member of the task force has taken on with determination, drive and an unwavering focus to support those who need it most. Can I say that staff have taken it on at very short notice when they were approached. Certainly Mr Kefford, when he was approached by me to be the lead executive in charge of this, took it on without a second thought. That is a real credit to him, his senior colleagues and all of the staff that have been provided across directorates.

Often it is fairly easy to criticise the work that public servants do. It is less often that people stand together and congratulate the work that is going on. I know people are on the phones on Sunday at 11 o'clock at night. I know Mr Kefford has provided his mobile phone number to particularly distressed families. I know that work goes on over the weekends. It really has been incredible to sit and watch, from my position, just how much the staff have pulled together and are continuing to work together to continue to deliver the best response they can for those families in need.

The work of the task force over the past four weeks has focused on, as a priority, responding to the needs of families currently living in a home affected by loose-fill asbestos, providing ongoing information to the broader Canberra community and providing advice to the ACT government on the long-term solution. I am hoping to have that advice this month.

Yesterday I was asked, “Where is that advice leading?” I have not seen the final advice; it is not even finished yet. This was my answer yesterday: from the briefings I have had to date and from the advice that I have had verbally, it is increasingly looking like demolition of houses will be recommended. I answered that question from the journalist when I was directly asked.

I would just say, though, that the government’s final decision on this might not be a one-size-fits-all for everybody, because within the Mr Fluffy homes there are a range of different views. In fact, I got a very heartfelt email just this morning from someone who does not want their home demolished and does not want to be put in the position where they are incorporated into a big job lot in a sense. The response from the government, when we do finalise these decisions, will, as much as we can, respect the wishes and desires of the Mr Fluffy home owners themselves. It may be that there is not a one-size-fits-all. As we know, everybody’s circumstances are different.

In terms of response to the task force—and I preface these comments by saying how hard the task force is working—in the last couple of weeks there has been a surge in registrations. We have gone from no registrations to, I think, 1,800, towards 2,000 registrations. The IT systems to support that are gradually being put in place. That will ease the frustration of people having to tell their story once, twice or three times. Hopefully we can address that with the IT systems that are being put in to support people.

The effect of the sending out of the registered mail was a spike in the number of people, particularly a lot of people who did not know they were in a Mr Fluffy home, who were quite distressed. That did have a spike in the workload of the task force and, I think, did affect the timeliness of their responses as they worked through them all.

As members would know, there are 27 families who have been advised to leave their homes due to contamination, and those 27 families require intensive support by the task force. This includes the families finding short-term accommodation so that they have at least a roof over their head as they work through the fact that they may not have a home they can return to.

The task force has been up-front in telling those registering with them that the immediate focus must be on the current residents of affected homes. In fact, this advice was outlined in the task force’s latest newsletter, which is sent weekly to all of those who registered. This does not underestimate the level of concern about this issue in the community but it does prioritise the work of the task force.

If I could just say, to give another example, last week, when the documents were provided to some media outlets raising concerns about Northbourne House—and this

is something that the task force is going to have to continually deal with—that diverted probably at least 1½ to two days of the task force’s time to find documents, go back and work out what was happening, speak to different asbestos assessors that have worked on that building over the years, in order to establish that it was not a Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos and that the issues were well in hand.

But it did divert the attention of the task force head, the head of WorkSafe ACT, asbestos assessors who are working on a lot of the homes and senior people for a period. And I expect we will have more of that, as people are very anxious about the asbestos and talk of asbestos when it is happening in Canberra.

I would just say, in closing, I do appreciate the support that is being provided by the Assembly, in particular by Mr Corbell as the minister who really did ramp up the government’s initial response to this and identified the issues as they were contained in the Downer house when he was minister for industrial relations, and the work that was done there, which I think positioned us well to move into this broader task force that has been established now.

I have taken ministerial responsibility for it, and that is because it does cover a number of government directorates. It also involves negotiations with the commonwealth, and it is appropriate that the head of government do that.

I also thank Mr Hanson, who has been very supportive in terms of the work that he has been doing in his role as Leader of the Opposition in speaking with all of the constituents but also for his representations to the commonwealth. Indeed the idea about the registered mail came from Mr Hanson to the task force head, who rang me and said, “What do you think? This is a good idea.” I said, “Yes, I agree, let us do it.”

The issue that we did have some difficulty with, only for a period, was how to access people’s data, names and addresses, as that information had been collected for revenue purposes and not for general information. We did cut through our own red tape on that and get a sensible solution, but I do appreciate that support. The fact that the Assembly will today again stand united in a unanimous vote of support for the work that is being done by the task force, the steps that are being taken, is a sign of solidarity of support for the residents of Canberra that this issue affects and support for our continued representations to the commonwealth government.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (12.06): I rise to speak briefly on this matter. The Chief Minister earlier mentioned that the task force response group has been very busy and that it is a whole-of-government response to this problem across Canberra.

As the new minister for workplace safety, I am very pleased that Minister Corbell, as previous minister, mandated for asbestos awareness training. As of 1 October all employers must ensure that any of their workers in the territory who may come in contact with asbestos as part of their daily work has undertaken asbestos awareness training. It is important to recognise that this is an issue that affects many and extends

well beyond the construction industry. Other workers, such as pest controllers, building inspectors, telecommunications technicians and similar tradespeople are often working in close proximity to asbestos in all its forms.

While it is relatively easy to identify what asbestos sheeting looks like and how to deal with it, loose-fill asbestos is not as straightforward, and it is important to ensure that all tradespeople or people who have a risk of coming into contact with loose-fill asbestos are trained to identify and notify the appropriate authority. This is about awareness. It is about making sure workers know what asbestos is, where they will likely come across it, and more importantly, when they do, how to seek further advice.

The course only takes one day to complete, and it is important to note that it is not about learning to remove asbestos. There are more in-depth courses available for training in the removal of asbestos. The course does not permit workers to disturb asbestos in any manner, and there is a strict regulatory and licensing regime in place for assessing and removing asbestos. The course is only mandated for workers but it is recommended that home owners and DIY renovators also take the course to educate themselves on identifying asbestos. Having as many people as possible trained in identification reduces the risk to tradespeople and also helps with the process of identifying all of the affected residences.

The course, which has been developed by the Construction Industry Training Council, has a session which specifically focuses on loose-fill asbestos. And there are a number of registered training organisations providing asbestos awareness training, including the MBA, HIA, Creative Safety Initiatives, who are the training arm of CFMEU, the Capital Training Institute and Robson Environmental. According to WorkSafe ACT, over 9,000 people have undertaken mandatory asbestos training.

WorkSafe ACT have provided a guidance note on the training. The note touches on a few important matters. Firstly, what is the law in regard to it? It talks about section 19 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and section 445 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011. It also talks about those that have been trained previously. Any undertaking of training prior to 1 January 2008 is not accepted, and the worker must be retrained by an RTO who is accredited to deliver a 10314NAT course in asbestos awareness. Also, training undertaken between January 2008 and 30 December 2013 through an accredited RTO listed in the guidance note is accepted. Those that have done a particular course do not need to be retrained.

That is a very important point for those that are working on older homes across the territory, whether they are in the construction industry or an associated industry, and I encourage all that may be considering working in those areas to undertake this particular training in awareness of asbestos.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (12.10): I am pleased to rise briefly to contribute to this debate this afternoon and to acknowledge the very significant work that is now being done by the asbestos response task force in response to the very challenging and difficult circumstances being faced now by many hundreds if not thousands of Canberra households.

As the minister responsible for the best part of the last 12 months in particular when it comes to this matter, I am very pleased to see the comprehensive response that has been put in place by the government as our knowledge and understanding of the difficulties faced by property owners who have remnant loose-fill asbestos material in their homes has become more and more apparent.

I do not think anyone within the government fully anticipated the extent and the complexity of the issues that were emerging in relation to the remnant Mr Fluffy properties at the time when the initial advice was provided to householders by the government back in February this year.

What we did see following that advice going to householders in February of this year was a slow but growing level of concern, anxiety and stress associated with the realisation that many, many more homes than had ever really been seriously contemplated were continuing to be contaminated to an extent that, in many instances, was not safe or practical for those homes to continue to be occupied.

The government has worked very hard at responding to issues as and when they have become evident. I want to particularly thank Mr Andrew Kefford and his team for their work. The core of the team is largely based on a team of ACT public servants employed in the Office of Industrial Relations when I was the responsible minister. They have really driven this process forward. Their advice, their knowledge and their empathy with the circumstances faced by householders I think is critical as we continue to work towards a permanent resolution of this issue. I am grateful that they are lending their passion and lending their expertise to this task in the dedicated way that is now possible.

I am very conscious that for a number of months as we led up to the establishment of the asbestos response task force almost the entire work of the Office of Industrial Relations was on this issue alone and that there was no capacity for them to really properly do their other work in terms of industrial relations policy development and issues, and response and advice to government and the broader community.

That put some very significant strains on the capacity of this small, dedicated team of people. So I want to thank them for the advice they have given me and the assistance they have provided to me as the responsible minister at the time and commend them for that work and for the very important work they are continuing to do now. Many of them are within the asbestos response task force itself.

This is a fiendishly complex and difficult issue. There are not many urban areas in the world—in fact, it would be fair to say that Canberra is almost unique, if not unique, amongst urban areas globally—that have this level of penetration of loose-fill asbestos fluff or product fibre in residential properties. So our response is suitably going to also have to be fit for purpose for these very unique circumstances.

The challenge, of course, for householders is that so many of them are faced with a circumstance where their one key asset has been seriously compromised in terms of its financial value. Obviously for many of us in the community, and certainly for

many of these householders, their properties are their main investment and their main financial asset. Indeed, it is their financial future, whether they are a young family starting out or whether they are, for example, a retired couple. This is their financial future. It has been fatally compromised because of the continuing presence of this material in these properties.

What compounds that, of course, is that, unlike some other emergency where, say, your house was flooded or was destroyed as a result of a bushfire, there is no insurance. There is no safeguard or last resort available to you to recover your loss. Insurance does not cover issues associated with loss of value because of contamination with loose-fill asbestos fibre.

This is ultimately a space that government must step into. Whilst government does step into circumstances where there is a natural disaster, as it rightly should, in those circumstances there is at least still some private protection as well in place, such as through insurance arrangements. That is not the case here. So there is an even more compelling reason for the government to be in this space.

In the week or so leading up to the announced revision of portfolio responsibilities, I am grateful for the support and advice that the Chief Minister was able to lend me as the responsible minister as we ramped up our response to the ever-escalating level of concern and representations being received from property owners. I am also greatly encouraged by the non-partisan nature of this discussion to date. I would like to thank Mr Hanson and his colleagues and indeed all of the federal representatives on both sides of the political divide who have lent their support to this issue, because it does go beyond politics.

This is a problem that pre-dates the self-government of the territory. It is a problem that occurred despite the knowledge of certain commonwealth authorities at the time about the potential dangers and the potential risks and problems that would eventuate. So there is clearly an obligation on the part of the commonwealth as a jurisdiction to address and ameliorate this problem in coordination and cooperation with the ACT. I am encouraged that to date we have seen an increasingly positive, receptive and considered approach by the relevant commonwealth ministers. I trust that that is able to continue.

There is another issue, though, that needs to be addressed. That is the presence of this material in properties outside the ACT. In Queanbeyan, the south coast and other smaller rural communities in our region, this material is present in roofs and it has been there in situ pretty much ever since it has been installed. It has not been removed. It has not been remediated. These are real and pressing problems for those property owners as well. I think the response on the part of the New South Wales government has been disappointing. They have not had full regard to the issues that are clearly going to be present in relation to these properties.

I note that local governments in New South Wales have been far more proactive and concerned, and that is right and proper. But I think there is a real obligation on the part of other jurisdictions at a state level to engage more closely with this issue because those property owners too are facing real and meaningful detriment as a result of the presence of this material.

The amendment before us from Ms Porter is, I think, a very good agreed position on the issues that we face as a community and the responses we need to continue to pursue. Our first focus must be on continuing to provide support, immediate emergency relief and long-term certainty ultimately for all of these property owners. I know that that is the task the government is very strongly focused on.

I am very pleased that the Chief Minister has taken over all carriage of this matter because it is a whole-of-government issue. It moves beyond an individual portfolio. It is a whole-of-government issue, and that gives it the attention it deserves. (*Time expired.*)

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (12.20): I concur with all that has been said by members here today. It is great people are working together to make a reality for those that are affected by the Mr Fluffy problem, that we can offer them something. Hopefully, we get it right and hopefully we get it done quickly so that this lingering doubt that hangs over people's homes and their futures is removed.

For those that have not seen it, there is a double page spread in the *Canberra City News* edition this week by Adam Spence. There is one curious section where he talks about when this problem first came to light. I will quote what is said:

The Department of Territories issued public warnings and offered free insulation testing to home owners from at least 1984. A manual obtained from a Commonwealth department archive details the advice for homes containing asbestosfluff—

as it was known—

warning that fibres would infiltrate the living areas of homes through paths such as vents and lighting fixtures. Their concentration would increase over time, and their presence would be stirred by every draft from a door or window. Removal, the manual warned, would usually not be feasible, with any attempts to do so increasing the contamination and being unlikely to remove all the pervasive material.

I think it is a grim warning from 1984. As we now know, it is a true and accurate warning. What we have to do is find a permanent and lasting solution to this problem so that the lingering doubt does not hang over these people. Now is the time to address the issue. People should not have to revisit this year after year or decade after decade because we do not get it right.

I think the 1984 manual from the federal government clearly shows that this was a problem known many, many years ago. So now is the time to make sure that we get it right. It is not just for the people living in those homes. We have known of the dangers of asbestos for a long time. We hear the stories of the good old days when apprentices would grind the drums and shoes of brake systems. Effectively, they were making asbestos dust and sucking it in.

So it goes beyond the tradie. It is the friends of these people. Do you tell a family that you have a Mr Fluffy home? Do you have to tell the babysitter, the nanny or the cleaner? Do you have to tell the lady that delivers meals on wheels or the community nurse? Those that live in the homes are clearly most affected, but do you tell the parents of your son's best friend that he is entering a Mr Fluffy home?

There is a ramification beyond those that lived there for us as a community. It is important that we as a community respond. For those that owned the home and want to stay, who do not want anything done, there is the long-term problem then for the community. Subsequent owners might want to replace a cornice, knock out a wall, renovate a bathroom or extend a room. The problem will rear its ugly head again and again.

As others have said, and I agree, we need a permanent, lasting answer. We need a permanent and lasting solution. As Mr Hanson and the Chief Minister have mentioned, perhaps it is that they will all eventually be demolished. But let us have a good process that leads us to an outcome that secures the future for all of us.

I would like to commend Mr Hanson on his leadership on this issue as well as the Chief Minister. But it was Mr Hanson who first called for emergency relief funding of \$5 million. The government saw the wisdom of that and it upped the ante. It made \$10 million available. That is a good thing. It was Mr Hanson who came up with the idea for the accountable method to notify and keep residents informed. I am pleased to hear the Chief Minister give him the credit for that. It is working. We have seen the spike in the responses, because people just did not know.

Indeed, I grew up a house in Curtin that had some loose-fill asbestos in the roof. Dad rang and said, "Oh my God, what have I done?" I said, "Well, dad, you have never had a letter, you have not got a letter, and you did not have that sort of home." But for older people it must be very disconcerting. I have had contact from people who think they lived in a Mr Fluffy home in the 1970s or 1980s and wanted to know how they could find out. It goes beyond those that own the homes. They are clearly the most affected, but we have got to get this right for the entire community.

It does raise an issue. Mr Fluffy is the specific issue at this moment, but in the broad everywhere that we turn now in the ACT we seem to have some sort of problem with asbestos. There are long-term problems for the ACT. We know that when remediation was carried out on the old Australian government publishing site, they not only cleaned up lead-based inks but there were also problems with asbestos.

We know that the East Lake developments have encountered problems with asbestos. We know the brickworks has asbestos. Indeed, there was an article earlier in this week where we know that roads may now be going over such sites. Perhaps once we fix the Mr Fluffy issue we should have a survey and a plan to address long-term the issue of asbestos in the ACT so that we work out where else it might be and what else needs to be done so that we can actually eradicate this problem out of our community for the safety of all time.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (12.26): I will speak now to the amendment and close the debate. I thank everybody today for their contributions. I indicate that, as I discussed earlier, we will be supporting Ms Porter's amendment, which is an agreed amalgam of our two motions. I think this presents the position of this Assembly quite clearly. It is good that the position of this Assembly is reflected in the two motions being written so similar in their intent. I think that the only significant addition really that has carried over is the issue that we need to make sure that the task force is properly resourced. I think that that—right here, right now—is an important matter for families.

I will not re-litigate everything that has been said. I think the case has been made very well by all of those who spoke. They have raised different aspects of the situation, both historically and where we sit now—the impact on families, the great work of the task force, the action of the government, the complexity and the enormity of this issue.

What I would like to do in closing is reflect on the personal impact on families. I was at one of the meetings at Kambah with the Chief Minister and others. We have heard the stories firsthand, as many of you have from a great diversity of people in Canberra—older people who have been in their houses for years, younger families, people who are renting properties out, and so on.

I will leave you with an email I received from one family which is common in terms of the concerns people have. I think reading through many of the emails I received and reflecting on the conversations is important as we move forward. This does get difficult and it does get costly to remind ourselves of the impact on families. The email from a family in the Belconnen area starts by stating:

We settled on our home on 23 November 2013.

So this is only recently.

We have a two-year-old living in our home and a baby due in mid-October. The first we knew of Mr Fluffy, or that our home could still contain loose-fill asbestos, was on 23 July 2014, when we received a registered letter from the ACT Government Asbestos Taskforce.

So they have not been in their home long. This is their entire asset. They have a young child and a baby on the way. There are two pages of the concerns and the problems that they are facing. I will not read it all, but I will go to the end:

My husband and I are feeling totally overwhelmed with the situation we find ourselves in. We worry about the health impacts this could have for us and our children in 30 years' time. We cannot sleep, and spend every waking hour thinking about the financial ruin that we are facing.

There are a thousand other stories the same as that. I think that that is worth reminding ourselves of every time this gets difficult, every time this gets costly. These are the people that we represent, and these are the people that I am proud to say this Assembly has joined together unanimously to support today.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Asbestos—loose-fill insulation

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (12.30): I will not be proceeding with this motion.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Porter.

Sitting suspended from 12.30 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Canberra Hospital—medical wards

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, an external review was recently conducted into practices and procedures in the medical wards at the Canberra Hospital by an external consultant, I believe a Dr Brown, but not Peggy Brown; that is my understanding. Are you aware of this review? What organisation conducted the review and what are the findings?

MS GALLAGHER: No, I do not recall being aware of that review at all. I will have to check my records but it does not set off anything in my head. There are a lot of reviews done across Health. I can certainly find out and come back to the Assembly.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, a supplementary question.

MR HANSON: Minister, when you come back with that information, could you come back with an explanation as to the reason for conducting the review.

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, I am very happy to do that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Smyth, a supplementary question.

MR SMYTH: Minister, you might also have to take this on notice as you are unaware of the review. What actions will now be taken as a consequence of the review?

MS GALLAGHER: It sounds like you might have the review; do you? Suspicions are being raised.

Mr Smyth interjecting—

MS GALLAGHER: I am not aware of it—unless it is known by another name. I just put that caveat on it. I will come back to the Assembly with further information.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Again, Chief Minister, you might have to take it on notice but was the review prompted by a number of unexplained deaths in these wards?

MS GALLAGHER: Without knowing of the review and any other details about it at this point in time, I cannot answer that. It would seem very unlikely if that was the case that I would not know about it if it was commissioned into unexplained deaths.

Transport—light rail

MR COE: My question is to the Chief Minister. On 10 June 2014, the *Canberra Times* reported that “Chief Minister Katy Gallagher has drawn a line in the sand on the Gungahlin tram project, saying cabinet will not support a cost substantially beyond \$614 million, adjusted for today’s dollars.” Chief Minister, when was the \$614 million figure for light rail calculated?

MS GALLAGHER: I would have to check my records but I think it would be in the 2011-12 year.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, what is the cost, then, of light rail when calculated in 2014 dollars?

MS GALLAGHER: That work is currently being finalised for the information of cabinet, so it is not a figure I can provide you with today.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, at what dollar figure will the government abandon light rail?

MS GALLAGHER: I think Mr Coe quoted from the *Canberra Times*, which was in relation to a question I was asked by a journalist about what was the tolerance of cabinet in terms of the total project cost. Obviously, costing light rail is a very important part of the project. There is a lot of work underway at the moment in terms of finalising the final business case that will come to cabinet. Cabinet will look through all of that information, the details of that information, as we have been doing at every stage of the project, to make sure that the costs are reasonable, that they are affordable and that they are in line with industry benchmarks for similar projects where cost comparisons can be made.

One of the issues for the cabinet, if the project proceeds to the next stage, will be finalising the financing arrangements and going through that process. That may include private sector support. Details of those negotiations, when and if they happen, and how we can project the cost to the community in terms of that figure, remain to be resolved. Those decisions have not been taken.

The government is rock solid behind this project, just as you are rock-solid opposed to it. There is an enormous amount of work underway to make sure that the decisions

which underpin the next stage of capital metro are taken with all the information available to the cabinet at the time, with all the risks outlined, all the benefits outlined and all the consequences of doing nothing, which presumably is the Liberal Party's policy on the Gungahlin-Northbourne corridor that we would expect to see—a do-nothing policy, which is not something we accept. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Chief Minister, could you just remind the Assembly what the benefits of this project will be to the ACT?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Dr Bourke for the question. Unlike our colleagues opposite, the government has a long-term vision for Canberra, and that long-term vision does include change to the way we currently live and the way the city is designed. We believe Canberra, as the nation's capital, is deserving of a modern public transport system that builds upon the bus system that we have had in place since Canberra was established and that provides other benefits along that corridor and, indeed, across the city.

I was very heartened to hear of the consultations that have been had to date by capital metro that they are leading right across the city—the shopfront that they have had in Canberra where I have seen the updates coming in of people who are walking in and asking for information, the community sessions that they have held in Dickson, Gungahlin and on the weekend in Erindale; and I understand that on Friday they will be down in Tuggeranong—to actually talk with the community and, where they can, if there are concerns, to address the concerns of the community and explain about the project.

I support the work that is being done by Minister Corbell in leading this for the government and, indeed, for the very professional work that is being done by the capital metro board, despite the constant fearmongering that the Liberal Party have chosen to attack this project with. We have some very committed, professional, eminent Australians who are advising the government on this project. We are very pleased with the project as it has proceeded to date. I think a lot of the concerns that are being raised are concerns that we have seen when similar projects are delivered in the country. Have a look at what has happened on the Gold Coast: similar controversy and then they could not fit everybody on when those trams started rolling, and we would expect the same to happen here. (*Time expired.*)

Budget—north Canberra infrastructure

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer please outline how the 2014-15 budget invests in north Canberra?

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, I warn you. The Treasurer has the call.

MR BARR: I am so pleased those opposite are interested in anything that happens north of the lake. It is such a rare commodity, interest from the Liberal Party in these things.

Let us be clear that the 2014-15 ACT budget makes significant investments in the fastest growing parts of our city that are, of course, in the northern suburbs. This acknowledges the needs of the community, particularly responding to that rapid growth that is occurring particularly in Gungahlin.

Overall, the 2014-15 capital works program is providing a record level of investment in infrastructure for the territory—\$470 million in new works announced as part of the budget joining a \$716 million works in progress program. In north Canberra in particular the budget is providing \$472 million for capital projects that are either new, commencing in this coming fiscal year or currently underway.

It is, of course, increasingly important for the territory government to invest in infrastructure projects that keep our economy growing and invest in job creation. This capital investment in infrastructure is vital to maintaining that momentum in our economy. A well-targeted infrastructure program promotes long-term improvements in productivity, which leads to long-term growth and improved living standards for the community as a whole.

The ACT government is promoting employment opportunities in the Gungahlin town centre through the construction of an ACT government office building in the town centre. This building will have office accommodation for more than 650 ACT government employees. It will also provide for a government shopfront and childcare facilities to service the growing needs of the Gungahlin community. It is just one example of how the government is helping to cater for the rapid growth in the northern part of the city.

Most of the population growth in the ACT in the last 12 months has occurred in the north of Canberra. Gungahlin has the highest growth rate of any region in the territory and accounted for two-thirds of the total growth in the territory in the last 12 months. Much of this has been due to growth in new suburbs—Bonner, Casey, Harrison and Crace.

However, infill development in our existing suburbs is also increasing Canberra's population, and the highest growth rates there have been occurring in the CBD, which is up 12 per cent on the previous year. As improvements in the Northbourne corridor are undertaken, the population in this area will also increase. Likewise, the redevelopment of West Basin and city to the lake will provide further opportunities for an increase in population in the inner north.

The government acknowledges the need to continue to provide high quality infrastructure and facilities for new and existing residents. In the 2014-15 budget we have continued to invest in north Canberra and Gungahlin to ensure that this important part of the city can contribute to economic growth and also enjoy the benefits of that growth.

To mention a few examples, the budget provided funding for: stage 4 of the Lyneham sports precinct, and work is well underway there; provision of the Gungahlin Leisure Centre's operating budget; the government office building in Gungahlin; a range of new Canberra Connect services in the Gungahlin town centre; further work on the Gungahlin joint emergency services centre; and \$20 million in funding for a range of upgrades to the Gungahlin to the city main transport corridor.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Can the Treasurer inform the members how the 2014-15 budget invests in land release in north Canberra?

MR BARR: There is a \$21 million investment in 2014-15 and across the forward estimates in land release in north Canberra. This includes the upgrade of five intersections at Dickson, which will enable the redevelopment of the Dickson group centre, which includes the development of two supermarkets and a range of specialty shops to be located on the site currently used as a surface car park—another site identified for mixed-use development, which will include retail facilities, which will, of course, further enhance Dickson as the retail hub for north Canberra.

The Majura parkway and Majura link road will enable direct vehicle access to the new Majura west precinct at Majura Park. This will allow for ease of access to the new bulky goods site to be developed by IKEA and also provide access to two additional significant commercial development sites. This development will improve road safety and congestion in the area and support the growth of retail and other sectors in the Majura west precinct.

The Throsby access road and western intersection project is essential for the programmed release of the Throsby estate in Gungahlin. This will support the release of about 880 dwellings over the next four years.

These projects will ensure that north Canberra has an ongoing supply of commercial, residential and retail space to enable the region to continue its strong growth.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: What investments will there be in Belconnen, Minister Barr?

MR BARR: There is a significant range of investments in Belconnen, most particularly in the land release area associated with the Riverview development. We are, of course, also seeking to invest in new community recreation facilities in Higgins as well as a number of upgrades to amenities, including footpaths, local shopping centres and other municipal services right throughout the Belconnen region, including playgrounds. There is a significant program occurring in each minister's portfolio responsibilities around upgrading community facilities and infrastructure right across Belconnen.

I know, for example, that Dr Bourke has been advocating very strongly for a local shopping centre upgrade at Cook, and we are very pleased that this budget delivers progress on that particular project. We are also looking to further invest in the Belconnen town centre, with a variety of land releases and infrastructure programs that will assist the town centre to continue its very impressive recent investment attraction.

It is good to see the private sector also investing in Belconnen. There are a number of projects that are underway that have been facilitated by government infrastructure works that have allowed the private sector to undertake significant investments in the town centre. In the context of urban renewal, I think the Belconnen town centre has certainly demonstrated both its adaptability to change and a very strong private sector investor interest, ensuring that government infrastructure works are leveraging private sector investment.

Those sorts of partnerships, like we have seen between the government and Westfield that have upgraded the Belconnen bus interchange, I think, set a very good example as we move into the upgrades of the Woden bus interchange, which is another key priority for the government. Ultimately we are seeking partnerships for new investments. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Treasurer, how is the government investing in the renewal of the Gungahlin-to-city corridor in the 2014-15 budget?

MR BARR: This transport corridor is clearly a very important part of the government's overall transport policy which helps to deliver faster, more convenient and more sustainable transport options for this fastest growing and most congested part of our city. Capital metro will of course run in its first stage from the city to Gungahlin along Northbourne Avenue and Flemington Road. It will deliver high quality, reliable and frequent public transport down one of our city's busiest corridors.

Light rail will certainly provide a competitive alternative to driving and help manage congestion as this particular corridor of population continues to grow. The government has identified the need to undertake some preparatory works in relation to the renewal of this transport corridor. The early enabling works package has been identified as part of the preliminary work associated with the metro project.

Aside from investment in capital metro, as part of the budget the government is investing \$20 million over the next two years in renewal of infrastructure in that corridor. The works will improve travel and amenity in the corridor and help for the preparation of the capital metro project. The range of improvements that are funded as part of this package over the next two years include road improvements, footpath improvements, drainage works, intersection works and alignment preparation.

Transport—light rail

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, you have previously speculated that the cost of relocating the pipes and wires that run along the light rail route may or may not be factored into the overall cost of capital metro. What is the estimated cost of relocating the pipes and wires along the proposed light rail route?

MR CORBELL: A final figure is yet to be determined in relation to that matter—the matter that Mr Doszpot asked about. That is why the Capital Metro Agency is undertaking right now detailed investigations along the corridor. We are employing local Canberra-based firms to do that work. A series of investigations are occurring in multiple sites along the Northbourne Avenue and Flemington Road corridor to confirm the presence or otherwise of infrastructure in the ground. That includes confirming that infrastructure is where it is marked on plans, where perhaps it is not marked on plans but nevertheless exists, and to ascertain also its condition. Those are important investigations which will help inform the Capital Metro Agency's assessment of these issues.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, can you now confirm whether this cost will be included in the \$614 million stated cost of capital metro?

MR CORBELL: As the Chief Minister has previously indicated in her earlier answer, the \$614 million figure was a figure based on 2012 dollars. The government is looking at—

Mr Coe: It said 2010 in the paper.

MR CORBELL: I beg your pardon; 2011 dollars, I should have said: 2011 dollars. The government is currently finalising its revised business case, which takes account of a range of inputs, including these issues that Mr Doszpot raises.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, when will the relocation of these pipes and wires be complete?

MR CORBELL: That is dependent on the final delivery model that is chosen by the government for the delivery of this project. It is simply pre-emptive to speculate on those matters at this time.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, where will these relocated pipes and wires go, and will all the trees on Northbourne need to be removed prior to the removal of these utilities?

MR CORBELL: In relation to those matters, it is simply speculative and far too early to pre-empt the outcomes of the investigations. The government, through capital metro, needs to complete those investigations before it can definitively decide what the outcome is in relation to those matters.

ACTTAB Ltd—tax revenue

MR SMYTH: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, it has been reported in the *Australian* newspaper that the real prize in Tabcorp's acquisition of ACTTAB is the 50-year licence at zero tax on tote earnings and less than one per cent on the sports bookmaking licence. In NSW the TAB pays 19 per cent and 10 per cent respectively on these earnings and in Victoria the TAB pays 7.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent. Treasurer, why did the government decide to forgo these tax revenues in the sale of ACTTAB?

MR BARR: We did not, Madam Speaker. We have made no changes to our taxation arrangements.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, how much revenue to the territory is the government forgoing with this deal?

MR BARR: None.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Treasurer, was this the result of negotiations with Tabcorp or is this something the government offered to the table as an enticement?

MR BARR: There was a full, open process with selected bidders in relation to the final sale of ACTTAB. That process was undertaken under the strictest probity guidelines. I am not at liberty to comment any further.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Treasurer, why is the government giving Tabcorp a 50-year tax-free ride while taxing home owners and contract workers to the additional total of \$80 million over the next four years?

MR BARR: We are not.

Parking—fines

MRS JONES: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, parking fine revenue is expected to increase from \$9.4 million in 2013-14 to \$14.4 million in 2014-15. That is in addition to indexing traffic and parking fines at six per cent in 2014-15 and over the forward estimates, and eight additional parking inspectors and two support staff being employed. Does the government intend to generate parking fine revenue as a result of the introduction of paid parking in the parliamentary triangle?

MR CORBELL: As Attorney-General, I am responsible for parking operations, so I am happy to take the question from Mrs Jones. The short answer is no; the government is not receiving any revenue associated with the introduction of paid parking in the parliamentary triangle, in those areas administered by the National Capital Authority.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, how much parking fine revenue does the government hope to raise through new means?

MR CORBELL: There is no definitive figure as part of a subset of that overall increase. But what we anticipate—and this is reflected in the budget papers—is that, first of all, there will be improved revenue collection due to a much lower failure rate of ticket machines in existing ACT government-owned car parks. As members would be aware, the previous ticket machines have been replaced with new technology. There was a significant failure rate of the old parking machine technology which led to uncollected revenue or revenue being foregone. We expect a much lower level of revenue being foregone because of a much higher level of reliability of the new ticket machines.

The government is putting in place additional parking inspectors, and that obviously will generate additional parking revenue due to increased enforcement activity. The government has put in place these additional parking inspectors because of the significant number of complaints that it was receiving from members in the community about parking problems, in particular, parking problems in neighbourhoods—parking on verges, parking on public land—which is causing problems in neighbourhoods. Certainly I have been getting a significant number of complaints about that, including from members of the Assembly. The government has responded to that by putting in place more parking inspectors to improve enforcement and compliance and make sure everyone is treated fairly and equally as we are able to respond to more complaints as and when they arise.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, what other benefits do these new ticketing machines provide for the Canberra community?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for the supplementary. The improvements to the ticketing technology certainly facilitate a greater range of payment options for drivers—in particular, credit card payment, which we know has been taken up quite significantly by drivers using long stay car parks owned and operated by the ACT government. What we are also seeing, though, is the deployment of an increasing use of the app-based compatibility with the ticket machines. That is very welcome as well.

So we have a much better level of usability in terms of the customer and we have increased reliability in terms of revenue collection, which is important for the ratepayer in terms of making sure that machines are operating when they should and are able to accept payment when it is made.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, will ACT parking inspectors be policing the parliamentary triangle?

MR CORBELL: No, they will not. The government has been in discussions with the National Capital Authority. They did ask the ACT government to put forward a proposal for their consideration. The National Capital Authority has determined not to engage the ACT government's parking inspection capability and instead is securing those services elsewhere.

Health—cancer treatment

MS PORTER: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, today you opened the Capital Region Cancer Centre. Can you update the Assembly on what this new facility means for the people of the ACT and surrounding region who are being treated for cancer?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Porter for her question and her ongoing interest in health facilities across the ACT. It was great today to officially open the Capital Region Cancer Service with Senator Zed Seselja representing the Hon Peter Dutton, the federal Minister for Health. This facility has been a long time in the planning and delivery stages and I have no doubt that it will be a very welcome addition to the health system for the people of the ACT and the surrounding region.

The Capital Region Cancer Centre is a purpose built facility designed to house the regional cancer service. The centre will provide comprehensive cancer care to the ACT community as well as to the southern New South Wales local health district.

The five-story building is an addition close to the existing radiation oncology building where the linear accelerator bunkers have been built in recent years. Overall, it offers 5,000 square metres of floor space. Senator Seselja and I just prior to question time were given a quick tour of the building. There is office space for clinical staff. There are purpose-built specially designed treatment spaces for people having day outpatient care such as chemotherapy.

There are places for bone marrow biopsies and, importantly, the focus of the centre is to collocate all the clinicians involved in cancer care into one place so that the services are wrapped around the patient rather than the patient having to go and visit one specialist and then another specialist and then go for another appointment in another part of the hospital.

It will certainly be a very big improvement not just for patients and families but also for staff who are very dedicated in the work that they do for the Capital Region Cancer Centre. There are five levels. There is a family space where people can go while they wait for their loved ones or they have treatment. The Canberra Hospital Foundation has donated 40 recliner chairs for people to sit in while they have their treatment. It has been a real partnership.

I note that the late Christopher Peters, former citizen of the year, and his wife Jo have donated two exquisite art works for the building. It is a real privilege to have been involved in the partnerships that have been formed in developing this centre since 2006 when I first met with clinicians around their idea for this centre to where it has been finished today.

I would like to pay tribute to Professor Robin Stuart-Harris who was up until recently the clinical director of the Capital Region Cancer Service. He was the first clinician in my door when I was a newly appointed minister to talk to me about wanting to secure funds for a cancer centre. He then went and lobbied the commonwealth. Along with submissions that we were able to put to the commonwealth, we secured almost \$30 million of funding in 2008-09 for this centre to be built.

I think that anyone in this place will have been touched by someone who has experienced cancer, who has maybe passed away from cancer or who has undergone cancer treatment. I know that when clinical services start on 18 August this year the experience for patients and their families will have taken a giant leap forward.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, how many people receive treatment for cancer in the ACT each year and how will this facility benefit them?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank Ms Porter for the supplementary. The 2014 Chief Health Officer's report shows that 1,473 people were diagnosed with cancer in the ACT in 2009. The Chief Health Officer's report also shows that the risk of ACT residents developing cancer before the age of 85 for men was one in two and for women was one in three. We also know from our own occasions of service that in the 2013-14 financial year 73,563 occasions of service were provided to non-inpatients by the cancer service. The cancer services provided care to over 1,500 new patients in radiation oncology, 1,000 patients in medical oncology, 705 in haematology and 596 in immunology.

So you can see from those numbers just how important having high quality services delivered through high quality facilities is. We also have high levels of people coming for cancer treatment from the surrounding region. That was an important part of our securing the funds from the commonwealth for this regional cancer centre when our submission was put to them several years ago. Along with the cancer service, we also have services like Duffy House, which was part of that funding from the commonwealth, where we have capacity now for people to come and spend short amounts of time in Canberra, if they live outside Canberra, to attend as outpatients,

which is how the majority of cancer services are currently provided. That is certainly something that, again, makes it important in terms of our role as a regional healthcare provider.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, with the consolidation and relocation into the cancer centre, will any existing facilities then become vacant and, if so, what is the intended use of those existing facilities?

MS GALLAGHER: There will be some, obviously, vacating of places. Unfortunately it is not all in one place in the hospital. It forms part of the decanting and staging project, but CRCC will still be using the radiation-oncology area for radiation treatment. Fourteen B, the in-patient ward, remains the in-patient ward. It is really co-locating into one place a number of clinicians who are dotted around the hospital and also some of those treatment areas. Those decisions will be taken.

Those spaces are not being filled at the moment with any specific service, certainly the treatment spaces, because they have not been refurbished or they have not been allocated for a particular purpose and they are not ideal facilities, as anyone who has visited there would know, in terms of where the chemotherapy is being provided. It will go into consideration for the next stage of the hospital rebuild.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, how does ACT Health work with the New South Wales regional health services to deliver cancer services?

MS GALLAGHER: This is one of those areas where there is a real strength of partnership between New South Wales and ACT health services. In actual fact, at the moment we are consulting on the draft ACT and southern New South Wales local health districts cancer services plan, which is going to be the high level planning document that will guide the delivery of public cancer services to residents of ACT and southern New South Wales for the next five years. Having a combined regional strategic plan in this area shows the strength of commitment from both governments to start thinking regionally when we are planning our health services and to not replicate services where it does not make sense to do so. That consultation is out now.

We also, through our specialist services, provide outreach services to residents of New South Wales and have cancer treatment centres in Goulburn, Moruya, Bega and Cooma. These are all supported by senior specialists from the Capital Region Cancer Centre, which allows people to have their treatment closer to home. I know that that is what everybody wants. If you are going through this it is much easier if you are able to access your treatment close to home. I really think we should acknowledge the efforts that clinical staff go to to ensure that their expertise, even if it is located in Canberra, can be shared so that local health services can deliver that important treatment close to where people live.

Disability services—transition schedule

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Disability. Minister, the transition schedule for eligible people to start their planning conversations with the National Disability Insurance Agency states that children born on or after 1 July 2012 are the first on the list to start accessing the NDIS. How many current clients of Therapy ACT in that age bracket have already transitioned to the scheme since 1 July?

MS BURCH: I do not have the numbers—most of that sits with the NDIA—but I am happy to bring back what I can. We are just a bit over a month through the introduction of the NDIA. The feedback I have had has been very positive. I know a number of families and individuals have started that planning process. I think there are only a number of completed plans, but that replicates what has happened in other jurisdictions as well, as everybody gets more comfortable with this. In short, I do not have the numbers. I can find out if I can secure those numbers out of the NDIA for you, Mr Wall.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, I imagine this will also be taken on notice: how many current clients of Therapy ACT in that age bracket have already been assessed and are still waiting to transition?

MS BURCH: Again, I will take that on notice, Mr Wall.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how is Therapy ACT communicating with current clients about their eligibility for the NDIS?

MS BURCH: Therapy ACT is working with its existing clients and certainly making them aware of the timing of the transition schedule. The NDIA is also making contact with those individuals and families as well and inviting them in to the agency so they can commence the planning process.

It was a weekend or so ago when there was a very well-attended forum, a meet the providers forum, that was held, as I understand it, at Hedley Beare. I think 120 families went through that and really welcomed the opportunity to meet and talk firsthand with the providers we have.

Also, as I have made the commitment here—it will be part of my statement this afternoon—we have secured a date of 13 September for another expo with a particular focus on the younger children and their families for early intervention. Again, that is another great chance for the local community to meet those providers that are there at the ready to support them.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how is Therapy ACT measuring the current and future take-up rate of their current clients to the NDIS?

MS BURCH: With respect to the clients that we know, we are certainly working to schedule and introducing them to the NDIA. At that point it really becomes a matter for the individuals, their families and the agency to complete those plans. As I said, it has been a tad over a month, and certainly people are recognising the change, but nothing is coming to me to say there is great concern out there. With respect to those families, those individuals that have recently been born or are not known to Therapy ACT, if we become aware of them through our normal mainstream intake system, we will refer them. If they are within that phase-in group, we will refer them on straight-off to the NDIA, and support them as we can through our broader play groups and mainstream services.

Kangaroos—cull

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. Minister, there now have been several instances of vandalism of government property by animal activists opposed to the government's kangaroo cull program. On 18 June 2014, the media reported that you said that "the 'senseless act of vandalism' was disappointing" and "This all costs the government and it's an unfortunate additional expense that is borne by the Canberra taxpayer." Minister, what form of civil disobedience against governments is acceptable?

Mr Corbell: Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell has a point of order.

Mr Corbell: I think the question asks Mr Rattenbury for an expression of opinion. Further, it is hard for me to see how his observations on matters in relation to civil disobedience in general fall within his ministerial portfolio responsibilities.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the first part of the point of order, I think that it is possibly a line ball. Could you just repeat the question, please—the actual question.

MS LAWDER: Certainly. What form of civil disobedience against governments is acceptable?

MADAM SPEAKER: Do you want to make a contribution to the point of order, Mr Coe?

Mr Coe: I do, thank you. Look, I think—

MADAM SPEAKER: In that case, you usually say, "On the point of order, Madam Speaker". It is just so that I am not mind reading all the time.

Mr Coe: On the point of order, Madam Speaker, if we are going to get into the habit of calling such questions out of order because they are an expression of opinion, we

are going to rule out the vast majority of questions that get asked by members on both sides of the chamber. Even “What disruption will the relocation of these pipes cause?” is a form of expressing an opinion. There are so many questions that are in fact going to be expressions of opinion. Ministers are in their role to exercise their judgement. It is for that reason that we think questions like this are appropriate.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order, I think that it is quite clear that the issue of vandalism on this occasion falls within Mr Rattenbury’s purview, because it was vandalism of TAMS property and Mr Rattenbury, according to the quote that Ms Lawder used in her preamble, has already engaged in this. Therefore I will allow the question.

MR RATTENBURY: I think Ms Lawder has done a perfectly good job of recalling my views on this matter. She has quoted my comments and she has answered her own question.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Withdraw that, please, Mr Hanson.

Mr Rattenbury interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: No, he does not need to. He just needs to withdraw it.

Mr Hanson: Do I have to withdraw? I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Hanson. A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why have you identified this act of civil disobedience as disappointing but not the Greenpeace CSIRO break-in in 2011?

MR RATTENBURY: Similar to my previous answer, as Ms Lawder has already quoted, I indicated my views in the *Canberra Times* on this matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, how is the 2011 Greenpeace vandalism different to the 2014 kangaroo cull inspired vandalism?

MR RATTENBURY: I have no comments to make on that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what have these acts of vandalism cost the government to rectify?

MR RATTENBURY: I will need to take that question on notice for Mr Wall. There have been two incidents: one at the Athllon Drive depot of TAMS and one at the Holder depot. Both those incidents caused considerable damage. TAMS was certainly investigating whether these might be covered by insurance; I have not had an update on that recently.

Certainly the incident at the Holder depot was particularly unstrategic on the part of the activists if they were seeking to have an impact on the kangaroo cull—all they did was damage equipment that was used by City Services for cleaning the city. This resulted in a delay in the cleaning of various shopping centres, public toilets and other public amenities around the city.

Emergency services—Gungahlin

MS BERRY: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, could you please outline for the Assembly how the 2014-15 budget provides for the future use of the Gungahlin Joint Emergency Services Centre?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for the question. \$450,000 has been provided for over the next two financial years in the current budget to examine the future use of the Gungahlin joint emergency services centre to meet the needs of the ongoing growth of the Gungahlin district.

The JESC accommodates currently the ACT Fire & Rescue Service at Gungahlin station, along with the ACT Ambulance Service Gungahlin station, the ACT Policing station, as well as facilities for the ACT State Emergency Service and the relevant ACT Rural Fire Service brigade, the Gungahlin brigade.

At the time that the JESC was first opened in 1994, ACT Policing serviced a patrol area of approximately 5,000 residents. The ACT Policing section within the facility operated as a shopfront. It was staffed between 7 am and 11 pm each day. Since that time the population of Gungahlin has grown to approximately 65,000 residents. Obviously, demand for policing services has grown as well during that time. The station now operates as a 24/7 facility. It has a force of 37 members currently stationed at the JESC on a roster basis.

There have been a number of upgrades in order to increase the capacity of the existing Gungahlin station and improve work flow for policing officers in that station, with the most recent works completed last year. These works have provided relief for police operations, but we will continue to see capacity challenges with the existing station facility as the number of police required for the Gungahlin district continues to grow as the population continues to grow.

The government has provided \$450,000 to allow us to undertake a feasibility and due diligence study on the future requirements for ACT Policing and the ESA as a whole at the current JESC. This will allow us to make informed and detailed decisions as to what future capital investments are needed to address the accommodation pressures for ACT Policing and other agencies within the ACT Emergency Services Agency over the short to medium term.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, what will the feasibility study review?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Berry for the supplementary. The feasibility study will review and advise on a range of issues. These include space and functional requirements for all the services—police, ambulance, fire and rescue, RFS and SES. It will also look at future requirements and demographic trends that will drive demand for service delivery. It will look at the capacity of the existing facility to meet requirements now and into the future. It will look at growth or expansion capacity within the existing JESC to meet future needs. It will assess alternative sites in Gungahlin for ACT Policing and/or the relevant emergency services. It will prepare a detailed report and business case for government consideration in future budget deliberations. The study will also look at issues such as the development of a functional design brief, site due diligence, concept designs and site massing studies, procurement and financial analysis, cost planning, risk and a risk report.

I think this is the right investment to make as we continue to work to meet the growing demand in the Gungahlin district. It is the fastest growing area of our city. It has seen very significant population growth over the last decade. That is expected to continue and we need to put in place the planning now to continue to meet that demand. This will certainly do that work for us to make future decisions in future budgets and to make sure that ACT Policing and all of our emergency services have the facilities they need to deliver their critical services to the Gungahlin community.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, when is the feasibility report expected to be completed?

MR CORBELL: I thank Dr Bourke for the supplementary. I am advised that the feasibility study will commence, subject to, of course, the passage of the budget, in the final quarter of this year and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2015. It is worth highlighting that the population of Gungahlin is forecast to expand to 90,000 residents by the year 2021, and this really does underpin why the government is making this investment now as we plan future capacity for the police and emergency services in Gungahlin.

Ms Gallagher: I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Supplementary answer to question without notice **Health—antenatal visits**

MS GALLAGHER: Yesterday, Mrs Jones asked me about the National Health Performance Authority's report *Healthy communities: child and maternal health in 2009-2012*. It related to why the ACT had one of the lowest attendance rates in the country for antenatal visits and the footnote relating to that around the data collection.

I can advise Mrs Jones and the Assembly that in the ACT this data has been collected from the woman's maternity card, which is normally not given until the 16th week of pregnancy, on their first antenatal clinic visit at the hospital. There have not been procedures in place for the hospitals to record when women had their first antenatal visit if that occurred with a GP. Processes are being changed now to capture the first GP visit for the woman. That should fix this anomaly. It is hoped that it will be reflected in data collected on 2014 births.

Housing—homelessness

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.25): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that 4-10 August 2014 is National Homeless Persons' Week;
- (b) homelessness causes devastating personal harm, significantly impacts on society and costs the government;
- (c) one in three people experiencing homelessness present at an emergency department in a year, which is more than the average rate;
- (d) a quarter of people experiencing homelessness were charged with a criminal offence in the past six months, and one in three of those in prison reported being homeless in the month before, which is more than the general population;
- (e) people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be unemployed than those in the general population;
- (f) that a safe and suitable place to live underpins a full and healthy life and enables social inclusion, education, health and employment opportunities; and
- (g) the solution to homelessness lies in the provision of more housing, specifically affordable housing, together with targeted support to enable people to sustain their tenancies; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) increase the supply of affordable housing in the ACT;
- (b) continue to implement innovative models as well as continue those that have proven successful in reducing disadvantage to vulnerable Canberrans; and
- (c) report back to the Assembly on progress.

I rise today to speak to this motion to mark national Homeless Persons Week. It is timely for us to reflect on the struggles that are faced daily by so many Australians, and more specifically Canberrans, and what we as a society can be doing to improve the lives of those who need our help.

The ABS statistical definition of homelessness says a person is considered homeless:

... if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

We must all be very clear that homelessness is not houselessness and it is not rooflessness. It means not having a safe, secure place to call home. Many people immediately think of people experiencing homelessness as the rough sleepers, people you may see on the streets at night—the most visible kind of homelessness—with their sleeping bag, huddled in a corner. This is a bit of a stereotype, and it is only a small fraction of people who are considered homeless, especially here in Canberra, where only two per cent of people experiencing homelessness are rough sleepers.

People experiencing homelessness include people who are couch surfing, people sleeping in their cars or those who have left domestic violence situations and may be in a temporary refuge with no home to go to. It may be that the sole breadwinner of a family has been in an accident or has an injury and can no longer work; suddenly, their lifestyle is no longer supported and their rent can no longer be paid. Not long after that, an eviction notice comes and they enter into homelessness.

Access to safe and secure housing is one of the most basic of human rights. It is essential for human survival with dignity, and it is essential to give people the best shot at life, the best chance to have a good education, the best chance to find and keep employment and the best chance to be in good health. Adequate housing provides everyone with the greatest opportunity to contribute positively to our society.

The 2011 census showed that there were 1,785 people experiencing homelessness in the ACT, which, according to the census, was the second highest rate after the Northern Territory. And if you ask community organisations around the ACT, you will note that they estimate that the figure is higher than that. It is a serious issue for us.

We must also think of the families in our city who are hovering on the brink of homelessness, those we call at risk of homelessness. There are somewhere in the realm of 9,000 families in Canberra struggling so much with the cost of rent and their home loans that they forgo basics such as food or leave the heater off in winter. They forgo school excursions for their children. I have also heard of people who do not buy batteries for their hearing aids because they cannot afford them.

The estimates committee heard that one in two people are turned away from services. Homelessness is a moral blight on our society. I am sure we all agree it is not acceptable that people in our city are unable to obtain safe and secure accommodation for themselves and their families. Yet despite all of us agreeing on this, the problem continues. This indicates the complexity of this issue. It is a multifaceted challenge and it needs a multipronged approach; none of us would claim to have all the answers.

When we are thinking about those experiencing homelessness and what actions need to be taken, we need to also take time to think about the effect this has on society in its entirety. Homelessness causes devastating personal harm and ultimately impacts on society and creates a significant cost to government. Take the health system, for example. One in three people experiencing homelessness present at an emergency department in a year, much higher than the general rate of only 13 per cent of people across Australia. It is around 33 per cent for those who are experiencing homelessness. Over a six-month period, on average, a quarter of people experiencing homelessness were charged with a criminal offence. One in three people in prison reported being homeless in the month leading up to their offence. We have also heard many times about the homelessness issues facing people who are leaving prison and other care situations. Statistics clearly show that those who do not have adequate stable accommodation are more likely to be unemployed and are far less likely to be able to hold down a job, if they have one, when they enter into homelessness.

High rates of homelessness indicate that housing is unaffordable or inaccessible. The solution to homelessness lies in the provision of more affordable housing and bridging the gap between social housing and the private market. The government needs to work to increase the supply of affordable housing in the ACT and make housing more affordable. I was pleased that the commonwealth government renewed funding for the national partnership agreement on homelessness for another year, but we cannot rely solely on commonwealth programs and funding; we must do everything we can as a territory government to help out vulnerable members of our society.

Recently, Minister Barr spoke at ACT Shelter about the need for more affordable housing, which is positive, and I agree. But at that time he did not mention the supports required to enable people to sustain their tenancies and leave the cycle of homelessness. That is vital for long-term solutions. Simply putting a roof over people's heads does not necessarily address the structural drivers behind why they became homeless in the first place.

My motion today in the Assembly is not a partisan motion; it is something that all members of this Assembly should be able to agree on. I genuinely believe we want to reduce and prevent homelessness; we can all acknowledge that there is an issue of homelessness in the ACT; and we all need to continue to work to resolve the issue, as well as addressing the underlying structural causes of homelessness. I call on the government today to make this issue a priority for them. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events) (3.32):

Homeless Persons Week 2014 seeks to raise awareness about homelessness in Australia and the experiences of the people who are impacted by homelessness. Data from the most recent census shows that on census night 2011 there were 1,785 people experiencing homelessness in the ACT. The majority of these people were in homelessness accommodation; some were couch surfing and some were sleeping rough in cars, in tents or on the street.

There are many factors that contribute to homelessness. These factors include family violence, financial hardship, substance abuse, mental health issues and exiting care or custodial settings. Homelessness remains a complex issue that affects people of all ages, genders and social and economic backgrounds.

The government recognises the very real challenges that many face. New administrative arrangements will strengthen the government's capacity to continue to meet the needs of vulnerable Canberrans and to deliver upon our priorities. For housing and homelessness services, our priorities focus on developing safe and affordable housing options. We continue to work with the community sector to provide services for people who are experiencing homelessness, along with other supports and assistance to enable them to live their lives to the fullest.

The government is developing a human services blueprint, a whole-of-system reform agenda to better utilise government investment in social outcomes. The blueprint enables the community and health, education and justice systems to work in alliance to join up support to people. It offers all Canberrans the right service at the right time for the right duration. One of the first initiatives of the blueprint is the one human services gateway which commenced on 1 July. The gateway brings together a range of government and community services in an accessible service hub. These services include Housing ACT, the Office for Women, Disability ACT, the children, youth and family support gateway, the National Disability Insurance Agency and a range of community partners.

The government recognises the challenges associated with operating in today's environment and providing services to vulnerable people in need. In partnership with the commonwealth and the specialist homeless sector, the territory government has made a number of announcements in this area.

Recently, the ACT entered into the 2014-15 national partnership agreement on homelessness. This matched a one-year agreement enabling service delivery to continue in the territory. In addition, the common ground project in Gungahlin is expected to be operational early next year. The ACT government has committed around \$14 million to the project, in addition to commonwealth funding and other privately sourced donations. On completion, common ground will be a 40-home community housing development, with 50 per cent of the units allocated to long-term homeless singles and couples and 50 per cent available as affordable rental homes.

An important service is provided through the emergency departments of Canberra and Calvary hospitals. They do not collect demographic data in relation to homelessness at the time of a patient's presentation to the department; quite simply, everyone is treated equally within our emergency departments. Homeless status or otherwise is not relevant to the treatment provided to people on presentation in our emergency

departments. Social work services are available through the emergency department for those patients who require additional support services in the community.

On 22 July, the Chief Minister officially opened the primary healthcare service at the early morning centre at Canberra City Uniting Church. This will be trialled for a 12-month period. It is a new primary healthcare service that will provide accessible healthcare to vulnerable and disadvantaged people who are disconnected from mainstream primary healthcare services. It is a partnership between ACT Health, ACT Medicare Local, Interchange General Practice and the National Health Cooperative.

Under the parliamentary agreement, the government established a community legal centre hub which co-locates legal centres and commits just over \$1 million in the budget. The government has also invested \$900,000 over three years in the innovative Street Law outreach legal service for the homeless. Street Law has provided early intervention outreach services to one of the most vulnerable groups of Canberrans.

High levels of disadvantage are associated with a lower likelihood of taking action and seeking professional advice in response to legal problems. Groups of people who are likely to experience high levels of disadvantage include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, people who are homeless and people who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The 2012 LAW survey report on legal need in the ACT indicated that 50 per cent of Canberrans experience at least one legal problem a year and 20 per cent experience three or more. Many vulnerable people who have legal problems, particularly those who have multiple legal problems, often experience accompanying effects as a result of legal problems that are left unaddressed. This can include stress-related illness, physical ill health, relationship breakdown, having to move home and, of course, significant financial strain.

With its outreach approach to service delivery, Street Law provides its services in a way that fits the clients it needs to reach, clients who are less likely to come into a government office but do attend other services which Street Law can provide.

These initiatives, together with many others that operate across the broad continuum of service delivery in the territory, provide a pretty comprehensive network of support and assistance to help people experiencing homelessness.

Suggestions that the solution to homelessness lies in the provision of more housing that is affordable is only part of the solution to the complex issue of homelessness. There is clearly a supply-side challenge, and we seek to respond to that, but the issue is more complex than just that.

We have an opportunity here in the ACT, as a result of the Chief Minister's announcements in relation to portfolios, to align Housing, Treasury and Economic Development. I think it is the first time in the country that these strategic responsibilities have been aligned. Placing housing in this economic development sphere provides a significant opportunity to not only stimulate the territory's economy at this time but make a real dent in the need to supply more affordable housing in the territory.

Since the release of the affordable housing action plan in 2007, the government has made a series of policy interventions to improve housing affordability. Now in its third phase, the affordable housing action plan includes a total of 98 separate actions which aim to address a wide range of issues impacting affordability.

But the most fundamental issue driving housing affordability is supply. To this end, the government has invested significant resources to improve and accelerate its land release program. This approach, of addressing supply constraints, coupled with a suite of other policies and taxation concessions, including a requirement for 20 per cent of housing in greenfield estates to meet our affordability criteria, has contributed to, and will continue to contribute to, the increase in the supply of affordable housing in Canberra. We have also invested strongly in the national rental affordability scheme, which is driving investment in the construction of new dwellings and also seeing these dwellings rented to low and moderate income tenants at below market rates.

Unfortunately, the federal government has decided to discontinue this highly successful means of providing an additional stock of affordable rental properties. A series of amendments that I will move to Ms Lawder's motion shortly will address some of these points. Not only has the federal government made the task of addressing homelessness more difficult by scrapping the NRAS; it has failed to commit to ongoing funding of homelessness services beyond this current fiscal year. The national partnership was extended for only one year, and that was disappointing. However, we—along with other states and territories on both sides of the political fence, I am sure—will continue to put the case to the federal government that it needs to play a role in combating homelessness in this country.

Despite these poor decisions by the federal government, we will continue locally to provide a range of measures to strengthen housing in the territory. This includes a commitment to ongoing growth of community housing stock, accelerating the renewal of our ageing public housing stock and maintaining and extending our social housing salt and pepper approach of locating public housing throughout all suburbs in the territory.

In conclusion, through the range of policies and programs I have outlined, the territory government continues to provide targeted support to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. I would like to take this opportunity in this week to thank everyone within the ACT government and the community sector for their sustained commitment to helping some of the most vulnerable and needy citizens in the territory.

I seek leave to move the five amendments that I have circulated together and ensure that we can cover off all of the issues that are pertinent in relation to homelessness. That particularly requires us to take a position—I think a firm position—in support of the national rental affordability scheme and the continuation of the national partnership beyond 2014-15. I seek leave to move the amendments together.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: I move:

(1) Omit paragraph (1)(g), substitute:

“(g) there is no single solution to the complex human experiences that lead to homelessness that can include family breakdown, mental health concerns, poverty and unemployment;”

(2) Insert new paragraphs (1)(h) and (i):

“(h) the ACT Government’s ongoing commitment to the creation of more social and affordable housing, increased early intervention and prevention programs, and an inclusive community; and

(i) the ACT Government’s ongoing investment in redeveloping and adding to the public and community housing stock, including, for example, the construction of Common Ground Canberra and the accommodation built in Casey through the Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund; and”.

(3) Omit paragraph (2)(a), substitute:

“(a) work with a range of partners to increase the supply of all housing types, especially affordable housing, and to develop new financing models for housing supply;”.

(4) Omit paragraph (2)(c), substitute:

“(c) call on the Federal Government to reconsider funding for the National Rental Affordability Scheme, widely regarded as improving the supply of affordable rental properties across Australia; and”.

(5) Add new paragraph (2)(d):

“(d) call on the Federal Government to continue to provide funding beyond 2014-15 to homelessness services.”.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (3.43): I am pleased to speak today on a matter that I, too, care deeply about—the importance of ensuring housing is accessible to all Canberrans. Ms Lawder spoke admirably about the importance of housing affordability, but affordability is not enough to deal with this quite complex issue. Canberrans need accessible housing—that is, housing within their budget, housing that is fit for their needs, housing that facilitates their full participation in our community. Achieving that has no simple or one-size-fits-all solution. As the minister spoke about, the ACT government has taken strong steps to work with the previous federal governments to improve housing accessibility for all Canberrans.

Ensuring housing access for Canberrans is particularly important for women in the territory. The primary cause of women’s homelessness is domestic and family violence. When they are seeking housing, it is likely to be in an emergency, often with children and all too often in traumatic circumstances. These are not circumstances in

which any old roof will do. Considerations around transport, safety and geography are all too important in these situations. So, too, is timeliness, and for that reason the Community Services Directorate provides additional responses to domestic housing over a six-week period around Christmas through the domestic violence Christmas program, which provides support and crisis accommodation for vulnerable women and children.

It is also women experiencing homelessness that reminds us of the importance of ensuring housing is available for Canberrans who do not have a stable income. Public housing is the only housing system that takes a client's capacity to pay as the starting point for their housing costs. For women, who are more likely to have been out of the workforce, who are more likely to be in casualised work and who often take on the full burden of caring responsibilities, public housing is often their only truly accessible form of housing.

I am proud to be part of a government that is not just looking to market-based solutions but is committed to ensuring that public housing is available to those who need it. Yet, sometimes housing is not the only solution. I recently spoke to Neil Skipper, the CEO of Havelock House, about the frustration and difficulty he faces knowing that his service often has available beds while people are sleeping rough 20 metres away. The stories Neil shares about the difficulty some people have sustaining tenancies, even when costs are covered and wrap-around support is available, is the reason I am pleased to be part of a government that knows that addressing homelessness is not a simple or one-size-fits-all approach.

The ACT government is working hard to support people who are, for a range of reasons, experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and Mr Barr has talked at length about a number of the services that have been available for people who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless. I want to touch on a few of those again: the supportive tenancy service is a clear example of how early intervention can be effective in preventing homelessness by working with vulnerable people who are experiencing specific challenges and difficulties. The street to home program provides assertive outreach which aims to address the causes of homelessness and assist people to move into stable accommodation when the time is right for them. Street to home not only helps to move people off the street but it also seeks to address the underlying issues that may have contributed to people being homeless in the first instance.

The Early Morning Centre provides free breakfast, support and referral services each week day to homeless and vulnerable and disadvantaged people. At lunch time today I was at a rally supporting the protection of Medicare for people experiencing homelessness. They would have to pay extra money under the federal Liberal government's plan to include a co-payment for Medicare. I talked to a volunteer who works out of the Early Morning Centre who said that between 20 and 40 people visit the program each day. This morning, on one of our coldest days in so many years, they opened the service earlier than normal because it was so cold and people were lining up outside. That is such an important service for our homeless and vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the Canberra community, and I acknowledge the great work the volunteers do at that centre.

The primary healthcare service has been added to that support where clients will see either a GP or a nurse practitioner. Staffing is provided by the Interchange General Practice and the National Health Co-op, formerly known as the Belconnen cooperative health service. ACT Health has provided funding towards the fit-out of a room at the Early Morning Centre and provides operational support which will allow GPs and nurse practitioners to provide primary health care for two hours a week to clients of the centre.

This builds on the work of community care nursing and allied health staff who provided mini health checks through the commonwealth's healthy communities initiative. The primary healthcare service has so far proved to be very popular with Early Morning Centre clients. The trial will run for 12 months, as Mr Barr has talked about, and will then be assessed to see whether it has provided a valuable service to those who are most in need and whether the selected model is the right one for the job.

Mr Barr has already talked at length about Street Law, but it is such an important program and a great example of how this government supports people who are homeless. Street Law conducts outreach, drop-in and referral sessions at community service centres, including Inanna, the Early Morning Centre, Toora Women's Centre Canberra, the Migrant Refugee Settlement Service, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre.

Just as a snapshot, during the first quarter of 2014, 85 per cent of Street Law clients were either homeless or at risk of homelessness, with 55 per cent of those currently living in public housing in the ACT or New South Wales, 18 per cent living in refuges and six per cent sleeping rough in boarding-house-type arrangements or couch surfing. Street Law's proactive services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness operate in an early intervention, on-the-ground fashion working directly with other services to identify opportunities to provide stable accommodation for individuals at risk before the individual becomes homeless. Street Law has a strong working relationship with the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Care financial counselling and other community legal and financial services. All of these services assist people who are not, for a range of reasons, able to access or maintain housing and work towards improving their capacity to sustain a tenancy.

It is timely that we are discussing this today, because it is exactly 40 years since Tom Uren and Gough Whitlam stepped up and invested in the Glebe estate. This investment is an important reminder of why we need to approach housing considering the whole lives of the community it is supposed to serve. The purchase of the Glebe estate is often remembered as Tom Uren's heritage project or Whitlam's bid to keep the community intact. It was both of these things, but it was also done to ensure that, in a growing city, access to employment, transport and appropriate accommodation did not become a privilege just for the rich. It is clear there are challenges to ensuring people have access to housing, but the Glebe estate shows us that transformative and effective investment by visionary Labor governments can meet these challenges.

I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this motion to the Assembly today, and I look forward to being part of the ongoing work this government does to address the housing needs of all Canberrans.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (3.52): I also thank Ms Lawder for bringing this motion forward today in national homelessness week. It is timely to have a discussion of these matters. As previous speakers have reflected on, the issue of homelessness in Australia is one that continues to provide real challenges to all of us in bringing some answers to the table. As the motion notes, we are in the midst of National Homeless Persons Week, a national week of awareness-raising and a time for the public and politicians alike to take stock of the issues and impacts of homelessness.

In my time as Minister for Housing I was presented with a lot of information about the very real and human experiences that lie behind all the quite shocking statistics and figures that groups such as Homelessness Australia publish. In particular, I have been taken both by the challenges and triumphs of the young people I heard speak about their experiences and the bravery it took them to talk openly about their journeys.

I was also impressed by the dedication, passion and professionalism of the housing and homelessness sector, both government and non-government. Every day in Canberra there are caring and skilled staff and volunteers out there working to prevent the myriad issues that can lead to people experiencing homelessness, to support those that are experiencing homelessness and to stop the cycle repeating.

Having spent the last 18 months as Minister for Housing, and as a Greens MLA, I believe safe, secure and sustainable housing is fundamental to ensuring that all members of our community have equal access to services and opportunities, and we are certainly not there yet.

Public housing holds an important place in the history of Canberra, and it is a vital part of our city. Our salt-and-pepper policy means that public housing is part of the fabric of every Canberra neighbourhood. This means greater social cohesion and it reduces the risk of concentrating and compounding disadvantage. But public housing also presents complex challenges. Housing ACT performs an interesting function. In my mind, it is an interesting mix of being a landlord and being a social service provider, and I believe this dual objective is fulfilled incredibly well by Housing ACT. I have no doubts they will continue to build on the ACT government's ongoing commitment to the creation of more social and affordable housing, increased early intervention and prevention programs, and an inclusive community.

When I first took on the portfolio, I was surprised by the sheer size of our waiting list and the age of our public housing properties. Many of the flats are old, cold and not suited to the demographics of the people waiting for housing. The size of the waiting list remains, with many of those waiting on the priority or high needs list. That means most of the people waiting to be housed are doing it really tough, and it is almost impossible to prioritise who has the most urgent needs for our limited supply of housing.

The ACT government made a very significant decision on this matter recently: cabinet decided to endorse a range of recommendations to increase the amount of public housing we have available for members of our community, to speed up the renewal process of our older properties and to maintain and expand the salt-and-pepper approach to public housing in existing and new suburbs. Perhaps even more significantly, this whole-of-government approach signals an evolution in housing that has been taking place slowly over the last year. That is an understanding that when people seek public housing, they do not do so simply because they lack accommodation but for a raft of reasons—from temporary financial difficulty to long-term homelessness, from personal crises to difficulties with social inclusion. Our tenants are diverse and their needs and the level of support they require are not homogenous. A whole-of-government approach focuses on providing a more cohesive and integrated range of services to our tenants and others who need them.

I can say unequivocally that we need to grow our social housing stock and we need to be more responsive to the environmental and social needs of a modern housing portfolio. That means we must renew and redevelop our housing stock so we can better support vulnerable members of our community. It means improving the quality of our housing, for instance, fulfilling our parliamentary agreement item to continue expanding public housing efficiency upgrades to reduce the environmental impact and to make heating and cooling more affordable for tenants. It means building new housing designed to meet the needs of tenants. Often this will mean smaller complexes of 10 to 15 units to reduce the risk of pockets of disadvantage forming and to promote more inclusive neighbourhoods, but it also means things like making sure houses are adaptable and accessible for people with disabilities or mobility problems so if a new tenant comes in there is not the need for significant modifications.

It also means changing our approach to managing tenants, which was started recently by introducing a new management model for Housing ACT that adopts a more responsive, tiered approach to directing the time, resources and services provided by housing managers. I was very pleased to launch this initiative as I felt it reflects the real diversity of Housing ACT tenants and means that those who need the most resources will receive them. It should lead to a reduction in the neighbourhood disputes that, unfortunately, arise from time to time in our suburbs.

Having said all of those things about the role of government, it is clear that housing insecurity and homelessness cannot be solved by government alone. To do this, we need to work with the community sector housing providers to support the sector's growth and the sector's role in providing an affordable alternative to public and private housing. It means working with a range of partners to increase the supply of all housing types, especially affordable housing, and to developing new financial models for housing supply.

I think Minister Barr spoke of Common Ground, and that is a good example in this space. It was a community initiative to identify the idea and urge the Canberra community to move forward on it. We then saw through a range of outcomes, including in the parliament agreement, government commit funding to that model, which has facilitated it going ahead. Finally, there is a range of NGO partners,

including the Snow Foundation, which has made a significant financial contribution, the Common Ground board, which has an ongoing part in driving this project forward as part of the governance team and then the NGO partners who will be the service providers at the facility when it opens for operation. In fact, they were involved in the design and the development of the project so that when they come in they will not just turn up and find a facility that does not quite suit them. They have been involved literally from the ground up to make sure this project is one that delivers the expectations we have for it. That is a great example of the way a government and a range of players in the community can work collaboratively to deliver the outcomes needed to tackle the very complex and difficult issue of homelessness.

That brings me to my concluding remarks: there are still many challenges to overcome in homelessness, and I certainly look forward to being part of the work the ACT government does over the coming years. We are witnessing a shortfall in federal funding and some uncertainty around federal policy direction. At a time when we need more housing and more support, we have only a transitional national partnership agreement on homelessness, which is due to expire this time next year.

I was disappointed by the apparent axing of the funding for the national rental affordability scheme, widely regarded as improving the supply of affordable rental properties across Australia. But with the incredible day-to-day work of housing managers, a solid government commitment to improving quantity and quality of available housing and a nuanced approach to meeting the needs of tenants, I am hopeful that social housing and specialist homelessness service provision will remain a keystone of our territory.

The ACT Greens have been keen advocates of the issues presented in today's motion in Canberra over the last 20 years through a number of my predecessors. It was certainly a privilege to be part of that ongoing work as a Greens minister for housing. As a member of this place, I will be watching this area with interest over the coming months and years to make sure these areas are being progressed and that we continue to look at the best and most innovative model to tackle these difficult issues.

A number of amendments have been moved today. I indicate at this point that I will support Mr Barr's overall amendment. I think he has picked up a couple of points and added some further depth to the motion moved by Ms Lawder. I think it is complementary to the intent of Ms Lawder's motion. Ms Lawder has then suggested some further text as an amendment to Mr Barr's, and I think she is right to pick up the issues of domestic and family violence as one of the issues that arise with homelessness. I suspect Mr Barr would say that is picked up in his text around family breakdown, but, nonetheless, I think spelling it out explicitly is warranted as it is such a significant issue, unfortunately, in our community.

I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this issue forward today; it is important that we discuss it. I guess that is the very point of homelessness week in Australia—to draw these matters to our attention and turn our minds to them so we focus on the policy issues before us as well as the very real human stories that lie behind the statistics and the policy discussions. I am glad we have taken the time to discuss this here in the Assembly today.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.03): I move the following amendment to Mr Barr's proposed amendments:

In paragraph (1)(g), after "poverty", insert the words ", domestic and family violence".

MS LAWDER: Very briefly, as Mr Rattenbury has already mentioned, according to the 2011 census, 26.4 per cent of people experiencing homelessness cited domestic violence and relationship issues as the primary cause for becoming homeless. Others included financial difficulties, 21.7 per cent; accommodation issues, 32.2 per cent; health reasons, 6.5 per cent; and other—such as transition from care, custody, lack of support and discrimination—13.2 per cent. Hence I felt that it was important enough to specifically add domestic violence. I hope that will get the support of the Assembly.

Amendment to proposed amendments agreed to.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that Mr Barr's proposed amendments, as amended by Ms Lawder's amendment, be agreed to.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.04): I will speak to the proposed amendments, as amended, and to the motion. As Minister Barr said, homelessness is a complex issue. There is no single solution, and if it was simple we would have fixed it by now. I note Mr Barr's point about the national rental affordability scheme, and I will give you my two cents worth. I support your comment, but if NRAS is to continue, better alignment is needed with ACT policy objectives, and greater contestability between NRAS bidders. The Canberra Liberals absolutely support initiatives such as the construction of Common Ground Canberra. It is a fantastic initiative. But do not forget that it is only 40 homes. It leaves 1,745 people still counted as homeless, so we cannot rely solely on these initiatives.

Prior to joining the Assembly I worked with a range of dedicated, passionate professionals in the homelessness sector. They worked every day and every night to assist vulnerable people. Mr Rattenbury is right to commend the work of those people. They work long hours, often under very difficult conditions, and they help to make our society a better place.

In closing, I would like to thank Minister Barr, Ms Berry, Minister Rattenbury and the government generally for their support of this motion today and their commitment to working on the issue of reducing and preventing homelessness. I thank Mr Barr for his thoughtful amendments. I commend the amended motion, as amended, to the Assembly.

Amendments, as amended, agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Women—pregnancy discrimination

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (4.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) discrimination in the workplace in the ACT is reported by the Human Rights Commissioner;
- (b) currently, all discrimination is reported as a single figure and not reported in categories; and
- (c) according to the Pregnancy and Return to Work Review 2014 released by the National Sex Discrimination Commissioner:
 - (i) one in two women report discrimination in the workplace during pregnancy; and
 - (ii) the issue of pregnancy discrimination has a huge impact on the mental health of women in Canberra and causes 22 percent of those who have experienced discrimination to opt out of the workforce; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) request the ACT Human Rights Commissioner collate the statistics on pregnancy discrimination;
- (b) report on the number of cases of pregnancy discrimination;
- (c) develop a strategy to address pregnancy discrimination; and
- (d) ensure this is an appropriate policy in place to deal with the above issue in the ACT Public Service.

I am pleased to present the motion that appears on the notice paper in my name around pregnancy and parenting discrimination. As a mother of four young children pregnancy discrimination is an issue that is close to my heart and something that I have been painfully the subject of at times in my professional career. This has been a hidden discrimination, a taboo that many people have been too afraid to acknowledge, and even I, as confident as I am, have had trouble talking about it and addressing it.

I am pleased that light is starting to shine on this area, and I am happy to hold the torch. Last month the national Sex Discrimination Commissioner released the *Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review—Report 2014*, which clearly proves what I have long known—that there is a great deal of work to do to stop pregnancy discrimination.

One in two mothers reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace at some stage during their pregnancy. This discrimination caused 22 per cent of those mothers to give up on the workplace altogether. Fathers often get the same treatment, too, with the report showing that 27 per cent reported discrimination in the workplace related to parental leave. And that is just the men who reported it.

The stress and the emotional and psychological toll this takes on women and parents and their mental health is of great concern. One male boss said to his employee, "We really need to get you back to your children." A supervisor of mine, who happened to be a woman, said to me, "You are coping, are you? Well, you can't be, because I'm so stressed that I go home and sit in the bath and cry." I answered, "I'm fine. I go home and feed the kids."

When pregnant, I have been asked, "Do you have a TV?" "Have you finished yet?" "What will you do after the baby's born?" "My wife was a better woman because she stayed home with the kids." "Who is looking after your children?" "Do you know what causes it?" "Was it planned?" I have been sent to the cafe to buy the boss a coffee, when walking is not that easy at 8½ months pregnant, getting back to the office and being sent to buy the boss a new toothbrush. It can be subtle. It can seem funny to some, to have an Aussie laugh about pregnancy, but it is often intended to belittle, and at other times it is intended to corner women when they have the least means of fighting back. It always leaves you feeling powerless and you can never think of a comeback line fast enough.

In the report we read that Kerry, a pregnant cashier, was refused a stool to sit on while checking items behind a register, to assist with the pressure and swelling in her feet. Alice was refused a request to take toilet breaks outside the allocated schedule. She ended up soiling herself in front of customers, suffering humiliation and discomfort.

Discrimination against women who bear children and are in the workplace and generally in the community is a blight on our society and a blight on all our futures. If you see it, you must speak out. If you know a pregnant woman, back her up, encourage her, be part of a solution.

When I was given the role of shadow minister for women, I asked for a briefing from the department. In the briefing I asked, "Is the government doing anything to address harassment of pregnant women in the workplace?" and the answer I got was, "I take great offence because the ACT public service is a large employer in this town." I concluded from that answer that it was not a great focus of the government, and that perhaps they were not aware of the problem. But I did add in that conversation that it happens all the time, and it does. I welcome the federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner's report into pregnancy and mothering discrimination, and I seek in this motion to raise our need to respond to this concern.

Some people may think this type of discrimination does not exist. Just because you do not see it, it does not mean that it is not there. Generally, harassment does not happen in front of everybody. It could be happening here in the Assembly; who would know? It is like other forms of belittling of women, and it is very hard for women to fight,

especially because when it happens women are in a more vulnerable state. They have to focus on several outcomes at once—the needs of their baby, their relationships, their job and their financial security.

I am a fairly strong character. People assume I do not have any feelings sometimes, because I just plough on, but it has been tough at times—very tough. I managed to fight through, but there are many women for whom such treatment is the last straw, and they prioritise family over work. In a way, who can blame them? They are focusing perhaps on what matters more to them at the time. But they suffer later on when trying to re-enter the workforce, and in many cases their self-esteem suffers, with feelings of failure or dislocation. They then have no or less income, limited superannuation, and often even end up having less in the way of possessions of their own. We women are good at looking after others, and we often put ourselves last. That is another debate in itself, and one day we may have that debate too.

As I have demonstrated through the estimates process, it is almost impossible for a young couple to survive in Canberra on one income. Money is considered the root of a lot of relationship and marriage breakdowns, and closely related to it is a woman's capacity to bring some income into the household as well. There are many women who just get to the point of thinking that the practicalities of being a full-time mother of a child and full time looking after the boss's wants is just too much of a load.

A man I know was at a work gathering recently where it was being announced that another man in the workforce was away on leave after the arrival of his baby. Congratulations were offered, and followed up by a comment that he had not yet worked out what caused babies, obviously, because this was his fourth or fifth. He was not in the room to defend himself, and it was a belittling thing to say. It was not funny, and it is not how we should treat people who have had babies, who are managing a double load. When they come back to work we should be able to say, "How are you going?" not, "Isn't it funny that the boss said that you don't know what causes it?"

More needs to be done. Talking is important. It brings the issue out into the light and makes us aware of it. However, talking about it is not enough. We should not tolerate it, and we should work to change such a culture.

I suggest two actions. Monitoring, and also positive cultural change. We need to manage workplace incidents and make people accountable for what they say and do. We need stats, and we need to bring the issue fully out into the light. My motion calls on the government to provide more stats, and to ask the Human Rights Commissioner for more reporting on this form of bullying and harassment in particular, to ensure that there is a public service wide approach as well.

We also need to think about our own attitudes towards those women and families brave enough to produce for us the next generation of Australians. If we want to be a happy and healthy society then we must embrace all the facets that women bring to both the workplace and family.

We need to have a new mentality towards children and towards the work parents do at home. Children are not just a private good; they are a public good as well. Mothers who are in the workforce are working full time on our present and our future at the same time.

Babies are a normal part of women's lives. It is completely normal for women to bear children. There is an unspoken pressure put on women: if you want a promotion or to get on in your workplace then you had better plan your pregnancies very carefully, or even better, think hard about putting it off into the never-never. The Sex Discrimination Commissioner has highlighted one case of a woman being told it was either the baby or the job, so she aborted the baby and subsequently lost her job anyway. I cannot imagine her pain.

Mothering is really misrepresented in our society. We must stop looking down on mothers and put them up in the place where they belong—revered as some of the strongest, most hard-working and most selfless people we have in our society.

Being a mum is not just some kind of personal fulfilment. Being a mum for many is a daily struggle, and yet for others it is full of joy. But as far as the broader community is concerned, it is our future. We must give women both the courage and the backup to be able to stand up to pregnancy discrimination when it occurs, and also to encourage women that they are doing great work and selfless acts from which we all benefit.

One great submission to the Productivity Commission's ongoing inquiry into child care calculated that if a woman has one child she gives, on average, 50 years productive life to our future economy. If she has two children, that figure then becomes 100 years of productivity. If a mum has four children, she puts 200 years of productivity into the future economy, and so on. To achieve all that we need to, we need to be comfortable with a little chaos. Parents must be supported in it and our culture must support mums from day one of pregnancy onwards.

I would like to start by changing the culture here today. I would like to say—although she is not in the chamber, she may be listening in her office—to Ms Burch: I value the years you put into raising your kids. You gave it all you had, and I salute you. To Mrs Dunne: well done. You have grown children. You have given yourself over to the task of raising five, and I want to say that you have done an amazing job. To Ms Gallagher, who has had children whilst working here in the Assembly: good on you for your courage and for the midnights that no-one sees when you work for the benefit of our future and your children.

To Mr Gentleman: you have raised a part of our future too. I am sure you had times of stress over this work, and times of tension. I really honour you. To Ms Berry: I am thankful for your beautiful children and what they will do in the future. To Ms Lawder, Mr Hanson, Mr Smyth, Mr Doszpot, Mr Corbell, Ms Porter; and to the newest dads in this place, Mr Coe and Mr Wall: you are just seeing what parents do, what mums do, and how much we have sacrificed for a new generation, and I applaud you.

I hope I did not miss anybody. Well done; thank you. Respect; just respect. There, I have just changed workplace culture. It was not so hard. I hope it can happen more in workplaces in Canberra. When we are old and grey and the next generation is combing our hair, we will then see the value of all this work we have done. Let us raise mums and dads up, and put them first in our minds and hearts today. Let us see cultural change, and an end to a culture of pregnancy and parental harassment and discrimination in our community.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (4.18): I thank Mrs Jones for bringing this motion forward today on what is an important issue—how we as a community treat pregnant women in the workplace. In responding to this motion, I note that the report referred to by Mrs Jones in the motion covers not only discrimination related to pregnancy but also parental leave and return to work, and these three areas are inextricably linked. If we discriminate against women returning to the workforce after pregnancy or against anyone returning after a period of parental leave or other carers' responsibilities, we do a great disservice to our community; we not only disadvantage those directly affected but we also lose a great deal of experience and knowledge from our workplaces.

In its recent draft report on childcare and early childhood learning, the Productivity Commission recognised the benefits of increased workforce participation to the wider community, including reduced social and economic disadvantage, increased gross domestic product and economic productivity, and improvements in the government's fiscal position. The Productivity Commission also identified the availability of flexible work and other family friendly arrangements as determinants of workforce participation.

While many women make a choice to leave the workforce while their children are young, they can often face seemingly insurmountable barriers in returning to work. If they are able to return to the workforce, they may have difficulties achieving their occupational aspirations. Barriers to women returning to the workforce and progressing in their careers can have a lasting impact on their ability to establish their financial independence but also contribute to the broader family budget. Barriers may be attitudinal. For example, "We can't promote her because she has children. They might get sick." They may be structural, such as inflexible hours, or they may be physical, such as no provision for a private space to breastfeed.

These barriers are detailed in the Australian Human Rights Commission's report, which records that 63 per cent of mothers experience negative attitudes on returning to work; 50 per cent experience problems with accessing flexible work conditions; 36 per cent reported being disadvantaged in the areas of pay, conditions and duties such as restricted access to training or missing out on a pay increment; 24 per cent were either threatened with losing or lost their jobs because they were pregnant, because their jobs were not there when they returned or because they felt so badly treated they felt they had no choice but to leave; and 22 per cent experienced barriers to breastfeeding, expressing milk or both. Clearly, all of these experiences are simply not acceptable.

The ACT government is committed to a flexible and holistic approach to supporting pregnant women in the workplace, assisting those who have been undertaking full-time carer's responsibilities, including women who have been on maternity leave, to return to and remain in the workforce. Mrs Jones's motion calls on the government to request the ACT Human Rights Commissioner to collate the statistics on pregnancy discrimination and report on the number of cases. I am pleased to report that the Human Rights Commission already reports on complaints made to it about pregnancy discrimination.

In the commission's 2012-13 annual report, the commission reported at table 11 on page 60 that three complaints were made to the HRC about pregnancy discrimination in the period covered by the report. But this does not mean there were only three instances of discrimination. We are fortunate in the ACT that there is more than one avenue to address this discrimination, including by complaining to Fair Work Australia or the Australian Human Rights Commission. Each of these bodies also report on their findings in relation to these matters.

The motion also calls on the government to develop a strategy to address pregnancy discrimination. The ACT Discrimination Act has been in force since 1991, and since that time, it has always been unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of pregnancy or status as a parent or carer. The Human Rights Commission, and before the commission the Human Rights Office, has been able to handle complaints made on these grounds. It has worked with individuals, their families and their employers to try to resolve complaints and to foster a discrimination-free workplace.

Since July 2009 regulation of workplaces in the ACT but outside the ACT public service has been largely been the responsibility of the commonwealth. The workplace relations system that governs employment in private enterprises is set out in the Fair Work Act 2009. Under this system, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an employee or a prospective employee because of a range of attributes of the person, including their marital status, their family or carer responsibilities or because they are pregnant. The Fair Work Act describes a range of adverse actions, such as dismissing an employee, altering a person's position to their detriment or refusing to employ a person because of these attributes. The Fair Work Ombudsman can take action against an employer who has taken or is taking adverse action against an employee that involves such unlawful discrimination.

The motion also calls on the government to ensure it has an appropriate policy in place to deal with pregnancy discrimination in the ACT public service. Once again, I am pleased to advise members that the ACT public service already has a number of strategies in place to address pregnancy discrimination. The first is through the RED framework. The respect, equity and diversity framework was launched in December 2010. It aims to provide a workplace that provides equal employment opportunities for all applicants and employees. It highlights the fundamental importance of each public service employee acting in ways that respect the inherent dignity of other people.

The RED framework has provided a foundation to support an ongoing dialogue about workplace behaviour. It contains many valuable elements, including the respect at work policy, the preventing work bullying guidelines, the open door protocol guidelines and employment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability. It remains in operation across the public service, and is currently being reviewed to assess its currency in the contemporary environment and options for future development.

The ACT public service code of conduct also provides for appropriate workplace behaviour. The code of conduct was launched in 2012, and it is founded on the ACT public service values of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation and the 10 signature behaviours that all people employed under the act are expected to demonstrate day to day. The way in which an individual demonstrates behaviours consistent with the code will vary depending on the work they do, so it is not deliberately prescriptive or compliance focused. Instead, it provides guidance and examples of good behaviour.

Further, in relation to our enterprise agreement framework, flexible work arrangements are formalised in our enterprise bargaining agreements to protect the rights of workers, both men and women, to access flexible working arrangements to care for children and other members of their families. For example, section E of the ACT public service administrative and related classifications enterprise agreement 2013-17 outlines flexible working arrangements and employee support. Provisions under section E13 of that agreement relating to nursing mothers provide:

E13.1 Employees who are breastfeeding will be provided with the facilities and support necessary to enable such employees to combine a continuation of such breastfeeding with the employee's employment.

E13.2 Where practicable the Directorate will establish and maintain a room for nursing mothers. Where there is no room available another appropriate space may be used.

E13.3 Up to one hour, per day/shift, paid lactation breaks that are non-cumulative will be available for nursing mothers.

Further, section E15.1 provides arrangements to:

...enable a pregnant employee to be transferred to an appropriate safe job during their pregnancy or enable them to be absent from their workplace if an appropriate safe job is not available.

Under these agreements, there has been a change in the calculation of payment for the period of paid maternity leave. The calculation is now based on the average weekly hours worked by the employee in the 12 months before the period of paid maternity leave commenced. Previously, the rate of pay was calculated based on the hours the employee was working immediately before the maternity leave.

The new provision seeks to provide equity across the public service. There are a number of female employees in situations where they must reduce their hours of work due to the physical nature of their duties or pregnancy-related medical conditions. Under the previous directorate-based agreements, an employee who worked full time before they became pregnant and during the first six months of their pregnancy who then reduced their hours to a 2½-day working week in the period leading up to their maternity leave would only be entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave paid at 50 per cent of their full-time rate. Under new provisions, this same employee would have their hours worked in the previous 12 months averaged out, resulting in the employee being entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave paid at 75 per cent of their full-time rate.

All in all, as members can see, there is a strong package of measures to support pregnant women in the workplace and to tackle discrimination against those women. But there is still, of course, more work to be done. We recognise that the complaints still get recorded, that they are likely to only be the tip of the iceberg and that many women may choose not to report pregnancy discrimination. The government, though, has a multilayered response to these concerns and continues to do its utmost as an employer of choice in relation to the way it supports pregnant women in the workplace. The territory government is continually moving forward to address discrimination in all forms and in all sectors, and I am pleased that Mrs Jones has brought this matter to the Assembly for discussion today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, considering the matters I have raised in my speech and the response to the matters raised in Mrs Jones's motion, I have circulated amendments which reflect those comments, and I now seek leave to move the amendments circulated in my name together:

Leave granted.

MR CORBELL: I move:

(1) Omit paragraph 1(b).

(2) Omit paragraph (2), substitute:

“(2) notes that:

- (a) the ACT Human Rights Commissioner collates the statistics on pregnancy discrimination complaints made to it;
- (b) the ACT Human Rights Commissioner reports on the number of cases of pregnancy discrimination in their Annual Report, as do other bodies that address pregnancy discrimination, including Fair Work Australia and the Australian Human Rights Commission;
- (c) it has been unlawful to discriminate against a person on the ground of pregnancy or status as a parent or carer under the ACT Discrimination Act since 1991; and

- (d) the ACT has a number of strategies in place that address pregnancy discrimination in a holistic way, including the ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework, the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct and Enterprise Bargaining Agreements.”.

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (4.30): I accept Mr Corbell’s amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (4.30): I would like to thank Mrs Jones for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. It is an important issue and one that has come to prominence in the last couple of weeks. The notion that women and men are discriminated against in the workplace as a result of their family commitments is an untenable one, especially in a society that values family, work and home life balance and sustainable workforces.

The notion that working while pregnant or engaged in raising a family is a privilege and not a right is also untenable in a modern, respectful society. Women who are pregnant and parents who are raising families are not looking for favours; they are looking to have their rights respected. They do not want to hide their plans for family or be secretive about their pregnancy, because working in an environment where that is required in order to protect their rights is not conducive to their wellbeing and work satisfaction.

The pregnancy and return to work national review was instigated by the federal Attorney-General’s Department in July 2013. Its objectives were to provide national benchmark data and analysis on the prevalence, nature and consequences of discrimination at work related to pregnancy during or on return to work after parental leave. The review engaged with a range of stakeholders, including government, industry and employer groups, unions and workers, and provided a range of recommendations when the report was released on 25 July this year. The level of discrimination that was outlined in the report from the national Sex Discrimination Commissioner really was astounding. Elizabeth Broderick noted in her comments, when the report was released last month, that little had changed in the 15 years since the last assessment was undertaken.

The key findings in the report—and it is worth repeating them in this place—were that one in two mothers reported experiencing discrimination at some point during pregnancy, parental leave or on return to work; 32 per cent of all mothers who were discriminated against at some point went to look for another job or resigned; one in five, or 18 per cent, of mothers reported that they were made redundant, restructured, dismissed or their contract was not renewed either during their pregnancy, when they requested or took parental leave, or when they returned to work; and finally, discrimination has a significant negative impact on mothers’ health, finances, career and job opportunities. On top of all of those findings, they found that 91 per cent of people did not report. That adds a whole, further layer to that set of quite astounding statistics.

The study found that discrimination constituted everything from negative attitudes through to job loss and that there was a significant negative impact on the women who suffered it. It seriously affected women's attachment to their workplace, and why of course would it not? Imagine working for an organisation for a number of years, becoming a parent, and then being restructured, made redundant or paid less. Mothers who experienced discrimination were much less likely to return to their job or return to the workforce.

Fathers taking parental leave were also covered in the survey, and over a quarter of them reported experiencing discrimination when requesting or taking parental leave or when they returned to work. The findings indicated that there is very limited awareness and understanding of discrimination, its nature and consequences amongst mothers and fathers.

What kinds of discrimination are we talking about here? With mothers, it occurred both during pregnancy and on requesting parenting leave. It included being made redundant or not having contracts renewed, which included being treated so poorly that women felt they needed to leave. It related to pay, conditions and duties, including the denial of leave to attend medical appointments, having to take parental leave earlier or later than preferred, denial of access to leave that women are entitled to. So we see a range of very subtle but nonetheless discriminatory actions.

In the area of health and safety, women were not provided with toilet breaks, a suitable uniform, workloads were not adjusted to accommodate pregnancy or people were not transferred to a safe job which involved different hours to make things easier for them. There are also issues around performance assessment and career advancement, including missing out on opportunities for promotion, denial of access to professional development and missing out on performance appraisals. It also included negative attitudes from colleagues and threats of redundancy or dismissal that were not actioned.

The impact of perceived discrimination for women was that if they felt that they were supported by their employer, they were more engaged and attached to their workplace. Of the mothers who reported experiencing discrimination at work during their pregnancy, 23 per cent did not return to that main employer. I think what this tells us is that whether or not discrimination is reported, whether it is in fact identified as having occurred, even the perception of discrimination has a massive impact on the actions of women in feeling comfortable in their workplace.

There is a great deal of detail in the report, but I did note with interest that the commissioner highlighted that in many ways the laws surrounding this issue are basically what is required but that the recommendations are, in her words, "directed towards a much better implementation of legal obligations through greater provision of information about employee rights and employer obligations". She also said:

This is an approach intended to help plug the gap that allows this discrimination to take place—the gap between the legal framework and the implementation of the law.

I think that this is an interesting observation, and one that may well be pertinent for us here in the ACT. The Attorney-General has today outlined that provisions are in place in the ACT to protect the rights of parents in the workplace—and these are commendable—but this report is basically saying that it is the attitudes towards pregnancy and parenting that are causing problems and that people need to better understand the law and what rights it provides for parents. So it is very much a cultural issue as much as a legal issue.

Turning to the specifics of Mrs Jones's motion, my understanding is that much of what she has called for in part 2 of her motion is already happening in the ACT, and the attorney has spoken to that to some extent. It seems, on our research, that the ACT Human Rights Commissioner does collect data about discrimination.

However, the pregnancy discrimination is not broken down into workplace/non-workplace as there have been so few cases reported. My understanding is that there were only three pregnancy complaints in each of the last two years. As such, further disaggregation could potentially lead to the identification of individuals, and the Human Rights Commission is reluctant to do this.

The ACT Human Rights Commissioner has separate categories to sex discrimination, categories that are effectively more detailed than the Sex Discrimination Commissioner pulled together for her report, partly because the Sex Discrimination Commissioner was attempting to compile data across the country and the data sets were different.

As such, I have supported Mr Corbell's amendments that outline both the data collection that currently occurs and the legal and workplace frameworks that are in place in the ACT to protect the rights of women who are pregnant and all parents during the parental leave stage of their lives.

Finally, I will be moving an amendment. I did want to add another amendment, because I think what part of Mrs Jones's section 2 is trying to do is ensure that the government responds to the issues that are highlighted in Ms Broderick's report and that any issues that might exist in the ACT—and unfortunately I suspect that some do occur—are identified and addressed by the government. It really goes to that question of certainly looking at and identifying this issue in light of Mrs Jones raising this motion.

We seem to have all of the right rules and all of the right policies in place, but what the national report highlighted was that gap in culture and implementation and I think that is where it is valuable for the ACT to reflect, to analyse the findings in the national report and to examine whether there is anything we can learn from that, for practical implementation in the ACT. I do not think there is any lack of will here in the territory, but there is also no doubt that there is always room for improvement in these sorts of areas. That is the tenor of my amendment. I added it, hopefully, to enrich the text that is already in place.

I move:

Add:

“(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) analyse the *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work Review* in regards to possible implications for employees in the ACT;
- (b) identify any actions that the ACT Government may take in response to the *Pregnancy and Return to Work Review* in order to reduce pregnancy discrimination in the ACT; and
- (c) report back to the Legislative Assembly by the first sitting day in November 2014.”.

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (4.39): I support Mr Rattenbury’s amendment. I agree that it is good to have any actions that the government will accept to work harder on this issue. In summing up, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner reported on this the week before last, and today I am calling on the government to analyse exactly how widespread the problem is here in Canberra. Given that in the federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner’s report one in two women have experienced it and, of those, 22 per cent leave work as a result, clearly our statistics are not managing to capture most cases. Again, that is why I welcome Minister Rattenbury’s amendment.

I am really glad that this issue is being brought out into the light—that it is completely unacceptable for women to experience harassment or discrimination associated with pregnancy, childcare responsibilities and family responsibilities. The discrimination has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of mums and families as well as the financial security of women. Mothers who are in the workforce are working full time on our present and on our future simultaneously. Children are our future.

Before having children, women often have many opportunities in the workplace, and this report shows that for at least half of those women their opportunities are severely limited afterwards. This is not acceptable. Women should be able to have the babies that they want without being forced to choose between their baby and their job. They should not lose jobs, be ridiculed or stripped of choices around work hours and opportunities.

Today I call on the government to acknowledge the need to work more on identifying and resolving this kind of discrimination in Canberra. I call on the community to actively help make the change. It is the responsibility of all of us to lift the treatment of women and parents and to eliminate this demeaning situation. If you notice it, say something about it. If you know someone having a baby, back them up. Speak positively in your workplace and in your community about mothering and family. Enough of belittling and undervaluing mothers in our society! I agree with the amendment and I welcome the support.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Health—obesity

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (4.42):

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the public health challenges brought about by the rising level of overweight and obesity across the Australian population;
- (b) rates of obesity and overweight people have increased dramatically in the ACT community over the past 20 years;
- (c) the ACT Government has set an ambitious target of “zero growth” for obesity in the ACT; and
- (d) behavioural change needs to occur across the spectrum of peoples’ daily lives to successfully manage the growing rate of overweight and obesity in the community; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) continue implementing policies and programs across government to help the ACT community to recognise the health and lifestyle impacts associated with being overweight;
- (b) work with the community to implement a wide range of programs that assist all at-risk members of the community to manage their weight through diet and activity; and
- (c) assist members of the community who are at increased risk of disease as a result of being overweight through a public obesity management service and access to publicly funded weight-loss surgery.

I bring this motion to the Assembly today because it is widely recognised that obesity is one of Australia’s biggest public health challenges. While rates in the ACT are slightly below the national average, they are still of grave concern with almost two-thirds of ACT adults being overweight, including one in four being obese.

This is a dramatic increase compared to 20 years ago when below a quarter of ACT adults were overweight. Worryingly, this increase has also occurred in young children. The high rates of obesity and overweight, as well as poor diet choices and low levels of physical activity, all significantly contribute to the growing chronic disease burden. The more body fat a person carries, the higher the health risk. People who are obese are two to three times more likely to develop cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack and stroke as well as being seven times more likely to suffer from diabetes than people in the healthy weight range.

Other health risks include high blood pressure, some forms of arthritis and some cancers. Obesity's impact on life expectancy is similar to smoking, with research finding a loss of between two and 10 years depending on the level of obesity. It is also a real impact on the economy through productivity losses. Nationally, obese employees have 14 per cent higher absenteeism due to illness compared to the healthy weight working population.

Based on the available evidence, it is very likely that the impact of overweight and obesity on quality of life, primary health care and the ACT economy are growing. Chronic conditions account for approximately 80 per cent of the burden of disease and injury in the ACT, and many of these have obesity as a risk factor.

In order to provide improved health services for people at very high weight levels, the ACT government funded an obesity management service in the 2013-14 budget following the obesity service redesign project. The service aims to support patients to achieve a healthier lifestyle and reduced risk profiles. The service is for adults with a high level of obesity whose body mass index is 40 or over and who have one or more medical problems. The service will work collaboratively with patients' GPs and also healthcare professionals to encourage positive lifestyle change through group education classes, nutrition plans, physical activity programs and other support services.

Ultimately, it is all about supporting people at very high weight levels to improve their health. Additionally, the ACT government has announced the introduction of publicly funded bariatric surgery where this is clinically required for people with severe obesity and related medical conditions. The ACT government recognises that, along with offering a range of treatment options, the most effective way to tackle this problem is through prevention and that we need to take active steps to reduce and to prevent levels of overweight and obesity in the ACT.

We have learnt the lesson that prevention works and can save lives from Australia's strong track record of success in public health intervention across our communities. Prevention works. We have prevented deaths and illnesses caused by smoking, from excessive sun exposure and from road traffic accidents. A recent survey commissioned by ACT Health showed that the ACT community strongly supports the government taking active steps to reduce levels of overweight and obesity in the ACT community as they feel it is a major problem in the ACT.

Support was strongest for interventions targeted at children, particularly within the school setting. Appropriate levels of physical activity and a balanced diet are the fundamental requirements for a healthy body weight. Individual medical and surgical treatments are not enough. Even a small degree of weight loss can bring health benefits such as lower cardiovascular risk.

Multiplied across the ACT population, these small effects can have a large impact on the burden of disease in the community and the overall cost of providing health services. In October 2013 the ACT government released its towards zero growth healthy weight action plan. It recognised that many of the factors that contribute to

rising levels of overweight and obesity lie beyond the traditional reach of the health sector. The action plan outlines a whole-of-government approach to address this issue. The government is investing \$3.6 million over four years under the healthy weight action plan to combat rates of overweight and obesity in the ACT.

The action plan funding will provide for a variety of activities across the community. Government is working to make the healthy choice the easy choice. The action plan builds on action previously taken across the ACT government. In 2008 the ACT government signed up to the national partnership agreement on preventive health, with the Australian government committing to provide the ACT with \$8.76 million between 2010 and 2018. The partnership agreement funded the delivery of five different initiatives: healthy children, healthy workers, healthy communities, social marketing and enabling infrastructure.

However, without notice the federal government in this year's budget ceased the prevention program, costing the ACT over \$3.5 million in facilitation payments and an additional \$2.5 million in reward payments. The fresh taste healthy school program was launched this February in public schools and is starting to be rolled out in the Catholic education sector. Many programs will continue this year with remaining funds from the commonwealth and investment from the ACT government.

In 2009-10 the ACT government supplemented the national partnership agreement funding by allocating \$11 million in the ACT budget over three years for the healthy futures initiative, which addressed a range of initiatives aimed at preventing or reducing risk factors for chronic disease. As a result of this injection of funds into prevention, the ACT government has committed to a range of programs and initiatives to halt the rising rates of obesity and overweight. These initiatives are implemented in partnership with the academic community, non-government organisations in both the public and private sectors and across a range of government directorates.

An example of an innovative program being run for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is the beyond today campaign. This campaign was designed with the community to focus on tobacco and alcohol reduction as well as providing education and support for healthy eating and increased physical activity to reduce obesity in this group. In the coming months the reach and presence of this campaign will grow.

As a further commitment by the government to reducing the burden of overweight and obesity, in July 2013 the Chief Minister announced that the ACT government had redirected the focus of the ACT health promotion grants program towards projects that aim to reduce the incidence of obesity, particularly amongst children in the ACT. The ACT health promotion grants program has been in place since 2006 and currently expends around \$2.1 million annually. The program funds a wide range of useful health promotion activities and is a resource which is valued by the ACT community.

The grants program now focuses on tackling obesity and improving children's health. There are now two funding opportunities under the program. The largest is the healthy Canberra grants, which allocates about 90 per cent of available funding or currently around \$2 million each year in multi-year grants. The aim of these multi-year grants is to provide sufficient time and funding to achieve sustained behaviour change and improved health outcomes at the population level.

There is also a smaller funding opportunity called the health promotion innovation fund, which also focuses on tackling obesity and improving children's health through innovative health promotion projects. This fund is continually open for applications and is assessed three times a year. The aim is to support community organisations to test new models of health promotion and prevention and to develop those that can be expanded to allow wider health reach in the ACT context.

The innovation fund covers a wide range of exciting projects. They focus on improving eating habits of children and their families, increasing engagement of children and the youth in sporting activities and supporting vulnerable groups to engage in physical activity and to choose healthier food and drink choices.

For example, one innovation grant, Koori Kids Health, focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children between the ages of four and 15 years to support them to build skills in growing fruit and vegetables in the garden and to create healthy meals. Innovation fund grants have been awarded to schools and organisations to make our schools healthier environments for our children. One grant supports Nutrition Australia to develop materials to align with the Australian health and physical education curriculum called Food&ME for years 5 and 6.

Community organisations have been supported to incorporate into their programs physical activity and healthy eating messages and interventions. Community sporting programs have also been supported. Skateboarding Australia, for example, aims to deliver free and fun skate clinics to children who otherwise may not engage in traditional sporting activities.

I call on all members of the Assembly to support the continued implementation of preventive health policies and programs to reduce the levels of overweight and obesity in the ACT and to assist at-risk members of the community through the provision of a range of treatment options. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.53): I thank Dr Bourke for bringing this important motion before the Assembly today, and I hope that this is one that we can all agree on, to continue the spirit of cooperation that has broken out in the chamber.

It is a motion that addresses an issue that challenges the long-term health of our community and the quality of life of many Canberrans. If this issue is not addressed it could permanently derail the Canberra health budget. We all know how much the health budget is—about \$1.4 billion. It is a very significant portion of the entire budget.

I have regularly raised the issue of obesity and, more broadly, preventative health in this place and in the community. I have raised concerns about the great number of people who are treated in expensive hospital beds who could have avoided that hospitalisation if they had been treated elsewhere, if there had been early interventions or if we had better preventative health.

Obesity is a disease. It is a disease where fat is accumulated to the point where health is impaired. It is often defined in terms of a body mass index of over 30 for adults and, for children and adolescents, there are other specific BMI thresholds. For people who are already overweight, weight loss strategies need to address modifiable causes of weight gain, such as inappropriate diet and sedentary lifestyle.

Many overweight or obese people self-manage their weight or they seek support—such as dietary advice, exercise programs, counselling and behavioural modification therapies—from private organisations, general practitioners or other primary care providers. Pharmacological therapies, which include appetite suppressants and drugs to reduce the absorption of fats, and behavioural or cognitive therapies, may be needed to maximise an individual’s capacity to benefit from healthier lifestyle choices. In some cases referral to specialist weight management clinics will need to be considered.

There are also, increasingly, surgical options, including gastric banding and gastric bypass, to address obesity. However, as is well known, as health preventions and interventions become more complex, they become more expensive, entail greater risk and use more of our precious health resources. So we need to be judicious with any public funding in these areas.

With so many health issues, we need to focus where we can on a holistic public health viewpoint. In 2010 I released a discussion paper, “The state of our health”. I opened my discussion paper with a quote from Professor Patrick McGorry, who is a specialist in mental health but his point is well made. He said:

Australia now needs radical change to the system of care with early intervention as the core feature.

It is very difficult to do, to transition from all the care at the tertiary end to a greater emphasis on primary and preventative, but it is an approach that I think we all would support.

In the discussion paper I made the following point:

Changes to the ACT’s health care system are needed to meet the growing demand on services by an increasing and ageing population that is expected to push the ACT health care system to its limits over the next ... decades. The current approach to delivering health care in the ACT is failing in a number of areas, particularly within our hospitals and in primary health care. Without significant improvements in the way we deliver health care in the ACT, it will become increasingly difficult for our health care system to cope with the increased demands. The cost of delivering health care in the ACT is enormous, consuming—

at that stage—

over \$1 billion of the ACT budget each year and growing at about 11 percent each year.

As I said then:

The ACT Government is unlikely to be able to sustain this growth indefinitely.

Indeed the Chief Minister has said that current levels of expenditure are unsustainable. We are yet to see what the Chief Minister intends to do about it. I went on to say:

What is needed is a new long-term approach to health care in the ACT in which a greater emphasis is given to the provision of preventative health care and primary health care. Our focus should change—

where it can—

to an emphasis on wellness rather than sickness.

And there is a definite problem in the ACT. In short, at least 32 per cent of Canberrans are overweight, and at least 17 per cent in addition are obese. High body mass index is a risk factor for many chronic conditions. These include cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks, cancers including breast cancer and bowel cancer, diabetes and osteoarthritis. These are all national health priority areas.

We have a slightly different approach from the ACT government. I think that we want the same end result, but while the Labor government and the Greens are talking about banning things—they want to restrict the number of car parks so that people walk; they want to ban fruit juice in school; they want to ban certain items from aisles in supermarkets—we need to have a holistic view to preventative health in general.

At the last election we had a comprehensive plan to tackle obesity and deliver preventative health. It was based on the national preventative health strategy and provided these strategic directions: shared responsibility—developing strategic partnerships—at all levels of government, industry, business, unions, the non-government sector, research institutions and communities; acting early and throughout life—working with individuals, families and communities; engaging communities—acting and engaging with people where they live, work and play, at home, in schools, workplaces and the community; influencing markets and developing coherent policies; Indigenous Australians—contributing to closing the gap; and refocusing primary health care towards prevention.

The national preventative strategy set a number of targets, the first of which was to halt and reverse the rise in overweight and obesity. I certainly welcome the ACT government's intent to do exactly that.

Back in 2012 we proposed a plan to establish an ACT preventative health task force, which would comprise members of community organisations, health professionals and ACT Health. The task force at that stage would have developed and implemented a holistic preventative health strategy across the ACT and provided ongoing advice to government.

We also promised an additional \$2 million a year for preventative health strategies. If we had seen that come to fruition we could imagine the good that we could have done to transition our health system—which I think we all agree on—from a focus at the tertiary level to a greater focus on preventative health.

The other issue that extends out of this is the self-management of chronic disease, including obesity, and many of the comorbidities associated with chronic disease. Certainly, an interesting area, and one that we need to put more focus on as well, is that if someone is obese and has diabetes type 2 or other associated illnesses, we should make sure that we are supporting them with their self-management of that disease. There are certainly steps that could be taken to do that. There are organisations already doing that within the ACT—Diabetes ACT, the Heart Foundation and other associated organisations.

At the last election we took forward a proposal to support and augment the self-management of chronic illness so that people who are suffering from obesity and other associated illnesses are essentially not just requiring medical experts to help them but can actually help themselves.

On the issue of weight loss surgery, I think this is worth having a go at. It is implemented in other jurisdictions—in New South Wales, Victoria and WA. I have researched the public funding for bariatric surgery, weight loss surgery, in those jurisdictions. But I would sound a note of caution. We are expending public funds, and we need to make sure that the people who have access to that surgery are the people at the morbidly obese end of the spectrum. This is not cosmetic. This is for people who are seriously ill and at risk of other conditions and who need that surgery.

We need to make sure that the patients are carefully selected based on evidence and that the patient care pathway includes a clear referral process, comprehensive presurgical and peri-operative patient assessment and monitoring, and post-surgical follow-up and monitoring to assess those patients. It needs to have input from a multidisciplinary treatment team, and good linkages between the surgery and community healthcare providers and nutrition programs, as well as programs to support physical activity and the required changes to eating behaviours.

In line with that, I indicate that I will shortly be moving the amendment that has been circulated in my name. There are two intents from this amendment. Firstly, it is to make the point that in order to change the culture, in order to change the behaviours, in order to get weight down and to tackle obesity, it does not have to be about banning everything. It can be about having positive change in our community.

I want to emphasise that, as we make these changes and take these steps, let us make sure that we are encouraging our community to be healthy, that we are saying that weight loss is a priority, that tackling the obesity crisis is a priority, but that we are not going to impinge on everybody's freedoms all the time to get there. I think that is an important point to make.

Secondly, if we go down the path of having publicly funded weight loss surgery, we should assess the effectiveness of this surgery. I would hope that is going to be done anyway, but let us have a longitudinal study to assess how the patients that receive the surgery are going, and where they are at after a period of time, to see whether that surgery has been successful, whether it has resulted in weight loss, and make other assessments, in concert with national research as well, to make sure that the dollars we are investing in that surgery are the best place for those dollars to be put, in terms of both looking after people's health and making sure that it is a prudent investment in our health system.

I commend Dr Bourke's motion. I indicate that we will be supporting it, and I would encourage members of the Assembly also to support the amendment, which I now move:

After paragraph (2)(c), add:

“(d) emphasise programs that encourage healthy behaviours rather than restrictive interventions; and

(e) institute a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of weight loss surgery.”.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (5.06): I would like to thank Dr Bourke for raising this issue today and giving space in the Assembly to discuss this question. The Greens certainly share Dr Bourke's concerns about people's health and the impacts of obesity. In particular, the Greens have long campaigned for more support for and promotion of preventive health measures.

As the newly appointed sport and recreation minister, I look forward to doing all I can to support the work already underway to tackle obesity and find new ways to create a healthier and ultimately happier society.

A great practical example of what we are already doing in this space is the healthy food in sport project. This innovative partnership between the Health Directorate, Sport and Recreation Services and Nutrition Australia ACT was funded under the national children's initiative under the Council of Australian Governments national partnership agreement on preventive health. The project focuses on supporting canteens run by community sports clubs to increase healthy food choices available to children and young people and to promote water as the drink of choice—not too dissimilar to the approach taken in ACT public schools recently. So far, 18 community sporting clubs have been engaged, ranging from little athletics centres to ACT government contracted pools. We have seen some good results, particularly in the reduction in “red” foods—that is, foods with little to no nutritional value. Unfortunately, the recent federal budget announced the cessation of the national partnership agreement on preventive health funding. Thankfully, ACT Health has provided Sport and Recreation Services with additional funds until 31 December this year, to assist with wrapping up the project and to explore what options may be available for the engaged community sporting clubs.

That is just one example of a very innovative and forward-looking project that is possible. As I said, as the new Minister for Sport and Recreation, I will be looking at other innovative projects and making sure that we continue to keep sport and recreation a strong part of our community, not just for the social benefits but for the obvious health benefits.

In terms of the broader issue of the impacts of obesity and people being overweight, it is vital that we address the increasing occurrence of childhood obesity and chronic illness. The Greens have a very strong preventive health agenda, and active living and healthy lifestyles are a major part of this. We have been pleased to see that it has also been a growing area in health policy in the ACT and more generally across Australia.

It is of huge concern that almost half of Canberra's children are not within a healthy weight range, and that this trend increases into adulthood. Obesity is becoming a major health crisis in our community, with 25 per cent of children and 63.3 per cent of adults in the ACT now classed as overweight or obese, compared to just 22.9 per cent of adults in 1995. That is an extraordinary change in the statistics in a period of just under 20 years. It will place a huge burden on our health system later down the track, and can lead to serious health issues such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancers and breathing problems. That is all very scientific and academic, but it really just means that there is a reduction in the quality of life for people. That is where, for me, this issue is critically important. It is not only the economic issues, the health issues and the lifespan issues; it is actually about quality of life.

We know that we could reduce the pressure on our health system if we could reduce the incidence of disease and injury in the ACT which stems from chronic and preventable conditions related to inactive lifestyles and obesity. A key plank to achieving this is through implementing proactive preventive health measures. The Greens' focus on early intervention in mental and dental health, as well as preventive health initiatives around diet, nutrition and physical activity, is about making the health system focus more on people's overall wellbeing and reducing pressure on the acute health system.

According to the ACT Health Council, obesity is the biggest threat to the ACT's high life expectancy, and changes in food purchasing habits need to occur if we are to improve our society's health. The Greens understand that to do this we need to support children and families to eat healthier foods. The Greens have been pushing for many reforms in this area, for children specifically. I would like to touch on a few of those ideas today.

To improve the health of all students, we would like to see greater emphasis on protecting children from targeted junk food advertising, improving school canteens, expanding breakfast clubs and creating more school gardens.

The Greens understand that the public school canteens are becoming increasingly complex to run and manage. This is due in part to fewer parents having time to devote to volunteering and the increased work of complying with new policies. We also know that many school canteens across the country are ill-equipped to provide fresh and healthy food, with only "heat and serve" facilities and insufficient fridges and cooking areas.

We would like the ACT to build on the success of our well-established and successful school gardens program and to support young people to learn about more sustainable patterns of living and build capacities for thinking, valuing and acting to create a more sustainable future, of which food and food choices are a critical part.

Research studies indicate that children who eat breakfast perform better in school. Unfortunately, it is estimated that approximately 25 per cent of children regularly miss breakfast. Around the country there are hundreds of breakfast clubs which provide healthy food to children who may need a better start to the day. It probably seems a fairly basic thing for most of us, but having a child arrive at school without breakfast is well documented as a factor in lowering their performance, their ability to concentrate and like measures.

Dental health is another area which the Greens believe does not currently get enough attention; yet we know that this has a huge effect on people's overall long-term health and eating habits. It is disturbing to hear of people who simply avoid raw fruit and vegetables because their teeth cannot cope with them. Too many Australians go without dental treatment because they find it too expensive; this is why the Australian Greens brought Denticare onto the national agenda. The Greens in the ACT want to complement that work by boosting services at a local level. For adults who are eligible for the ACT's public dental service, only 12 per cent access it, and they face an average wait of 12 months. Health groups are advocating for the better use of dental hygienists as a way of providing improved preventive dental services. The Greens will continue to support this advocacy.

Members may remember that in 2011 my former colleague Amanda Bresnan initiated laws to improve nutrition information that is provided by fast food outlets to customers. You can now see this operating successfully on the menus of many food outlets around Canberra. We now have much more comprehensive information about what some of the meals up on the boards actually do in terms of daily nutritional intake, for a range of key food indicators.

There are in the parliamentary agreement a number of items which directly address healthy diets and lifestyles. I have touched on it already, but one is looking into banning junk food advertising. We know how susceptible children are to targeted advertising. More than 75 per cent of Australians already support a ban on junk food advertising on children's television. There is no doubt that this is an incredibly influential way that young people's dietary habits are shaped and there is no doubt that it is contributing to the increasing levels of childhood obesity that we see.

The Greens are also, through the parliamentary agreement, encouraging people to get active—whether it is recreationally or by commuting—by improving walking and cycling infrastructure such as paths, bike lanes, pedestrian crossings and simple things like lighting and signage, which make it much better and much easier for people to get around using the various walking and cycling opportunities that are out there.

As I touched on before, we are keen to see the enhancement and growth of community garden projects across Canberra. That is touched on in the parliamentary agreement.

Also, as a direct result of the parliamentary agreement, we have seen the installation of drinking fountains in key public locations such as town centres, sporting fields, hospitals and schools, and at public events, to encourage people to drink water while out and about and while exercising, instead of drinking soft drinks. Thirty of these fountains are being rolled out across Canberra, and there are more to come. I went to the launch of the very first one, over at Harrison district playing fields, just a couple of weeks ago. We had a bunch of school kids with us there. They certainly were attracted to them; they are a great design. I know that since we announced the locations of the ones that are already funded, I have had a lot more requests from people who have got places around the city where they would like to see the fountains available. They are great because they are not only a bubbler but also have taps on them so that you can refill a re-useable bottle. So hopefully, we will see some reduction in the use of throwaway plastic containers there as well.

The Greens have long argued that preventive health is an investment that pays high dividends for people, the community and the health system. I agree with Dr Bourke that it is important that the government continues to implement policies and programs across government that help our community to recognise the health and lifestyle impacts associated with being overweight, that assist people at risk to manage their weight through diet and activity, and that support the public obesity management service. I will be supporting Dr Bourke's motion today.

Let me turn briefly to the amendment moved by Mr Hanson. I will not be supporting it today. We have only had it for a short amount of time, but I had a brief chat with Mr Hanson and I do not entirely disagree with him. He has moved two points. One is to emphasise programs that encourage healthy behaviours rather than restrictive interventions. On the face of it, it is agreeable text, but when I spoke to Mr Hanson, and he touched on this in his remarks, he said: "We really shouldn't be going for the banning of things. It should be about encouraging people."

I think that we need all of the tools in the armoury. We face an epidemic of obesity in this country. I think that is the only way to describe it; I have seen it described like that in many a place. We need every option available to us. Some of that will be about being quite proscriptive about activities and some of it will be about being encouraging. I am reluctant to go down the path of supporting text that suggests that some of those options are less valid than others, because I think they all have their place. We certainly need to keep monitoring their efficacy, but we should keep all of the options open to us.

The second point is to institute a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of weight loss surgery. Again, I do not entirely disagree with the point, but I would want to discuss the detail of it. I think the question is: should the ACT government be doing this on the relatively small scale that we have here in the ACT, and we know that many things are on a relatively small scale here in the territory, or can we rely on reports done by larger jurisdictions, done by large-scale medical research institutes? I imagine that evidence is already out there, or ACT Health would not be offering this service. In the time available to me, I have not had an opportunity to research it, to find it, but I have confidence that, in offering this service, that sort of evidence is already in place. Again, I would want to have some further discussions about what we are going to

here: should this be an ACT-specific study or can we plug into some other research institution and have ACT patients participate in that?

So I will not be supporting the amendment today, but I am sure that it involves issues that we will continue to discuss.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (5.18): I thank Dr Bourke for moving this important motion today. I will, firstly, advise that the government will not be supporting Mr Hanson's amendment. On the first part of Mr Hanson's amendment—programs that encourage healthy behaviours rather than restrictive interventions—the healthy weight initiative already focuses on encouragement right across the community. As to the longitudinal study on weight loss surgery, it is, in our view, a bit too early to look at a study like that. The weight loss surgery program has only commenced in the public health system this year. But on a good note for Mr Hanson, the healthy weight initiative has a large evaluation component in it, and the obesity management service will also have a reporting requirement.

Each of us knows how far-reaching obesity is as a public health issue. The data is well established and the trends are not improving. From a survey conducted earlier this year on behalf of ACT Health, we know there is widespread awareness of obesity as a challenge for our community. Some 77 per cent view it as an issue for the adult population. We know that up to 95 per cent of people support government intervention to change the food environment and the prevailing cultures which have led us to the current situation. Further, 90 per cent support action to reduce children's consumption of sugary drinks.

Unfortunately, we face a national political environment in which the appetite for strong action on obesity, which is preventive health more generally, has faded. Most disappointingly, the recent commonwealth budget for 2014-15 announced the end of the national partnership agreement on preventive health and all associated funding from 1 July this year. This came without any prior warning, and the longer term implications of this are still being worked through.

ACT Labor, of course, took the zero growth commitment to the ACT election in 2012. This is where we promised to draw a line under the current rates of obesity and overweight. At face value, zero growth does not seem like an ambitious goal. We have seen recently in the ACT Chief Health Officer's report that almost two-thirds of ACT adults are overweight while one in four is obese. One in four children are also overweight or obese. We also see in this report some of the root causes. Only 11 per cent of adults eat sufficient vegetables on a daily basis, in children aged two to 15 years, only 37 per cent have enough vegetables in their diet, and 40 per cent of adults are not sufficiently active.

The key policy document which guides actions against our commitment is called "Towards zero growth—healthy weight action plan". The Chief Minister has taken responsibility for this policy not as health minister but in her role as Chief Minister. Since the policy was launched last October, we have been building an understanding that the priority encompasses all arms of government.

In the recent ACT budget the government put money behind this framework with a commitment of \$3.6 million over four years to implement specific initiatives under the plan. The framework takes in six themes. The first is the food environment, and perhaps the single most important factor in the rise of obesity has been the evolution of our food environment towards energy rich, nutrient poor foods, particularly through the processed food and takeaway cultures.

We know from looking overseas that the most effective way to change this is through substantial regulation and taxation. While a state or territory government has limited ability to regulate this environment, there is meaningful action we can take on improving healthy choices in vending machines, working with supermarkets to try to reduce junk food at checkouts, improving skills in buying and preparing food, increasing the availability of drinking water around the city and looking at where we have the ability to reduce junk food advertising.

In schools, activities to increase physical activity and improve the food environment are well advanced. Sugary drinks are being phased out of government schools this year. We are teaching healthy habits through the fresh taste program and through ride or walk to school. We are developing more support for teachers to incorporate physical activity into daily learning. New water fountains are helping create a school culture where water is the drink of choice.

In workplaces, this is where we get our own house in order through initiatives such as improving food choices at ACT government workplaces and facilities, encouraging daily exercise through sport and initiatives for staff and changing building design where we can build exercise into the working day. The government understands the need to lead by example. From this sharing point, we are looking to expand these initiatives into other workplaces and embed active design principles into Canberra's future commercial buildings.

On social inclusion, I have touched on the need to help all groups in our community build the skills and confidence to live healthily in a food environment which does not always make it easy. We are looking to use our community services footprint to connect with higher risk groups in the community and improve their ability to make healthy choices through education and incentives.

In urban planning, across the built environment of our city there are opportunities to re-engineer more healthy lifestyles, making the built environment attractive and safe for walking, jogging and cycling, encouraging more people into public spaces and increasing the use of public transport. For example, the government's decision to build light rail in Canberra is expected to double the distance people will walk to ride it compared to buses. We are already seeing some private sector leadership in the design of major new developments, and this is a key area for government and industry to be working in unison.

The evaluation of this area goes to our management and evaluation of data around body weight and physical health. We are continuing to build the evidence base for these policies to guide our next steps, improve public access to health information and help underpin the push for change at other levels of government.

The government, of course, recognises that some people need help to manage chronic obesity, and for this reason it has established the obesity management service through ACT Health. The obesity management service supports adults with a high level of obesity to improve their health and wellbeing. The service focuses on those who are at high risk of developing complications from their obesity or those who already have additional health problems. The service team includes doctors, nurses, dieticians, psychologists, physiotherapists and exercise physiologists.

The recent ACT budget also included \$1.03 million over four years for public bariatric surgery for the ACT. Bariatric surgery provides a surgical option for a small number of people struggling with obesity and will be closely linked to the newly opened obesity management service.

In conclusion, it is estimated that in 10 years Australia will be spending some \$7.4 billion each year on treating additional diseases caused by overweight and obesity. If I am right, a proactive response to the obesity and overweight challenge is relatively cheap in health terms. It does, however, require the support and participation of people from all fields. The government recognises that it has a leadership role to show courage in the public interest and a willingness to challenge strong commercial interests, to be dedicated in the way we share evidence with the community and educate people about the healthy weight as it applies to them, and to convert community support into the momentum needed to make a significant change. I encourage everybody to support Dr Bourke's motion.

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (5.27): I thank members for their support of this important motion on the impact of the rising rates of overweight and obesity, and I concede that members have recognised that obesity is one of our greatest public health challenges. I oppose the amendment from Mr Hanson for two reasons: firstly, the healthy weight initiative of the ACT government is all about encouraging working the community as a whole to make healthy options available. The second point of his amendment surprises me, because I would have thought someone who styles himself as a potential health minister one day would have been aware of the NHMRC's 2013 report, *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, Adolescents and Children in Australia*. It is a 660-page document, members, so you could not really miss it.

That report concluded that bariatric surgery is an effective treatment option to achieve and maintain significant weight loss in obese patients. That is a pretty significant statement and really negates the need or the desire for a longitudinal study given the depth and breadth of that systematic review, a systematic review which identified 4,291 article abstracts on obesity and overweight, that selected 416 to be identified for review and then actually reviewed 137 studies, 70 of which were systemic reviews and 67 of which were randomised control clinical trials.

Given the small size of the ACT jurisdiction and the small numbers of people who would be undergoing this procedure in the ACT, you would have to conclude that the value of a longitudinal study in the ACT would be extremely questionable. That is why I oppose that part, and that is why I oppose all of Mr Hanson's amendment. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7		Noes 8	
Mr Coe	Mrs Jones	Mr Barr	Mr Corbell
Mr Doszpot	Ms Lawder	Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman
Mrs Dunne	Mr Smyth	Dr Bourke	Ms Porter
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion agreed to.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind members that it is customary to keep quiet when the Clerk is conducting the count.

Mrs Dunne: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, during the division, a member on the other side—I am not quite sure who—when asked for their vote said, “That’ll be no.” I draw to your attention that the forms of the house require a yes or no and no other comment.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs Dunne. That is why I made my comment. I think the member was actually commenting on Dr Bourke’s loud “No”, saying, “That would be a no,” and then she gave her answer of no after that, but I am not sure what that—

Mr Hanson: Madam Deputy Speaker, I can shine a light on this matter.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, Mr Hanson, I have not finished speaking.

Mr Hanson: My apologies.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is why I—

Members interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, if you could let me finish it will be a lot quicker, and we can get to the adjournment debate. That was the reason I made the comment, because there was a lot of toing and froing going across the chamber as we were trying to hear the replies. That made it very difficult, so I ask members, again, to just give their reply of yes or no and not to enter into any kind of commentary because it makes it very difficult for the Clerk to hear, and certainly for me. Mr Hanson, did you have something else?

Mr Hanson: I agree absolutely with the point of order, and the reason for it was that I think Mr Rattenbury and Ms Burch had voted both yes and no during the vote, so I think there was some confusion about that matter.

Adjournment

Motion by **Ms Burch** proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Alcohol marketing on Facebook

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (5.37): Australia has an estimated nine million Facebook users active daily, including 7.3 million using a mobile to connect to Facebook. It is the world's largest and most popular social network.

Alcohol brands have embraced Facebook to promote their product and engage with Australian users. Unlike advertising via print, radio and television, the internet is social and interactive, enabling successful marketing to spread like a virus—hence “viral marketing”. The alcohol industry keeps fans interested through highly targeted and entertaining interactions.

In May I participated in a public forum called “Like, comment, share: alcohol advertising and promotion on Facebook”. It featured Dr Nicholas Carah of the University of Queensland, who was commissioned by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education to look at how alcohol companies use Facebook to advertise their brands.

Dr Carah analysed the activity of the 20 top alcohol brands on Facebook business pages in Australia over 2012. By the end of 2012, the 20 alcohol brands studied had 2½ million followers on their pages, and had posted 4,500 items of content. There were 2.3 million “like”, “comment” and “share” interactions with alcohol brands' content. As interactions increased, the reach of the brand increased. Brands may focus on gender or age demographics, depending on the targeted audience and the image they wish to portray.

In the forum, we were invited to join the conversation on Twitter, and I asked the panel about their concerns over regulation of alcohol brands online. Dr Carah said that alcohol brands are irresponsibly skirting advertising restrictions by prompting users to say things the brands cannot. Alcohol advertising legislation does not permit the targeting, portraying or encouraging of people to consume alcohol in excess or rapidly. To skirt legislation, one alcohol brand tactic is to ask users to respond to questions about the product. For example, Jack Daniels posted an image with the question: “You're locked in one of the barrel houses. What do you do next?” Dr Carah said that users showed their loyalty to the brand by using humour about alcohol overdose. Users' posts were visible to their own network of friends, who may also comment, adding to the post.

Alcohol brands also incorporate their brand into a user's identity by inviting them to upload photos of themselves drinking the product and enjoying it, effectively marketing it. Timing is another tactic. Brands most commonly post to Facebook on Fridays between 3 and 6 pm. This optimises engagement with users who are perhaps leaving work for a drink, going to the bottle shop or getting ready to enjoy the weekend, encouraging them to post their weekend drinking exploits.

Dr Carah accepts that people should be able to say what they feel and to market the brand with friends if they want to. Facebook has policies and guidelines on alcohol advertising following Australia's alcohol beverages advertising code, ABAC, and there are very few complaints from the public. It would appear that alcohol companies are acting responsibly, but Dr Carah argues that this is not the case. Whilst alcohol promotion on Facebook is not illegal, brands prompt users to say things that challenge a regulatory framework.

Dr Carah calls on governments and the alcohol brands to rein in the social media marketing of alcohol in recognition of the serious health and social problems caused by excessive consumption.

Canberra Gang Show

MR WALL (Brindabella) (5.41): I rise tonight to acknowledge the fantastic annual ACT scouts and guides gang show I attended in mid-July at the Canberra boys grammar school. The production, *Bean and Gone*, was a fine display of young people getting out there and giving the creative side of life a crack, building skills in theatre production, both onstage and backstage. The gang show is a great opportunity for young people to challenge themselves, build new friendships, gain confidence, improve their time management skills and, best of all, have fun.

This year's gang show was done in honour of Michael Peter Hickey, a leader of the ACT scout movement. Mr Hickey dedicated over 45 years of his life to the movement here in Canberra; for 30 of those, he was heavily involved in the production of the local gang show. I would like to congratulate producer Phil Oldfield, director Evan Long, assistant director Katrina Nash, technical director Richard Surkus and musical director Anna Davies for putting on a great display of youth involvement, as the scouts and guides always endeavour to do.

Also particular congratulations should go to the friends of the gang show, namely, the Bendigo Bank, Kimberly Gaal, Claire Smith, Anna Richardson, Allison Haese, the 2014 creative group, Mount Rogers scout group, Murrungundie district guides, Diamantina scout group, ACT branch arts people, Whitehorse Showtime, the Albury gang show, Canberra Grammar, Bunnings Tuggeranong, APRA, PPCA and AMCOS. I would also like to extend a personal thanks to Peter Harris, the chief commissioner of Scouts ACT, for his kind invitation to join him to watch the production this year and for giving me the opportunity to meet the 100-odd cast and crew of the production.

I look forward to attending next year's 48th Canberra gang show. I am sure it will be as impressive as this year's edition, if not more so. Once again, this event is a great testament to youth involvement in our city. Hopefully, such involvement will remain strong into the future.

**Taylor Primary School
St John Vianney's Primary School**

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (5.43): I have spoken before of my regular visits to schools throughout Canberra, and tonight I want to mention two that I have recently visited. The first was Taylor Primary School at Kambah. This is the school that, quite suddenly, in March 2012, had to close down after heavy rain damaged the school and there was concern that asbestos had been exposed. The school has always been known for its bright colours and unusual design and has earned its affectionate nickname of the Lego school.

At the time Taylor students were forced to relocate to Namadgi School, not far away but of sufficient distance to cause disruption to families, traffic arrangements and, no doubt, to both school campuses, staff and pupils. Many questions were asked about whether it was better to knock down and rebuild, and whether there was any point in resurrecting the school at all. But you only have to visit the school in its refurbished site and speak with Simon Smith, the principal, and his very dedicated teaching staff, to realise just how important the school was and is to them and to the local community.

Despite being dislocated for over 12 months, the school did not lose enrolments or staff, which is extraordinary when you think how difficult it must have been for school principal Mr Simon Smith in trying to operate and keep his team together at a temporary location.

Taylor is only a small school but it punches well above its weight in terms of school pride, enthusiasm and commitment. The school motto of “experience today discover tomorrow” has really been put to the test in the last 18 months, and I think the school community has come up trumps.

The second school I visited, on Monday afternoon, was St John Vianney's primary at Waramanga. The occasion was the official blessing and opening of the refurbished administration area and staff room, which I attended with Senator Zed Seselja and federal MP for Canberra Gai Brodtmann. While these schools are in different sectors, meaning one in the public sector and one in the non-government sector, they have much in common. Both have passionate principals, engaged school boards, and enthusiastic and committed staff, students and parents.

I would like to congratulate St John Vianney's principal, Mrs Vicky van der Sanden, on the wonderful way the official blessings and the opening were conducted. It was a great afternoon for school celebration—indeed for the whole school community. Senator Seselja did the official unveiling and addressed the school community. Monsignor John Woods and Father Kevin Brannelly, the parish priest, conducted the blessings, and Mrs Moira Najdecki from the Catholic Education Office gave her usual inspirational address.

Acknowledgement of country was delivered by Sharee Thomas, who is the religious education coordinator at the school. There was also an interesting address by

Mrs Charmaine Smith, the community council chair. The school community was also involved in the ceremony in the form of prayers led by Joseph Palisi, parish honorary associate, Christie Wilson, community council member, Maureen McGrath, planning and facilities officer at the CEO, Luke Donnelly, primary schools coordinator, Nina De Rosa, the assistant principal, and student leaders Kasey Galloway and Rhys Parritt.

Congratulations to both schools, each of which in their own way signifies all the positive attributes of ACT education.

Hiroshima Day

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.46): Sixty-nine years ago today, a US bomber dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima City. The entire city was devastated by the blast. Today is Hiroshima Day, the day that we remember the moment that changed the world forever.

At 8.15 am on 6 August 1945, a bomber called the *Enola Gay* dropped its deadly cargo. The bomb fell for 43 seconds before detonating at 580 metres above Shima hospital, near the centre of Hiroshima City, with an explosive force of some 12½ thousand tonnes of TNT. The blast, the heat and the fires that ensued levelled the entire city. Some 140,000 people perished as a result of that terrible day. Schools and hospitals were destroyed. Students, teachers, doctors and patients, mothers, fathers, daughters and sons were obliterated. It was the destruction of an entire civilian population in a single act with a single weapon.

At 8.15 this morning the peace bell was rung in the Hiroshima peace memorial park, where the Genbaku Dome stands as the only remaining structure near the hypocentre of the bomb and a powerful symbol of hope and human resilience.

This afternoon the Hiroshima Day peace declaration was presented, pleading for the worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons and the realisation of lasting world peace, just as it has been every year since 1947 when the mayor of the day, Shinzo Hamai, made this poignant appeal:

This horrible weapon ... has convinced us of the necessity and the value of lasting peace. That is to say, because of this atomic bomb, the people of the world have become aware that a global war in which atomic energy would be used would lead to the end of our civilization and extinction of mankind. This revolution in thinking ought to be the basis for an absolute peace, and imply the birth of new life and a new world. What we have to do at this moment is to strive with all our might towards peace, becoming forerunners of a new civilization. Let us join to sweep away from this earth the horror of war, and to build a true peace ... Here, under this peace tower, we thus make a declaration of peace.

Unfortunately, world leaders did not heed the warning of the mayor of Hiroshima. Nearly seven decades later, there are around 19,000 nuclear weapons in the world, according to the Medical Association for Prevention of War. Nuclear weapons are owned by just nine nations, with Russia and the United States possessing over 94 per cent of today's nuclear arsenal.

The struggle for nuclear disarmament continues. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—ICAN—is a community campaign bringing together civil society groups, non-government organisations, churches and citizens to build a groundswell of public opinion to demand an end to nuclear weapons. ICAN aims to achieve a nuclear weapons convention to ban the development, possession and use of nuclear weapons.

One of their campaigns is the mayors for peace program, a worldwide network for mayors and local governments which aims to expedite the decommissioning of nuclear weapons under existing non-proliferation agreements and which encourages full disarmament by 2020. It also seeks to build cultures of peace in member cities. Membership currently stands at 6,206 cities in 160 countries, and I understand that Canberra is a member city of this program.

Sixty-nine years after that fateful day, the voices of the bomb survivors, or “hibakusha”, as they are known in Japanese, continue to be a source of information and inspiration for those who are trying to understand and learn from what happened in Hiroshima and, of course, Nagasaki. The Atomic Bomb Museum has this testimony from survivor Shizuko Nishimoto:

Alas, August 6 comes 'round again. That horrible A-bomb, that scorched earth, the fire that left all Hiroshima in ashes, these are all vivid in my memory. No words or pictures could ever express the cruelty of the atomic bomb.

On this day, we heed the words of someone who saw that cruelty with her own eyes and remember those who did not survive that horrible atomic bomb. Indeed it is apt that we also take this opportunity to honour all the civilian victims of all the wars, including the innocent people that have lost their lives in conflicts of our own time. They are not forgotten.

Health care

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (5.51): Today is the 40th anniversary of Australia’s first universal healthcare scheme. It is with great sadness that I rise in this chamber to share stories I heard today at a rally in support of this scheme. It is deeply saddening that Canberrans would need to come together to support this very basic right of access to health care, but they did.

Pensioners, parents and students rallied today, and it was clear why they did. The federal Liberal Party’s attacks on Medicare is a very serious business. At the rally I was happy to see the fantastic crew from Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, who know what the costly co-payments that the federal Liberal government wants to introduce will mean to the many disadvantaged people and the vulnerable in our community that they treat every day.

Margaret knows that the clients she sees at the EMC will not get the medical care that they desperately need. George Blatmann, a young ANU student, knows what the Medicare levy will mean to students reliant on inadequate rates of youth allowance. They will not be able to see a doctor.

It would be preferable to be able to describe the federal Liberal attacks on Australians' access to Medicare as out of touch, but I just do not think they are. I think they are pursuing a systemic system of destruction to a scheme they have never supported, and they do not care about the people who get in the way.

But I am optimistic that they will never succeed. For the 40 years that Labor has stood for the Medicare scheme, the Liberal Party has sought to tear it down. But today we are celebrating another year, because Australians know the value of this scheme. People like Margaret, George and all of the other people that attended the rally today know the value of a universal medical system. I will keep turning up and standing with them against the Liberal Party's senseless attack on what is a very basic human right.

Canberra Ornithologists Group

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.53): This afternoon I would like to talk about the Canberra Ornithologists Group and the recent photographic exhibition they held in the Assembly as part of their 50th birthday celebrations. Canberra Ornithologists Group, or COG, formed in 1964 and was originally a branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union until 1970. It has been an active group in Canberra for the past 50 years and in that time has gathered a great base of information on our bird life here in the territory.

COG has also been instrumental in ensuring that local bird species can co-exist in a growing city; it provides bird data for conservation-related purposes; it responds to draft government strategies, policies and plans; it makes submissions on development matters; and it works through the Conservation Council to lobby for better environmental outcomes. From the outset there was much activity in the club, ranging from monthly newsletters to surveys and excursions. During this time many books, brochures and other information guides have been published by COG or members of COG.

Today I wish to acknowledge first the work of the committee. I know that the governance and activities of groups like COG take a lot of dedication from the committee. These members are: President, Alison Russell-French; Vice-President, Neil Hermes; Secretary, Sandra Henderson; and Treasurer, Noel Luff. The general committee members are Jenny Bounds, Sue Lashko, Lia Battisson, Bruce Lindenmayer, Stuart Rae and Chris Davey.

It is always good to see active groups within our community and it really is an amazing feat to have a volunteer organisation such as this that has run successfully for so long. It is a real tribute to all those involved. Both past and present committee members should be congratulated as well as general members of the organisation.

Finally I want to bring attention to the outstanding photographic exhibition that COG held in the Assembly at the end of June. There were 48 photos, all submitted by members of COG. I would like to acknowledge the photographers that submitted to this exhibition. The photos were incredible and I know that I had a difficult time voting for my favourite.

These photographers were: Geoffrey Dabb, Leo Berzins, Harold Schranz, Tobias Hayashi, Megan Meers, Rhonda Hansch, Lindsay Hansch, Roger Williams, Stuart Rae, Margaret Leggoe, Stuart Harris, Marg Peachey and Ann Eldridge. From the voting by members of the public, the winners were as follows: the viewers' choice winner was Julian Robinson with his photo "satin bowerbirds at bower" and the viewers' choice runner-up was Charles Davis with his photo "rosellas in fog".

I would like to congratulate these winners again and thank everyone involved for the time they contribute to our community through the Canberra Ornithologists Group.

University of Canberra Chorale Capital Cycling

MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.56): I rise this evening to talk about the University of Canberra Chorale. The UC Chorale is an adult, non-auditioned community choir devoted to enjoying the creation of music. The choir is truly community based, being self-funded with the needs of the group being funded through membership fees, sponsorship, ticket sales and fundraising. At its core, the choir aims to promote classical music in Canberra and to allow a high level of musical achievement to become accessible to ordinary members of the community.

The choir meets most weeks on a Friday where they not only practice their singing but are tutored in the elements of voice production, music reading skills and the appreciation of the composer. Through this practice, the choir has built up an impressive repertoire of songs, which span from the year 1400 to the present day, covering both sacred and secular works. Ultimately, the choir aims to present at least two quality performances to the general public each year.

Earlier this year, in June, I had the pleasure of attending a presentation from the choir, *Songs of Peace and War*. This presentation included songs from World War I, works by Bach, Purcell, Butterworth, Ireland and Wrango and featured Handel's *Eternal Source of Light Divine*. The presentation also included performances by soloists Jessica Harper, Christina Wilson, David Yardley and Rohan Thatcher. The presentation was so well attended at the Belconnen Arts Centre that it became standing room only, and I thoroughly enjoyed the performance.

I commend all those who were involved in the concert. In particular, I would like to take the time to thank and praise Alan Hicks, the director of the choir, for his commitment and the skill that he has shown in that role. The University of Canberra is also to be thanked as they provided for the administration of the course and a venue for the choir to rehearse.

Most importantly, I would like to encourage all members to attend the next performance of UC Chorale, which will be on 14 November this year when the choir performs Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. I encourage all members to attend this performance which, from my personal experience, I am sure you will enjoy. For more information on the work of UC Chorale and to keep up to date on when the choir next performs, I encourage all members to visit their website at canberra.edu.au/music/choirs/uc-chorale.

I wish to acknowledge the formation of Capital Cycling, a merger of Pedal Power ACT, ACT BMX Association, Canberra Off Road Cyclists and the ACT Cycling Federation. Each of these membership organisations has been very successful in their efforts for their respective causes. However, as a united organisation they will be able to multiply their efforts and go from strength to strength.

I wish the new organisation and their vast membership all the best for their advancement, for their advocacy and other endeavours. Based on my interaction with the community, I have no doubt that Capital Cycling will be an effective voice for cycling and cyclists.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 6 pm.