



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**EIGHTH ASSEMBLY**

**26 NOVEMBER 2014**

[www.hansard.act.gov.au](http://www.hansard.act.gov.au)

### Wednesday, 26 November 2014

Canberra Hospital—obstetrics unit.....	4019
Standing order 46—personal explanation.....	4035
Women—White Ribbon Day.....	4036
Economy—performance .....	4054
Visitor .....	4062
Questions without notice:	
Canberra Hospital—emergency department .....	4062
Transport—light rail .....	4065
Transport—light rail .....	4068
Transport—light rail .....	4071
Water—security.....	4072
Budget—deficit .....	4074
Education—parental engagement.....	4075
Budget—deficit .....	4078
ACT public service—bullying.....	4079
Children and young people—trauma recovery centre .....	4080
Economy—performance .....	4084
Arts—policy framework .....	4105
Transport—light rail .....	4122
Adjournment:	
Housing—public.....	4133
Ms Samantha Jayne Steele .....	4134
Ms Samantha Jayne Steele .....	4136
Women—prostitution and human trafficking.....	4137
Macgregor Primary School—40th anniversary .....	4139
St Vincent’s Primary School .....	4140
Roads—cycle lanes.....	4142

**Wednesday, 26 November 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.

### **Canberra Hospital—obstetrics unit**

**MR HANSON** (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.01): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the ACT Health Minister Katy Gallagher has failed to resolve serious and ongoing issues in the maternity service at The Canberra Hospital (TCH);
- (b) in February 2010, staff of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology unit at TCH made serious complaints about the unit and at least 13 doctors resigned;
- (c) in 2010, the Canberra Liberals called for a Board of Inquiry that was rejected by the minister. However, a subsequent review of the maternity unit found:
  - (i) a lack of cohesion amongst the executive team and considerable confusion over roles and functions of senior management;
  - (ii) reporting lines between TCH and ACT Health were “blurred” and that the “chain of command often fails”;
  - (iii) numerous serious complaints made by staff were not addressed and that their complaints were ignored in a “systematic and long-standing reticence by management to address disruptive or inappropriate behaviour”;
  - (iv) inadequate clinical governance;
  - (v) significant staff shortages;
  - (vi) a heavy on load call inconsistent with the safe working hours concept;
  - (vii) poorly coordinated clinical handover between shifts; and
  - (viii) significant reductions in gynaecological surgery;
- (d) in 2012, serious concerns were again raised by staff and the ANF about the maternity unit at TCH, including:
  - (i) a flawed model of care that resulted in mothers being discharged only six hours after giving birth;

- (ii) capacity constraints that may have compromised patient safety;
  - (iii) staff morale that had plummeted; and
  - (iv) nurses and doctors under enormous pressure and highly stressed;
- (e) on 7 November 2014 serious concerns were again raised by TCH staff to the media and to the Opposition about the maternity unit, including that the recent accreditation review conducted by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG);
- (f) The *Canberra Times* on 7 November 2014 titled “Worst in Australia: Canberra maternity unit under pressure” reported:
- (i) allegations of bullying and mismanagement;
  - (ii) doctors have alleged a toxic culture exists at the hospital, with hapless management and departures of senior staff contributing to poor patient outcomes;
  - (iii) one visiting assessor reportedly described Canberra as having “the worst maternity training unit in Australia”;
  - (iv) one doctor said the new Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, opened in 2013, had too few beds and staff being trained faced bullying and unrealistic work demands;
  - (v) another person with specific knowledge of the situation said serious cultural problems existed and they feared a serious accident or staff suicide; and”
  - (vi) “extreme distress, fatigue and lack of coping. Everybody is still performing their job as best they can in very difficult circumstances. This has been ongoing for months or even longer”;
- (g) the ABC on 7 November 2014 titled “Canberra Hospital at risk of losing teaching accreditation” reported:
- (i) TCH could lose its accreditation as a teaching hospital amid accusations of a “toxic” culture of bullying in the maternity department;
  - (ii) staff bullying has plagued the department since concerns were first raised four years ago;
  - (iii) several doctors have told the ABC staff relations at the hospital have deteriorated to the point where patient care has suffered; and
  - (iv) one senior staff member told the ABC the department was a “car wreck”, while others have spoken about verbal threats of violence and intimidating emails; and

- (h) on 21 November 2014, *The Canberra Times* in an article “Leaked report claims Canberra Hospital maternity patients at serious risk” reported on a leaked extract of the RANZCOG accreditation report including that:
- (i) mismanagement and long-running cultural problems inside TCH maternity unit have put the health of patients at serious risk, an official report has warned, as adverse medical outcomes, inadequate supervision and critically low morale remain;
  - (ii) “the unit is significantly at risk of both adverse medical outcomes and personal risk to the health and wellbeing of the registrars”; and
  - (iii) it (the report) highlights staff shortages, a lack of engagement by visiting doctors, increasing birth numbers, shortages of senior doctors, limited clinical experience, poor rostering, conflicting management protocols and “widespread disaffection”; and

(2) calls on the Minister for Health to:

- (a) provide the Assembly with the full recent accreditation report conducted by RANZCOG;
- (b) specify actions the minister is taking to address the long term and serious concerns with TCH maternity unit; and
- (c) assure the Assembly and the community that the minister is able to resolve the issues with TCH maternity or will step aside as Health Minister.

It is with real concern that we find ourselves back here in the Assembly talking about the maternity unit at the Canberra Hospital. This has been an ongoing saga. It was the subject of three separate motions in 2010. It was the subject of a motion in 2012 and we are back here now in 2014 discussing issues that are sickeningly familiar—issues of a bad culture, of bullying, of doctors under stress, of doctors resigning and of concerns about patient care.

When this issue arose in 2010 the minister initially denied that there were any problems. She dismissed this as an issue. She then attacked those doctors that had made the complaints. She stated that this was just doctor politics in a 10-year war. If it is true that there was a 10-year war, that means it is now a 14-year war in obstetrics in this town. The minister has provided assurances repeatedly in this place and in the media that this is being addressed. She has told this place that we should not be worrying about it and we should not be bringing these matters forward because the staff are dealing with it and she is dealing with it. That has simply proven not to be the case.

I will give an overview of the history of what has happened before I then go into some of the very disturbing details. As you would remember, in 2010, Madam Speaker, there were some pretty serious allegations that were raised. There was a woman who was advised to have an abortion but refused to do so and who then had a healthy baby. At that stage allegations were raised and 13 registrars resigned. With respect to the

complaints that were made, it was not as Ms Gallagher says in her defence; her line seems to be—and no doubt she will use it today; she used it yesterday—“Stop attacking the staff. Stop attacking the staff.”

Madam Speaker, it is the staff who are making the complaints. It is the staff. It is the front-line doctors, senior clinicians, registrars and nurses who are going to the media and who are going to the opposition. So the minister cannot stand here and say, “Don’t raise these issues because it’s making the staff upset.” It is the staff who are so frustrated with the lack of attention from this minister that they are coming to me, and they are going to the ABC and they are going to the *Canberra Times*.

In 2010, when they raised those concerns, they were dismissed. This was just doctor politics; that is what this minister said. We then had the disgusting situation where the Chief Minister at the time went out and said, “Let’s dig dirt up on these doctors. Let’s review the last 10 years of medical records.”

We called for a board of inquiry. We said, “Let’s bring this into the open. Let’s look at this in an objective fashion. Let’s have someone external to look into that environment.” What did the minister do? She refused to do that. She covered up one of the reports that was commissioned and was finally dragged kicking and screaming, because of the absolutely disgraceful situation and the concerns that were raised by the doctors and nurses at the time. There was a report done and the report that came back was damning. It talked about lack of cohesion amongst the executive team, considerable confusion, the chain of command often failing, complaints by staff that were not addressed, inadequate clinical governance, significant staff shortages, the heavy load inconsistent with the safe working hours concept, poorly coordinated clinical handover between shifts and significant reductions in gynaecological surgery.

There was then a situation where the director quit. But we were provided with assurances that this was being addressed; this was being resolved. I turn back to 2010 and all of the media reports, all of the statements by the minister, the statements made here—by Dr Brown, the head of Health—that the department had not received any formal complaints. That was simply not true. The hospital and ACT Health were accused of trying to hide medical blunders. The doctors voted with their feet by resigning. ACT Health hit back, saying that the royal college was “overreacting”. The director-general came out and said that it had improved. She said: “It’s all improved; there’s been a change in personnel. I’m advised the relationships in the unit are very collegiate.” That is what we were told. “This is all fixed. Nothing to worry about.”

The minister said it too, back in February 2010. “No complaints to investigate,” said Katy Gallagher on ABC News. “No complaints to investigate.” Thirteen doctors resigned and because of that attitude of burying it, denial and cover-up, here we are. “There’s a lot of doctor politics in it,” she said. “That’s all it is, just doctor politics.” “I’m not prepared to conduct an external review,” she said, “based on a couple of concerns.” That is what Katy Gallagher was saying in 2010, and it is so similar to what we are hearing today. The circumstances are very similar. The personnel are different because so many doctors have resigned, but again we are hearing the same concerns from the front-line staff and the same sort of response from the minister and the director-general.

In 2010 we called for a board of inquiry. That was rejected. We called repeatedly for open and accountable investigations in this unit. Eventually the government were dragged kicking and screaming, there was a report done that was damning and the government assured us they were fixing this problem. They said, “Yes, we’re on it.” We did not need to bring these things to the Assembly, apparently, because the staff were fixing it.

But in 2012 we were back. And we were back in this place because again concerns were raised. They were not concerns raised by me; they were concerns raised by the royal college of obstetricians, they were concerns raised by the Australian nursing federation and they were concerns raised by patients. We had mothers being pushed out, being kicked out of the maternity ward six hours after giving birth. This was the high quality maternity service that Katy Gallagher assured us after the 2010 review she was going to make sure was first class. Six hours after giving birth, women and their babies were being pushed out of this service.

Ms Gallagher said she was fielding complaints from both mothers and midwives, and the ANF came out and said it was unacceptable. More importantly, the ANF had been ignored. They had warned repeatedly of the concerns that were building and they were ignored.

After that long history of failure, we in this place rightly assumed, based on the assurances that we had received, that these matters had been resolved. But we now know that was anything but the truth. A number of reports came out in the media. Doctors went to the media and doctors came to me—front-line staff, male and female, came to me with significant concerns.

Let me quote, Madam Speaker, from some of the concerns that were raised about the maternity unit in the media, and see whether you can hear the parallels with the issues in 2010 that were then swept under the carpet by this minister—and she has failed over four or five years to fix them. The *Canberra Times* reported allegations of bullying and mismanagement, the same as we heard in 2010. The article stated:

Doctors have alleged a toxic culture exists at the hospital, with hapless management and departures of senior staff contributing to poor patient outcomes.

That is just what we heard about in 2010. It continued:

One visiting assessor reportedly described Canberra as having “the worst maternity training unit in Australia” ...

One doctor said the new Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, opened in 2013, had too few beds and staff being trained faced bullying and unrealistic work demands.

And that is what we heard in the report in 2010—unrealistic work demands. It continued:

Another person with specific knowledge of the situation said serious cultural problems existed and they feared a serious accident or staff suicide ...

“There’s extreme distress, fatigue and lack of coping. Everybody is still performing their job as best they can in very difficult circumstances. This has been ongoing for months or even longer.”

And this is the unit that we were assured had been fixed. The ABC, in a report entitled “Canberra Hospital at risk of losing teaching accreditation”, stated:

The Canberra Hospital could lose its accreditation as a teaching hospital amid accusations of a “toxic” culture of bullying in the maternity department.

Indeed if Canberra Hospital were to lose that accreditation, that would be a disaster for the ACT. It continued:

... staff bullying has plagued the department since concerns were first raised four years ago ...

Several doctors have told the ABC staff relations at the hospital have deteriorated to the point where patient care has suffered.

Doctors on the front line are telling people that it has deteriorated so badly that patient care has suffered. And what is this minister saying? “Don’t raise these concerns. The staff don’t want to hear it.” In actual fact it is the staff who have raised these concerns. They want to hear it because they have been ignored by the minister. The ABC report continued:

One senior staff member told the ABC the department was a “car wreck”, while others have spoken about verbal threats of violence and intimidating emails.

Part of this has come to light because the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have done a review. They do this on a frequent basis; they review a unit to make sure that it is safe and that it is clinically appropriate for training to occur. And that report has been damning. As I said, it has been described as the worst maternity training unit in Australia. We have not seen that report, but, as we understand it, extracts were leaked to the *Canberra Times*, to the media, to the ABC. I quote:

Mismanagement and long-running cultural problems inside the Canberra Hospital maternity unit have put the health of patients at serious risk, an official report has warned, as adverse medical outcomes, inadequate supervision and critically low morale remain.

That is from the *Canberra Times* on 21 November, just the other week. Quoting from this leaked report—and we cannot confirm this but maybe the minister can—the article continued:

“The unit is significantly at risk of both adverse medical outcomes and personal risk to the health and wellbeing of the registrars” ...

It highlights staff shortages, a lack of engagement by visiting doctors, increasing birth numbers, shortages of senior doctors, limited clinical experience, poor rostering, conflicting management protocols and “widespread disaffection.”

This is the unit that the minister has said she is going to fix, this is the unit that we have raised repeated concerns about, and this is the unit about which Katy Gallagher said, “It’s just doctor politics. The staff are addressing it. The staff are fixing it.” It is the staff that are raising the concerns, and it is the external reviews, both the one in 2010 that we have seen and which was tabled in this place, and the review that has been done by the royal college—of which we have not been provided a copy—that are raising these concerns.

Madam Speaker, enough of the cover-ups, enough of the denials, enough of dismissing this as just doctor politics. I am calling for three things. We need to have a copy of the report. The minister can go to the royal college and say it is important that this report be tabled. It is important that the community understands what is going on in this unit. Just saying, “I don’t think that the royal college would want it released,” is not good enough. Has she asked them for a copy so that she can table it? If necessary, it can be tabled in camera so that we can see it and understand the problems. The minister needs to come into this place, as I call for in this motion, and specify the actions that she personally has taken to make sure that in another four years we are not back here with the same concerns about bullying, a toxic culture and risk to patients.

This minister needs to assure the Assembly and the community that she is going to fix this problem. She needs to provide that assurance. If she cannot provide that assurance then it is time to step aside. After eight years as health minister, after four or five years of grappling with this problem, after denials, after the cover-ups, after dismissing this as an issue, it is time for this to be fixed.

**MS GALLAGHER** (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (10.17): The government will not be supporting the motion moved by Mr Hanson today. However, we have circulated an amendment to the motion which deals with the facts of the matter. I move the amendment that has been circulated in my name:

Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) the Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G) Unit at The Canberra Hospital is a highly specialised medical unit providing 3252 births and 20 408 occasions of gynaecological and obstetric care for women across the region;
- (b) the high quality outcomes experienced by patients of the unit;
- (c) in 2010, staff of the unit raised concerns about the interpersonal relationships within the unit, and that these concerns were addressed at that time;
- (d) in September 2014, the Minister for Health received an anonymous letter raising concerns within the unit;

- (e) ACT Health advised the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) about these concerns prior to their scheduled accreditation review of the training program in September 2014;
  - (f) RANZCOG has provided ACT Health with a report which included a number of commendations, including good obstetric experience, excellent after hours consultant support, training supervisors who provide ongoing support and feedback to the registrars, a well-planned new building with impressive facilities, commitment to quality control and audit, research opportunities and a consultant coordinating the weekly teaching sessions, but identified areas for improvement required for accreditation for RANZCOG training to be retained; and
  - (g) ACT Health is working with RANZCOG and the staff of the unit to address these areas for improvement;
- (2) calls on the Government to table by no later than 5 December 2014:
- (a) a summary of actions taken to address concerns raised in the O&G unit in 2010; and
  - (b) a summary of ACT Health's work with the staff of the unit to address the areas for improvement raised by RANZCOG in 2014;
- (3) acknowledges the need to let the action plan be implemented and that management must be given scope to manage the issues in the unit; and
- (4) thanks the staff of the unit—senior doctors, junior doctors, midwives, allied health, management, administrative and other staff who provide excellent care and services to the women and babies across the region.”.

To recap some of the issues that have been raised in the previous speaker's speech, in 2010 there was an independent review undertaken to address some of the issues that had been raised by staff, and from that 2010 review a number of actions were undertaken. These included the establishment of the ACT maternity services network; the appointment of an O&G deputy clinical director; ongoing monitoring of clinical outcomes through Women's Health Australasia and the AHCS; consumer representation at the department's leadership and quality meetings; the implementation of the continuity at Centenary Hospital (CatCH) program, which provides continuity of midwifery care, including care for women who may have an obstetric or medical complication; the implementation of a shared morbidity and mortality meeting with Calvary Hospital; an organisational wide culture survey in 2012; an O&G specific cultural pulse survey in 2014; a review of the quality and safety framework within maternity services; the recruitment of a new O&G clinical director, with specific allocation of admin time for that clinical director; changes to the on-call roster to one in 10 for consultants, which means they are rostered on every tenth weekend; clerical support implemented for the clinical director; and three additional VMOs recruited to the service.

In Mr Hanson's speech today—and he has done it a number of times here—he uses the figure “13 doctors resigned”. I have been looking at the separation data for obstetrics and gynaecology from 2009 to 2014 and there is not one single year when 13 doctors have resigned. Indeed, the most separations that we have had are: nine in 2009, four in 2010, four in 2011, eight in 2012, six in 2013 and 12 in 2014. Of those, a large number of the ones that Mr Hanson now scoffs at were related to end of contract terminations.

In 2012 and 2014, ACT Health undertook some culture surveys within the unit. This was to map the changes and to make sure that the measures that had been introduced were on the right track. Certainly the results from this—and I was briefed earlier this year on those—showed improvements of anywhere between 19 and 50 per cent and a very high level of staff engagement: in 2012, 108 staff participated; in 2014, 183 staff participated. This is seen as an indicator of more positive engagement from staff with what is going on in the department. These surveys did, however, highlight the need for continued focus on culture, and that was certainly part of the response to those surveys—which is a very appropriate one—from management.

In terms of growth and demand for the service, it is clear that families across Canberra and the region have a very high level of confidence in the maternity services provided at Canberra Hospital. This has been clearly seen in the number of women coming to the hospital for treatment, including bypassing their local hospital in order to be seen at Canberra Hospital. There were 2,743 births in 2010-11. That was up to 3,252 births in the last financial year. Again, that shows, I think, the level of clinical care and the services that are being offered within that unit.

In terms of the model of care which was touched on, the building was designed for those who are well enough, well women who have well babies, to be discharged early. We agreed, when we were getting complaints on that, that it had been a model of care that was developed by various stakeholders and that in response to feedback we should have a look at that model of care. A review was undertaken. It highlighted that a safe and effective service exists within the Canberra Hospital maternity unit. It did have a number of recommendations. Five recommendations were made and these were all accepted in full or in principle. These recommendations have been implemented or actioned and are being monitored on an ongoing basis through the maternity leadership group.

In relation to the RANZCOG report, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists are responsible for the accredited training program that is offered to the medical staff. This training program is an adjunct to the clinical service delivery and high quality care offered within the hospital. The RANZCOG report is part of a regular accreditation process that all specialties within a tertiary facility undergo. ACT Health was aware of some of the concerns within the Canberra Hospital obstetrics and gynaecology unit. I received an anonymous letter on 11 September that was referred immediately to the director-general. On receiving that, ACT Health contacted the college and raised these concerns with them prior to their scheduled accreditation review in September 2014. They were fully apprised of the issues that had been raised by the junior medical staff, in large part, and the college attended with that information in mind.

I am not in a position to table the RANZCOG report today. RANZCOG do not publicly release these reports, although I understand they are considering a publicly available reporting process as part of their general college work. The report was released and it did make a number of recommendations. The amendment that I have moved has a number of commendations about the service, including the high level of obstetric experience, excellent after-hours consultant support, training supervisors who provide ongoing support and feedback to the registrars, a well-planned new building with impressive facilities, commitment to quality control and audit, research opportunities, and a consultant coordinating the weekly teaching sessions. But RANZCOG did also identify areas for improvement, based on the interviews they had with staff and some of the information that Health had provided to them as part of their accreditation visit.

The accreditation report relates to teaching standards. It does not extend to commenting on clinical care, but the directorate is working very hard to address the recommendations in the report. A number of steps have already been taken to address the recommendations. Indeed, these were put in place well before the report was received and directly in response to the feedback that we had from staff in September. These measures had been put in place well before this matter hit the public arena.

These steps include changing booking arrangements for clinics to better reflect the availability of clinicians and improving supervision arrangements for clinics. Additional recruitment occurred, and is ongoing, to assist the management of the workload. Additional locum medical officers have been recruited. Staff specialists have been appointed. An additional VMO has been appointed. Another VMO has agreed to increase their current workload, with negotiations underway with other VMOs with the capacity to do the same. Arrangements are in place for the 2015 cohort of registrars to ensure an equal spread of skill mix and experience. An additional senior registrar has been appointed from 2015, and a working party was established to provide further progress implementation on the recommendations. This working party includes representatives from the college.

ACT Health and I refute the comments made by media outlets referring to Canberra Hospital having the worst maternity unit in Australia. These comments are not contained in the accreditation report, nor were they reported by the college surveyors during the feedback to staff, and there is absolutely no evidence to support these claims.

Discussions between ACT Health and a representative from the college have reinforced that there are very good prospects for the recommendations in the report to be met within the six-month time frame before the next visit, and I have certainly indicated to ACT Health that nothing but maintaining accreditation is acceptable to the government. The college is supportive of Canberra Hospital and is hopeful that Canberra Hospital will receive full accreditation at its next visit. I think it is fair to say that there has been a lot of concern about the publicity and the headlines associated with the reporting on this issue. There is concern about those within the unit who are leaking or, for whatever purpose, providing these headlines to the media.

The ACT AMA has also expressed its support for the service maintaining accreditation. Dr Liz Gallagher, who is an obstetrician and gynaecologist in Canberra, has very much endorsed the management response to the concerns that have been raised and is urging both senior and junior doctors to come together on some of these matters.

In discussions with the director-general the department has commissioned two external reviews. One of them is on rostering practices in the O&G department and will look at the allegations around workload, skill mix and staffing levels. The review is being undertaken by representatives sourced from RANZCOG and the completed report is expected this calendar year. The second review will provide an independent examination of the clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction and is being undertaken by Women's Healthcare Australasia, again with a finalised report also expected this calendar year.

With the work that has been done to date, there is no evidence to suggest that any adverse or negative patient outcomes have resulted from some of the issues that have been raised, largely by junior medical staff. This is supported by recent ACHS benchmarking data.

It is also important to put on the record that, in relation to feedback on the unit from patients, the comments or complaints the department has received have decreased by 30 per cent, from 199 in 2012-13 to 140 in 2013-14. The number of compliments has increased by 93 per cent, from 323 in 2012-13 to 623 in 2013-14. This is not an insignificant fact and, again, speaks to the quality of care that is being provided at that unit.

Support for staff is being provided to those who have come forward expressing concerns about stress. The Canberra Hospital is also working with Calvary and Queanbeyan hospitals to look at ways to better manage demand for birthing services across the ACT and the region. There certainly has been an issue this year with Calvary referring numbers of women to Canberra Hospital, which has compounded the demand, and we are negotiating with them for those women to be managed appropriately and safely at Calvary, as they can be.

In terms of recruitment, all positions are recruited for the 2015 training year, in line with the internal training program placements. In addition, two senior registrars have been recruited for 2015. This is new for 2015. In the past only one senior registrar has been engaged. There have also been two unaccredited registrars and four senior resident medical officers recruited for 2015. Recruitment planning to appoint the professor is currently underway, with interviews scheduled for later this year.

The clinical director of the O&G department has indicated he will not be continuing in the role from the end of this year. He will continue within the department as a senior clinician. I do thank him for his leadership over the past four years and for the decision that he has taken to stand aside while some of these issues are being worked through. He is a leading clinician and Canberra is lucky to have him at the Canberra Hospital, offering those clinical skills to women and babies across the region.

In terms of resources for the hospital, since 2011-12 the government has invested in excess of \$10 million in women's, youth and children's services across a range of initiatives and that has been to help meet demand. This has included an extra bed for neonatal intensive care, an extra bed for paediatric inpatients, an extra paediatric day surgery bed, expansion of the of the delivery suite in the birthing centre by an additional bed, and expansion of the maternity assessment unit by an additional bed.

I hope that this speech today has indicated to members just how seriously this issue is being treated and has been treated right throughout the last year, particularly since September, when fresh concerns were raised with management.

As part of the amendment, I have agreed to table no later than 5 December 2014 a summary of all the action that has been taken. It will largely focus on the information I have provided today, but I think now we have to accept that managers and staff in the unit need to get on and work through these issues, together with the college.

The outcome we are seeking is a workplace where people feel supported in their work, the continuation of a high level of service to women and babies across the region and, most importantly, continued high quality medical outcomes for all patients of the unit.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Molonglo) (10.32): I am pleased to talk about this today because I have certainly been aware of the reports in the media recently. I think it is legitimate that these things are discussed in the Assembly because I know there are those in the community who have concerns about this. It is hard not to have genuine concerns about outcomes for patients or consumers when there is so much noise about the management and cultural problems in a specific unit of the hospital, and more so when this unit is the maternity unit. But I have not seen the concerns that have been expressed manifest in anything presented to date.

The media and opposition have both been loudly critical of the recent developments relating to the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists—RANZCOG—report and consideration of the accreditation of the unit as a training hospital. I admit that I have had cause to discuss these issues with the Chief Minister as well, due to both the media reports and the nature of those reports, and I certainly appreciated being able to have that discussion in some detail.

Noting that I have only heard of the findings of the RANZCOG report accreditation review and, like the opposition, have not actually read the report, what I have heard appears to be a concerning development. While not directly related, it carries some reflections of the issues which were raised in the review into service delivery and clinical outcomes at public maternity units in the ACT four years ago and which have been raised occasionally since.

The 2010 review was conducted by a panel of four independent reviewers, including representatives from the Australian College of Midwives, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators, and highlighted some clear staff performance issues. The 2010 review raised 31 recommendations, and the health minister agreed or partially agreed to all of those recommendations.

Further, an internal inquiry into bullying and harassment claims was also undertaken. In relation to today's motion that calls for the release of documents, Mr Hanson may well remember the debate that occurred regarding the publication of that review. If I remember correctly, he was ejected from the chamber that day, but he also came dangerously close to calling on the government to breach the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994, not to mention threatening the integrity of the complaints processes.

Subsequent budget allocations, staff movements and many other actions were no doubt implemented in good faith to respond to those recommendations, and I am sure were actioned with the intention of not just changing the model of care and the management practice but also addressing wherever possible the apparent negative culture of some key staff.

It is fair to be asking questions about the issues that both reports may have raised, but I find it unfair to draw direct comparisons, as clearly a range of steps have been put in place and there has been considerable scrutiny of the issues raised in 2010. Be that as it may, the most recent RANZCOG report, discussing accreditation—as I said, I have not seen or heard of it outside of the media reports and the observations by Mr Hanson—is not a report of government as such, or at least that is what I understand to be the case. I understand it is a document the ownership of which lies with the college rather than the government. Therefore, I cannot support the motion's call to release the report, based on that understanding of the documentation. I am also advised there are genuine concerns raised by current staff who also do not wish the report to be made public—not to avoid scrutiny but to offer some protection as the needed changes are addressed.

How the Assembly deals with these sorts of issues is a really interesting question. Workplaces have problems from time to time. Some of them are dealt with internally and improvements are made; others seem to make it into the media. It raises really important questions about how we deal with these things, both to ensure accountability is in place but also acknowledging that workplaces have difficulties at times and we need to let the managers manage those difficulties, work their way through them and sort these things out. That is what we pay these people to do. I think it is a very difficult issue for members of this place to consider.

What we have heard from the health minister and the Director-General of Health has been recognition that, yes, there are problems and, yes, they need addressing. As I see it, no-one is trying to hide from the fact that there seem to be cultural issues in that workplace that need to be addressed. I am sure that no-one is more disappointed than the health minister that many of these problems seem to be embedded despite a few public expositions and airings, not to mention the real business of running such a complex system and the many reviews and action plans. I think most people would think the effort that has been put in would make some difference.

I am certainly not convinced that these issues are of the health minister's making. She has obviously had no personal hand in bringing about these problems; on the contrary, I think the directorate and the minister have clearly responded, and the minister has outlined a number of steps today to address what are obvious issues.

My reading of the situation, albeit from a distance—and that is the situation we are all in—is a picture of staffing, interpersonal and relationship issues that are clearly flowing over into the day-to-day operations that relate to running a training hospital. While I am concerned about the longer term issues that may be stemming from these cultural issues, it is fair to say that the ACT Greens would be more alarmed by any suggestions of people's health being directly compromised, and that does not appear to be the case. I have only ever heard positive stories of mothers' experiences of the new hospital.

RANZCOG's job in this report is to not delve into the longitudinal health outcomes of women and mothers but to gauge the effectiveness of the training environment. That should then appropriately be the focus of this debate, and that is the discussion we are having. What this ultimately amounts to is that we have six months to judge the minister's ability to realise the needed changes and six months to address the RANZCOG concerns. I am sure the health minister will be working hard to address the systemic and temporary issues that have been identified. No health minister would want to preside over a unit that has been under such a management cloud nor face the possible loss of its accreditation.

I appreciate that the amendments moved by Ms Gallagher seek to table all actions taken since 2010 and a summary of actions that will be taken in 2014-15. Again, the Chief Minister's amendment goes significantly to addressing what I think is Mr Hanson's key point about accountability and action being taken. The Chief Minister has identified a range of points in that amendment. Further, she has indicated a willingness to table by next week—in a very timely manner—a summary of actions taken to address concerns raised in the unit since 2010, as well as a summary of ACT Health's work with staff of the unit to address the areas for improvement raised by the college in 2014. We have seen a clear commitment to action.

The real test for the health minister is what is actually being done. There is all the politics and all the noise that goes around these things and there are the media reports. But from my point of view the real aim is making sure that the issues that have been raised are being tackled. I think we will have a very clear point of accountability in six months because the college has indicated that that is when it will come back and check this accreditation.

I do not think we need trial by media or the politics of the Canberra Liberals. We will have this objective test of accreditation. That is a real point of accountability, and that is certainly a benchmark I will be looking very closely at. We have an undertaking here from the health minister to provide that information to the Assembly, and the college is playing a very clear role of ensuring that the steps that have been put in place are appropriate to address the concerns that have been raised. On that basis I will not be supporting the motion as moved, but I will be supporting the amendment moved by the health minister.

**MR HANSON** (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.41): I will speak to the amendment and close. I must say that I am disappointed that, again, information we are looking for and assurances we are calling for are not going to be provided. I am not particularly surprised that Mr Rattenbury is once again falling into line, despite

the evidence that has been provided. He has essentially caught up with Katy, had a cup of tea, and they have stitched up that they will not provide the information that is needed.

I remind Mr Rattenbury that the article we have seen in the *Canberra Times* about the clinical report from the royal college says:

The unit is significantly at risk—

I say again—

The unit is significantly at risk of both adverse medical outcomes and personal risks to the health and wellbeing of the registrars.

Mr Rattenbury is happy to say, “Oh, well, we don’t need to worry about this. We don’t need to see this report. I’m happy that this is all ongoing.” Can you imagine for a moment, Madam Speaker, if I were the health minister and Mr Rattenbury were responding to a motion that had been put forward by Ms Gallagher? I can imagine the mock outrage we would hear from him. I can imagine him banging on the table, demanding scrutiny and saying how unacceptable this was. Mr Rattenbury is again simply the patsy of this government. As long as this member gets light rail and the other little bits of sugar he wants, he will do anything to support this government.

What he is doing here is letting down the ACT community, and he is letting down the doctors, the nurses and the staff who have come forward wanting resolution, wanting this to come to light. They have not gone to the media and the opposition lightly. They have not provided reports to the media lightly. And we are seeing Mr Rattenbury letting down those staff and ultimately letting down the patients.

Turning to Ms Gallagher’s comments, I stated that in the period when this was raised in 2009-10, 13 doctors resigned. She denied that and went on to say that nine resigned in 2009 and four in 2010. For the benefit of the health minister, nine plus four is 13—13 doctors resigning in that period is a lot and is abnormal. The point made at the time by the president of the royal college was that in many cases these were registrars. These are people who basically said, “This is too much. I’m getting out of this.” They walked away from their training; they walked away from their specialisation as doctors because things were so bad.

My motion, which will be watered down by this amendment from the health minister, asked what action the minister was taking. She has deferred that to the staff. She has said, “Oh, we’ll just find out what the hospital is going to do.” This was the approach last time. The minister has no accountability, takes no responsibility: “That’s Health’s problem.” She said this last time and she keeps saying it. The issue for me is that this has to be something that managers at the hospital and managers at Health deal with. The minister says, “Not my problem.”

What has Dr Brown said? She said staff and the ACT community need to allow ACT Health the time and opportunity to resolve the issues. Well, it has been 14 years, according to Katy Gallagher. How long do we need? Another four years? How long is reasonable after 14 years of war, as Katy Gallagher says, in maternity?

I have asked this minister to provide assurances to the Assembly and to the community that she will resolve this issue or resign. It is a pretty simple thing to ask after so many years that this minister provide assurances that she will fix the issue. She is refusing to do that today. She is going to stand in this place and vote: “No, I will not provide those assurances.” She could have provided those in her amendment. She could have said, “Yes, I will provide those assurances.” This minister is saying today that she refuses to assure this place and she refuses to assure the community that after years of mismanagement, of problems, of this sick culture, she will fix it.

It is quite reasonable, I think, that we expect a minister, given these long-term problems, to come into this place and say, “I’m the minister. Under the Westminster system I am responsible and I will fix this.” I would have thought that after four separate motions, after all the media reporting, after the reports that have been provided by RANZCOG and other external reviews, this minister should have the confidence to be able to say that.

I have lost faith in Katy Gallagher as the health minister. If she is unable to provide assurances that she can fix the problem, if she is refusing to provide those assurances, as she is today, what faith can we and the community have that she is acting proactively, that she is acting ethically and that she is acting reasonably to fix these problems?

Last time these complaints were raised, we know she attacked the doctors. It was so bad that the AMA came out and said there was a witch-hunt by the government against them. We know Katy Gallagher took sides when these issues were raised last time. How do we know she is not doing that again?

I remind the minister and Mr Rattenbury that the staff are raising these concerns. Enough of this, “Oh, this is just politics from the opposition.” Nothing I have said today has not been made as a point by front-line staff. The staff I have spoken to include junior registrars but also senior clinicians. They have a different view about who is to blame and where the root of the problem is. But they are consistent in what they say—that is, the culture is sick and that as a result of the problems in the unit there is a real problem of increased risk to mothers and babies. This minister and Mr Rattenbury are going to again sweep this under the carpet, again refuse to provide the assurances to the community that these problems will be fixed, and again simply try and say this is just politics and the staff are fixing this.

I want you to mark my words today, Madam Speaker, that we will be back in this place on this issue. When you sweep things under the carpet, when you deny, when you cover up and when you just say it is all going to be fixed without taking action or responsibility, just as we were back in 2012 and just as we are back again now, I guarantee, sadly, that we will be back in this place on this issue. Again we will see denials and assurances that the staff are taking care of it, but we will not see a minister who will take responsibility and we will not see a member of the Greens who will do anything other than support his Labor colleagues. That is all he will do. The myth that the Greens once provided any level of accountability in this government is gone forever.

Madam Speaker, in 2010, when the government covered up one of the previous reports, an article appeared entitled, “Maternity doctors fear ‘business as usual’ at Canberra Hospital”. It stated:

*Junior doctors fear it will be “business as usual” at the Canberra Hospital maternity unit now the inquiry into bullying and harassment allegations has been completed ...*

ACT Health announced on Friday afternoon that an investigation into the allegations had been completed but the results would not be made public ... a number of staff in the obstetrics and gynaecology unit were concerned that the problems which led to the inquiry could occur again.

“Could occur again.” It continued:

“I think the junior doctors who put their hands up and said they felt bullied now feel hopeless,” Dr Foote said. “A number of staff have contacted me and said there’s fear and dread of what’s going to happen ... it’s business as usual.”

The fear and dread of those doctors has come to realisation, and it is a fear and dread that this minister, through her inaction, through her incompetence and through her attack on those doctors, is directly responsible for. (*Time expired.*)

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Mr Barr  
Ms Berry  
Dr Bourke  
Ms Burch  
Mr Corbell

Ms Gallagher  
Mr Gentleman  
Ms Porter  
Mr Rattenbury

Mr Coe  
Mr Doszpot  
Mrs Dunne  
Mr Hanson  
Mrs Jones

Ms Lawder  
Mr Smyth  
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

### **Standing order 46—personal explanation**

**MS GALLAGHER:** Madam Speaker, I seek leave under standing order 46.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Do you claim to have been misrepresented?

**MS GALLAGHER:** I do.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You have my leave.

**MS GALLAGHER:** Thank you. Earlier in the debate, Mr Hanson said, “Katy Gallagher says there is a 14-year war in obstetrics.” I have never said that, ever, and I do not believe it is true.

## **Women—White Ribbon Day**

**MRS JONES** (Molonglo) (10.56): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2014;
- (b) White Ribbon Day is the only national, male led campaign to end men’s violence against women;
- (c) over 12 months, on average, one woman is killed every week as a result of intimate partner violence;
- (d) a woman is most likely, if killed by her male partner, for it to occur in her home;
- (e) domestic and family violence is the principle cause of homelessness for women and their children;
- (f) intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Australian women aged 15-44;
- (g) one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone known to them;
- (h) one in four children are exposed to domestic violence, a recognised form of child abuse;
- (i) one in five women experiences harassment within the workplace;
- (j) White Ribbon Day works to change the attitudes and the behaviours that lead to and perpetuate violence against women by engaging and enabling boys and men to lead the social change;

(2) acknowledges the great work done by the White Ribbon Day and its valuable role within our community; and

(3) calls on the Government to collect statistics on incidents of domestic violence perpetrated against women in the ACT and report annually to the Assembly coinciding with White Ribbon Day.

I bring this motion to the Assembly today to acknowledge the work of White Ribbon; to mark White Ribbon Day, which was yesterday, 25 November; and to draw our attention to what everyone can do within the community and what we can do as legislators to help stop violence against women.

White Ribbon Day raises a number of facts. It is the only national, male-led campaign to end men's violence against women. Over 12 months, on average, one woman is killed every week as a result of intimate partner violence. If a woman is killed by her male partner, it is most likely to occur at home. Domestic and family violence are the principal causes of homelessness for women and their children. Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill health in Australian women aged 15 to 44. One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone known to them. One in four children are exposed to domestic violence, a recognised form of child abuse. One in five women experience harassment within the workplace.

White Ribbon Day works to change the attitudes and the behaviours that lead to and perpetuate violence against women by engaging and enabling men to lead social change. White Ribbon began in Australia in 2003 and works to change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to this problem.

The victims of violence are often mothers. They are daughters, sisters and wives. They are valuable and their safety should be of concern to all of us.

With regard to incidents of domestic violence, this is not confined to a specific socioeconomic group in our society; it occurs across all sectors regardless of socioeconomic background, religious belief, education level, occupation or profession, community position, or cultural and ethnic background. No group is immune; research shows that domestic violence crosses all boundaries and impacts the whole family, not just the women being victimised.

The research shows that one in four children will be exposed to domestic violence. There are children who grow up in homes where they are exposed to violence at the hands of fathers and stepfathers, who struggle to adjust later in life, who may never know what a healthy family could look like.

One woman I know told me how she lived with domestic violence for most of her childhood. Her stepfather frequently terrorised the family with bouts of rage that always ended in some form of violence. There were tirades of verbal abuse and physical attacks that got more and more violent as the years went on, ultimately culminating in him attacking her with a knife and breaking her nose. She shared how she regularly feared for her life and how, leaving home at 15, braving life on her own with limited life skills and no place to go, seems a far better prospect than staying and waiting for an assault that could be fatal. All the neighbours knew what was going on—and several school teachers—but nobody stood up for this young girl.

Violence against women is not confined to domestic relationships; it is far more wide reaching and, sadly, more prevalent. Research shows that one in five women have experienced sexual violence. This has to be the worst kind of violence for most women. Fifteen per cent of those who are sexually assaulted are assaulted by a person they know, and almost four per cent of these women are sexually assaulted by a stranger.

This is an area that I am particularly passionate about, as sexual violence against women is often shrouded in shame and secrecy as well as being an area coated in many myths. Some of the myths around sexual violence include that once a man is sexually aroused he cannot help himself and has to act—not something that we accept in our society—that if a woman is drunk or on drugs she is asking for it; that a woman who is dressed in an attractive way is asking for it; and that if a man paid for dinner, she owes it to him. These are complete nonsense, but you do hear them from time to time.

Probably one of the most regularly touted myths is that if a woman is selling sex, if she is a prostitute, then it is not rape. I recently met a woman who shared with me how she had survived 10 years of being a prostitute. Her words to me were that about 25 per cent of those who paid for sex were extremely violent. In her own words: “They wanted to make me bleed.” This violence took place within legal facilities, with bosses turning a blind eye in favour of profits. No-one stood up for this young woman, and it was over 10 years before she was able to make a break.

Another woman told me that at times a client would pay for one service and then decide halfway through that they would take another by force. Ultimately, therefore, she was raped many times while being paid, but no-one would ever advocate for her after accepting that she had been violated.

Women who are purchased by men for sex are often exposed to violence in their workplace. This violence is endemic, and we would never tolerate it in any other work environment.

According to an article in the UK’s *Guardian* newspaper, a recent interview for an international study showed that the experience of men buying sex often shows attitudes of violence towards women or attitudes of acceptance of the fact that she is likely to have been the victim of violence, terrorism, trafficking or gross emotional manipulation. One man said: “I don’t want them to get any pleasure. I am paying for it and it is her job to give me pleasure; if she enjoyed it I would feel cheated.” Another man said he had “seen women with bruises, cuts and Eastern European accents in locations where lots of trafficked women and girls are”. But did he act? No, he did not.

For a proportion of men buying sex, knowing that a woman has been abused makes little difference to them. They are happy to go on, indifferent to the abuse, ignoring what they can clearly see and focusing on their own desires. It is time for these men to stop or be stopped from further abusing women who may have already experienced physical and/or sexual violence. It is time for men to speak up when they know of abuse and violence against women, whatever walk of life that woman is in.

In my motion today I am calling on the government to collect, collate and report meaningful statistics about domestic violence against women and to report such statistics back to the Assembly each year to coincide with White Ribbon Day. I note that some figures included in the ACT’s criminal justice statistics, tabled in the Legislative Assembly here yesterday, could form part of such a report—in particular, a breakdown of the person offences, which include sexual assaults, abduction, harassment and other offences.

A White Ribbon ambassador said to me recently, “A key component of preventing violence against women is raising the awareness of this menace in our society, and accurate, current and meaningful statistics are fundamental in measuring the effectiveness of our awareness campaign.” It is very important to have accurate statistics on domestic violence against women here in the ACT. That way, the government and the community can see real change and measure improvements. Words and ribbons are only words and ribbons if we cannot actually track whether or not there has been any improvement.

We also should understand better the response times for women who call the police for help. I understand that the New South Wales government has released an app for smart phones, called Aurora, which provides resources and an emergency call icon that women can use in an emergency. There is also an app that has been developed in the US which deletes previous phone calls or texts so that a woman who is in an abusive relationship can call for help without her partner being able to track what she is doing on her phone.

Violence against women is an intolerable and completely unacceptable phenomenon. We must look towards providing practical help to support and assist women escaping violence. Women need very practical options, a safe place to go, a safe and supportive person to speak to.

I applaud White Ribbon on their public campaign raising awareness of this very real problem. Now is the time to make sure that our actions are genuinely producing results for women. It has been said that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. In the light of White Ribbon Day, let us stand up and take a pledge to speak out against violence against women and also to measure action. Let us here today pass this motion to collect data on the incidence of domestic violence against women so that we can clearly see where the work needs to be targeted in the future.

I commend this motion to the Assembly.

**MR CORBELL** (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (11.05): I rise to support this motion from Mrs Jones today. The issue of domestic violence or violence against women and children in our community is a significant one. It is a hidden problem, and days like White Ribbon Day give us the opportunity to reflect on and remember why it is that this issue needs to be kept in the public spotlight and, further, why it is critically important that men stand up and say why violence against women and children in our society is unacceptable.

I have been very pleased as Attorney-General to have been engaged in numerous White Ribbon Day events over the years. I have been pleased also, on behalf of the government, to provide significant financial support to those groups in our community who are working to address, respond to and eliminate violence against women and children.

Earlier this month I made the decision to allocate \$80,000 from the confiscated assets trust fund for women's sector proposals that align with the ACT prevention of violence against women and children strategy. I will be announcing the details of those funding programs shortly. This payment will bring the total of the amount approved for women's sector payments to address violence against women and children to just over \$500,000 since 2009. The government has a strong commitment to working with those groups in our community that work to respond to and address the issue of violence against women and children in the ACT.

I have circulated an amendment to Mrs Jones's motion that seeks to address the last point about data gathering. I want to start by saying that I agree absolutely that better data gathering is important for this issue to remain in the public spotlight and I commend her for bringing the issue to the Assembly's attention this morning. The amendment that I have proposed is, I would suggest, a refinement to the motion put forward by Mrs Jones. It is not put forward as a proposal of opposition, because we agree absolutely with the sentiments and the statements that are otherwise set out in Mrs Jones's motion. This should be a matter that is beyond partisan political debate.

The amendment that I have had circulated, Madam Deputy Speaker, and which I will shortly move, seeks to address how the government is proposing to respond to this issue of data gathering. Let me give some context on this. In 2013 the Justice and Community Safety Directorate completed a review of the content and presentation of the quarterly criminal statistical profile. That is a very comprehensive report on data across the criminal justice system that I table every quarter in this place. I tabled the most recent version of that yesterday.

One of the limitations of the profile that was identified in that review was the absence of certain data sets. The 2013 review recommended the development of topic-specific data sets on family violence crime. Officers from Justice and Community Safety are currently engaging with the Family Violence Intervention Program Coordinating Committee and the Domestic Violence Prevention Council on how this data should be incorporated into the criminal justice statistical profile. The intention is to include a family violence data set in the profile for the first time in March next year. That will be published in mid-2015. That is for the March 2015 quarter, which will be published early in mid-2015.

The publication of that family violence data will rely on the important work of the family violence intervention program. Established in May 1998, the FVIP is a coordinated justice and community response to criminal family violence matters. It is chaired by the Victims of Crime Commissioner, Mr Hinchey, and is made up of representatives from a broad range of justice partner agencies, including JACS and the courts and tribunals, police, Corrective Services, Community Services Directorate, DPP, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, ACT Law Society, Legal Aid and Victims Support ACT.

The FVIP coordinating committee commissioned the Australian Institute of Criminology to conduct a review of the program in 2009. The scope of the report was

to analyse data that was collected by agencies that participated in the FVIP from 2005 to 2008. After completion of the report, additional data from 2008-09 and 2009-10 was made available by FVIP to participating agencies.

The Australian Institute of Criminology evaluation of the FVIP was published in September 2012. I would encourage those members with an ongoing interest in this matter, and family violence matters generally, to look at the evaluation of the family violence intervention program here in Canberra. It is a program that I believe we can be very proud of for its efforts to provide a joined-up justice system response to victims of family violence.

The Domestic Violence Prevention Council, which is the advisory body that reports to me on domestic violence matters, has formed a subcommittee to look at the issue of data and, in particular, to identify possible approaches to developing and establishing better data gathering and analysis of that data for domestic violence here in the ACT. As I have said, the intention is to provide for that data to be incorporated into the quarterly criminal justice statistical profile which is tabled in this place.

The issue about appropriate reporting of family violence data was raised by the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. The national council raised as an area for improvement the need for adequate data and evaluation to inform understanding of what works best and why, to ensure that government and community investments are effective in reducing and preventing violence against women and their children.

The council noted that setting the baseline for monitoring change over time, agreed by all governments, is essential. For this reason all jurisdictions across Australia have agreed, through the national plan, to a commitment to national data collection and reporting. In the long term, the aim is to create nationally consistent data definitions and collection methods. The ACT government is closely involved in these national discussions.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has also developed a paper titled “Bridging the data gaps for family, domestic and sexual violence” in support of the national plan. This paper identifies priority themes for data enhancement that can assist in improving the evidence base for family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, and also highlights the importance of consistency and standardisation when collecting this data.

So, as members can see, we are closely engaged in both national discussions and a local process to improve the way we collect and report data on domestic violence in our community. Whether it is through those discussions nationally to have a common baseline so that all jurisdictions across the states and territories report family violence data consistently and allow for good comparisons and analysis to be undertaken at a national level or whether it is improving transparency locally on our understanding of the full picture of violence against women and children here in Canberra, there is significant work being undertaken.

My commitment is to see this data incorporated into the criminal justice statistical profile, the quarterly reports of which are tabled in this place. I am looking forward to receiving the advice of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, who have already commenced work on this area. I think that that will be a very valuable development when it is achieved, hopefully, at the beginning of next year.

With that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I commend Mrs Jones for bringing this matter forward. I commend her for her ongoing interest in this matter and, indeed, so many members in this place. It is very comforting to know that members across the political divide are committed to addressing the very serious problem of violence against women and children that exists in our community. I trust that my amendment to Mrs Jones's motion will be supported, because it will bring up to date the steps already being taken by so many good people in our community to incorporate and improve data collection, consistent with the spirit of Mrs Jones's substantive motion. I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit paragraph (3), substitute:

“(3) notes:

- (a) a review of the Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) in 2012 resulted in additional data on family violence being made available by agencies that participate in the FVIP for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 years; and
- (b) the Domestic Violence Prevention Council has formed a data sub committee which will consider and identify possible approaches for the Council in relation to developing and establishing a data gathering and analysis strategy for the ACT. This work will lead to the collection of frequent, meaningful data about domestic and sexual violence in the ACT.”

**MS BURCH** (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Racing and Gaming, Minister for Women and Minister for the Arts) (11.16): I thank Mrs Jones for bringing this motion on today. It is an important matter. It is something that members here, and indeed the whole community, should be aware of, and we should do all we can to stop violence against women. As the motion has noted, one in three women experience violence at the hands of someone they know and one in four children are exposed to domestic violence. As Minister for Women, I am committed to tackling these issues and reducing violence that happens in the ACT community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government is strongly committed to the prevention of violence against women and children and supports the White Ribbon foundation in its work to promote the role of the men in speaking up to prevent violence against women and their children. White Ribbon must be commended for its work in helping to raise awareness of the issues. Those who saw the two RAF Hercules transports thundering over Canberra suburbs on Tuesday could not have missed the 4.6-metre white ribbon painted on the tail of one of the aircraft. The very fact that people came

out of their houses to see what was going on and the resulting conversations about the planes and what they symbolised were good to have because it made people more aware of this matter and it made people, one would hope, reflect on what they can do to effect change.

Raising awareness of an issue and fundraising is an important way of engaging us on these critical issues. But, in the long term, interventions and activities that make a real difference are where the government is focused. The ACT women's plan 2010-15 identifies the need to improve safety and security for women, with one of the three outcome areas identifying both priority areas for action and progress indicators. The women's plan provides the strategic underpinning for the ACT prevention of violence against women and children strategy 2011-17—"Our Responsibility: ending violence against women and children"—and involves the whole community in upholding and respecting the rights of women and children to live free from fear and experience of violence.

It is deliberately called "Our Responsibility" in an effort to emphasise the nature of the responses that are required. The strategy provides overarching principles to guide violence prevention activities across government and non-government agencies and provide flexible and targeted responses to women and children experiencing violence.

The ACT strategy has four main aims: women and children are safe because an anti-violence culture exists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children are supported and safe in their communities, women's and children's needs are met through joined-up services, and men who use violence are held accountable and supported to change.

The government will provide over \$5 million in 2014-15 towards crisis responses to those experiencing domestic and family and sexual violence, and specialised accommodation and outreach services for women who are escaping domestic violence. There have been a broad range of initiatives under "Our Responsibility", which include funding for the Canberra Men's Centre for the working with the man program, a program which works with men who use violence to be accountable for their behaviours and to change their attitudes towards women.

Initiatives under the national plan include the four yearly people safety survey, undertaken by the ABS, and the four yearly national community attitudes survey undertaken by VicHealth. For the first time, the 2012 people safety survey results allowed us to drill down into jurisdictional data. The survey found that in the ACT 6.3 per cent of women had experienced domestic violence or experienced violence, and women with a disability or long-term health condition were three per cent more likely to experience violence than other women in our community. We will only begin to see changes in the data when the next survey is undertaken in 2016.

In the ACT, data about men's violence against women is collected in a number of different contexts. We have the AFP data, which records reported incidents. We have data from services such as the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the domestic violence service, and their data focuses on the services they provide and therefore reflects the number of inquiries or calls that are made to their crisis line. Their data is, of course,

not comparable to police data. We know that reporting rates are very low when it comes to reporting crimes of this nature and that the figures provided by the AFP are not likely to reflect the true incidence of these crimes.

In addition to this, data is collected in a broad range of other contexts—for example, in the criminal justice system, the emergency departments in hospitals, the Forensic Medical Sexual Assault Centre, other community support services, drug and alcohol services, mental health services or the women’s information line. There is no one centralised database that allows us to give an accurate picture of this. In the long term, the aim is to create nationally consistent data definitions and collection methods. All governments that consider the data framework to be a key priority are working together on how this data can be improved.

In keeping with the key priority of the national plan in building a strong and lasting evidence base, the ACT government has contributed to the establishment of the Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety and will continue to support the work of ANROWS into the future.

In the ACT we have recognised that comprehensive collection of data will contribute to provide a fit-for-purpose, rich and flexible evidence base to meet the current and future needs across the field. These needs may relate to topics ranging from primary prevention, to understanding the prevalence and incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault, to response and service provision.

I thank Mr Corbell for his amendment today. I think it goes to the questions that all of us in this chamber would have about how do we have good evidence, how do we collect the data and how do we report the data. I hope Mrs Jones will support this amendment. Mr Corbell has indeed noted March next year as the time when this data may be able to be consistently reported.

This week I released an information sheet providing an outline of some of the data that we do have and the information about ACT government strategies to address this issue. It includes data such as the Domestic Violence Crisis Service reported in their 2012 annual report, that, between 1988 and April 2012, 61 women, nine men and two children known by the service lost their lives as a result of domestic violence in the ACT—far too many, and something this community needs to be aware of.

As many as one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence and almost one in five Australian women have experienced sexual violence from the age of 15. The AFP data shows that, in 2013-14, 274 incidents of sexual assault, including sexual related offences, were reported to them. This data sheet shows that women aged between 25 and 35 are proportionally the highest identified age group experiencing these crimes, at 6.4 per cent. For the information of members, I table the following paper:

Violence against women in the ACT—Data and evaluation information sheet 2014, prepared by the Community Services Directorate.

In conclusion, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important to understand that all of the statistics—and I think it is an accepted truth—are an underestimate of the actual problem. We know that the prevalence of domestic and family violence, sexual assault and violence against women more broadly in the ACT is the same across this country. This means that all of us, as members of this Assembly and as members of this community, need to be champions and stop violence wherever we see it and not accept any form of violence whatsoever.

I acknowledge Mrs Jones for bringing this important motion forward. It provides an opportunity for all of us to make public statements, because all of us have a role in preventing violence. I also acknowledge the role of the White Ribbon foundation and the many men in this chamber that are sponsors of or ambassadors for this great cause.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Molonglo) (11.26): I would like to thank Mrs Jones for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. It is an important topic to discuss and one well worthy of a discussion here today.

At the forefront of the White Ribbon campaign is the shocking statistic that each and every week in Australia a woman is killed by a partner or ex-partner. It is a staggering number. One woman every week in this country loses her life at the hands of a man that she knows—not a stranger; a man who is or has once been an intimate partner.

The White Ribbon campaign aims to end this violence. The campaign focuses on men, because ultimately they are the perpetrators of this violence. The White Ribbon foundation asks men to “swear” to take an oath never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. It asks us to take a good, hard look at ourselves and question how we can possibly allow this violence to continue—as individuals, and as a community.

One of the key elements of the campaign is the way it taps into the vernacular, and speaks to men with language they use and can relate to, to encourage them to lead by example, to challenge sexist behaviour, and to talk with their mates about what is a very serious subject. The White Ribbon campaign has done a great job in engaging broadly with the community about men’s violence, and getting the conversation started in places where perhaps previously the issue may not have had prominence.

What do we know about domestic violence in the ACT, and what can be done at a policy level to make the kinds of changes that are needed to solve this shocking social problem? Experts cannot say exactly how many deaths can be linked to domestic violence here in the ACT. Some deaths can be clearly attributed as homicides, while others may be hidden by other issues. It is, however, estimated that each year domestic and family violence claim the lives of more than 100 people in Australia. Children, too, are tragically often victims.

The ACT Domestic Violence Crisis Service estimates that, in the 24 years between 1988 and 2012, 72 ACT deaths were caused by domestic violence—an average of three Canberrans every year. We know that reporting of domestic violence is on the increase. The Domestic Violence Crisis Service received 13,959 calls to its

emergency line in the 2012-13 financial year, an increase of 47 per cent from five years ago. We also know that any official figures are likely to be a major underestimation of the full scope and nature of the problem and do not capture the more invisible, but no less damaging, psychological and economic aspects of domestic violence.

Noting that, however, more figures were released recently. In 2012-13, of the 274 sexual assaults reported to the Australian Federal Police in the ACT, 55, or 20 per cent, occurred in a domestic violence context, and 33 per cent of all reported assaults were family violence related. In 2013-14 the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre received 15,315 calls, a 29 per cent increase from 2012-13. In 2014 the Domestic Violence Crisis Service responded to 15,109 requests, of which 84.5 per cent were from women. And also in 2014 the Women's Legal Service reported that 63 per cent of women seeking family law court assistance were experiencing domestic or family violence.

While it is encouraging that women are becoming more likely to report abuse, a greater willingness to speak up is unlikely to explain the scale of the increase. With the rising demand for the 24-hour service, women are left at risk as the service struggles to meet the increasing demand.

Sadly, an increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have been accessing the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. Despite representing only 1.45 per cent of the ACT population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for four per cent of the service's client group during 2012-13.

The community sector not so long ago called for a holistic and whole-of-government approach to tackling domestic violence, and I do believe the ACT government is taking many practical steps in the right direction. In July this year the government ordered a review into deaths from domestic violence, which is being led by the independent Domestic Violence Prevention Council, which the minister spoke of earlier.

The council consists of a project coordinator and 12 other members, including representatives of different arms of the government, and at least six community members, including representatives of the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the culturally and linguistically diverse community, and a representative of women with disabilities.

The review will consider closed cases of domestic and family violence that led to a death. The findings will hopefully help to identify potential legislative, policy, practice and service reforms, to improve the capacity of the government and community sector to support victims of domestic violence such as sharing information by courts, law enforcement and social services agencies.

We know there have been some other jurisdictions that have done reviews of this kind and they have led to some very good responses. The review was welcomed by the ACT Victims of Crime Commissioner as a way of both identifying strategies for preventing deaths from domestic violence and being a way to remember victims who have died.

The government hopes the review will help to achieve the objectives of both the national plan to reduce violence against women and their children and the ACT prevention of violence against women and children strategy, which is midway through its implementation period.

The announcement of the review came in the same month that Prime Minister Tony Abbott launched the second stage of the national plan to reduce violence against women and children. Recent high profile domestic violence cases have drawn national attention to this human cost of family violence, with calls by women's rights and domestic violence campaigners to establish a royal commission into domestic violence, and it has become a hot issue in this weekend's Victorian state election.

Family violence campaigner and Victorian nominee for Australian of the Year Rosie Batty says that there needs to be a major overhaul in the way that the justice system deals with family violence, along with improvements in the way agencies work together to support victims of violence. As members will know, Rosie is the mother of 11-year-old Luke Batty, who was brutally murdered by his father at cricket practice in February this year, and she herself endured a decade of abuse by her former partner.

Calls for a national commission have also been put forward, including by social activist Phil Cleary, who has campaigned against domestic violence since 1989 when his sister was murdered by her former boyfriend, who was then granted a provocation defence and sentenced to less than four years in jail. In an online opinion piece this year Mr Cleary told the story of the changing way that we view family violence. He is quoted as saying:

Twenty-five years ago, I spoke in the Melbourne Town Hall at one of the first major gatherings to discuss violence against women. The women who led this campaign came from the battlegrounds, the community centres, refuges, legal centres and anti-violence agencies where frightened women sought protection and comfort from the terror.

We've come a long way since those days. No longer do we believe 'family violence' by men is private business. No longer can judges make inappropriate comments with impunity in 'wife killer' trials, even if juries still find such men not guilty of murder. No longer will the community simply shrug its shoulders when a local woman is killed. No one held vigils in the 'old days'. Now they have become part of the ritual of the epidemic of violence against women.

Mr Cleary went on to express powerfully his feelings of frustration. He said:

But I'm sick of the vigils and the endless violence. I don't want to be crying about another murder and remembering what it was like when the woman about whom we now shed tears was my sister. We need to end the carnage. We need far reaching cultural change. For that we need a royal commission.

This is a very powerful expression of the issue from someone who has obviously very personally felt the loss brought about by domestic violence.

Turning specifically to Mrs Jones's motion today, as I said earlier, I really appreciate that she has brought this on, because it is an important issue to discuss, and it is very appropriate that we reflect on the meaning and the significance of White Ribbon Day, and that we do so in this place as part of private members' day.

The focus of the discussion today has been on the issue of statistics and how they are collected. Mrs Jones made a very important point in identifying the need for specific statistics to be drawn out, away from general assault statistics, and putting a real focus on those. I completely support her in seeking to draw that out.

I also note the comments that the attorney made and the amendment that has been circulated. I note the spirit in which the attorney has put that amendment and the very clear commitments he has given regarding the production of that data. I am pleased to hear that some of that work is already underway and the clear commitments from the attorney, echoed by Minister Burch, that that data will be made available. I think it is critically important that it is in the public domain. Just as we need to talk about difficult issues like suicide and the number of people who commit suicide each year, it is critically important that this data becomes available and that we can use it both to monitor levels of domestic violence and, with it being explicit, to focus on an issue that can sometimes be dismissed as a private issue. I think Phil Cleary is right when he says we have come a long way from that, but I fear that in some places it is still the case.

That brings me to the final remarks I want to make. This is an incredibly important issue and the White Ribbon campaign has done a lot to bring this issue into the public domain. Family violence, domestic violence, is simply not acceptable. I appreciate the sentiment of all members of the Assembly who have spoken today in making that point. Men have to take responsibility. For me, the most powerful part of the White Ribbon campaign has always been the acknowledgement that men, largely, are the perpetrators of this violence; therefore it is men who have to take responsibility to ensure that it ends.

I have always strongly supported the idea that men must challenge fellow men, to say that this is not okay, to not be silent. I have always thought that is an important part of this messaging and the strategy of White Ribbon. If blokes make reference to this in the sporting change room or in the pub, other men should not simply sit back and condone it or, perhaps even more powerfully, not silently jerk away from it but in fact actively stand up and say, "This is not okay," because we know that peer pressure is a really powerful force for change.

Peer pressure is often talked about as a bad thing but I think it can be a very good thing. Men speaking out and saying that this is not acceptable is a most important way or a very effective way of changing the culture and ensuring that we live in a society where every single person knows, understands and accepts that violence in the home, domestic violence and violence against women, is not acceptable in any form. There is no excuse for it. That is the country that I want to live in and I hope that we can continue to strive to be in that place.

Thank you, Mrs Jones, for bringing this motion forward today. I give it my full support, with the addition of Mr Corbell's amendment, which I think will reinforce the intent of Mrs Jones's motion.

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra) (11.38): I welcome the opportunity to speak about this very important issue today in the Legislative Assembly, particularly following White Ribbon Day yesterday. I want to talk about some types of domestic violence or abuse that have not been referred to in this motion. I did not get around to moving an amendment, but I will talk about them now. I think they are forms of abuse that are sometimes invisible in our community and in our families but nonetheless are just as devastating as physical assaults and abuse.

These are the emotional kinds of abuse where a victim is blamed for all the problems in a relationship, where they are constantly compared to others, affecting their self-esteem and their self-worth, there is sporadic sulking and a withdrawal of interest and engagement. For example, there are weeks of silence from the partner, social abuse where victims are isolated from family and friends through techniques such as ongoing rudeness to family and friends, moving to locations where the victim knows nobody and physically preventing the victim from going out to meet people and, in effect, imprisoning that person.

There is spiritual abuse, denying access to ceremonies, land or family, preventing religious observance and forcing victims to do things against their beliefs, denigration of cultural background or using religious teachings or cultural tradition as a reason for violence and economic abuse. There is complete control of all the money, no access to bank accounts, providing only an inadequate allowance, using any wages earned by the victim for household expenses.

It is important that we remember that domestic and family violence and abuse come in many forms. Sometimes these types of abuse are not seen as clearly by our community, and they are things that we need to be aware of and bring attention to when we can.

I am happy that the ACT government have been doing some work on this, not just as a government but as an employer. The enterprise agreement with their employees provides for 10 days domestic violence leave so that people who do need to get support can have the leave available for them to be able to do that. The ACTU also has a claim with Fair Work Australia for domestic violence leave to be available for all employees. Everybody in our community, including employers, needs to do the right thing by people who have been a victim of domestic violence or abuse and ensure that they can get support when they need it without fearing for their jobs or fearing being unable to afford to take the time off to be able to get support.

I met a woman last year who was a victim of emotional, social and economic abuse. Thankfully we were able to give her a hand up and Mr Rattenbury's office assisted with providing this person with public housing. She was also supported by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. I can say now that she is certainly on her way to a better future for herself and her child. She was amazing and brave to come forward

and seek support, and I know that not everybody is in a situation to do that. For all of us, it is our responsibility to take a look around us and speak up when we see any forms of violence or abuse in our community.

I am absolutely 100 per cent committed to tackling these issues and reducing violence and abuse against women in our community. And these things happen daily in the ACT. So I do commend Mrs Jones for bringing this motion to the Assembly. I think the more often we talk about these things and get them out in the public, the more opportunities people have to get support from other people in our community about these terrible things that happen. I absolutely support the motion that Mrs Jones has brought into the Assembly today.

**MS PORTER** (Ginninderra) (11.43): I welcome the opportunity to talk about this important subject as well. I do thank Mrs Jones for bringing this important matter to the Assembly, especially after White Ribbon Day yesterday. Of course, any time is the time for us to talk about this important subject in this place. I was not going to speak. However, listening to the other speakers today, I want to add my voice as a person who was the subject of domestic violence for many years. I would like to emphasise the points about the forms of violence against women mentioned in this place this morning. I found the hidden violence, the emotional, social and economic abuse, hardest to bear by not only me but also my children.

The physical violence is evident and does engender support, but the hidden violence does not always engender support. It can also cause problems with your friends and your family because they do not recognise what is happening to you. It can cause divisions within your family. It can cause your children to be torn between one parent and the other as they do not really understand what is happening to them. It was particularly hard for my children at the time as they were going through their teenage years. Although this violence started when my youngest boy, who is now a father of three children, was only a babe in arms, the violence lasted for many years.

The reason you put up with it, as I now realise, was that you fear your children will be stigmatised. You fear that you will be stigmatised. You imagine that you are going to be homeless. You imagine that your life and your children's lives will never be the same again. Of course that is not true.

Women need much support to be able to take that step. I had the support of my friends at the time. Some women friends and some male friends said to me, "You have choices and we will support you to make those choices." It is important, I think, for people not only to speak up about their own experience but to look to support their friends and see how they can support them to make the choices that are often extremely difficult.

We have the supports now that we have all been talking about here in this place, which are far better than they were at the time I was experiencing these things. However, I believe that we need—and I think all members in this place have acknowledged that we need—to continue to get those supports in place. We need to improve on those supports and we need to make sure that we are accurately reflecting what is happening out there so that women do not feel stigmatised and do not feel reluctant to report.

I think it is extremely important that we continue to work on this, that we do not ignore it, that we do not allow it to be a hidden thing in our community, that we acknowledge it, that we raise our voices. Unless we raise our voices, women and children will continue to suffer. I feel very fortunate to be in this place today and to be able to stand and speak about it, because I have been there, I have done that, and I now can put my energy into supporting other women and children who may be experiencing this.

Thank you, Mrs Jones, for moving this motion today.

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (11.47): I thank Mrs Jones for bringing this motion forward today. It is very important for us to talk about and to acknowledge the terrible toll that violence against women takes in our community. On average in Australia, one woman a week dies at the hands of a current or former partner, most often in her own home. Another shocking statistic for us is that domestic violence is a leading contributor to disability and illness for women and that women with disabilities are at least twice as likely to be abused than women without disabilities.

I acknowledge the work of the White Ribbon campaign, because we will never solve violence against women without changing the attitudes and actions of men. Domestic and family violence is a leading driver of homelessness in Australia, most particularly for women. Too many women are trapped by the choice—which is no real choice—between violence in the home and homelessness.

A form of domestic violence which we have not spoken about much today is financial abuse, a form of abuse that is difficult to measure because many women do not identify with the terminology and also because powerful social beliefs help to keep this issue quite hidden. Persistent gender stereotypes show that men are better money managers, women are spendthrifts and financially incompetent, and these stereotypes combine with the notion that financial matters should be kept private. This works to keep financial abuse out of the public eye.

But it is conservatively estimated that financial abuse occurs in at least 50 per cent of family violence cases. This means that, on the basis that one in three Australian women experience family violence in their lifetime, around two million women are subject to this form of abuse. Financial abuse results in immediate and often long-term financial insecurity for the women who experience it, and for many it leads to poverty and homelessness. It touches women from all walks of life and across age, social and cultural spectra.

As well as having lost control over their finances during a relationship, these women have been told repeatedly that they are hopeless with money, they are stupid, they cannot understand or be capable of managing financial matters. This means that when their relationship ends not only are they left with little or nothing but debts but also they have a profound lack of self-confidence. They may have difficulty finding a job because they may have been out of the workforce for years, and it makes it very hard for them to get back on their feet financially. This can impact on their financial security for the rest of their lives.

You may be forgiven for thinking that, in a city as well off and as lovely as Canberra, homelessness is not a problem. But I think we all know that in the ACT on any given night there are almost 2,000 people without a safe and secure place to call home. Eliminating violence against women would dramatically reduce homelessness in Canberra and Australia.

But our homelessness system is blocked. We have people entering but unable to leave the homelessness system. There is a lack of exits from homelessness, including a lack of alternative housing, whether it is because of the long public housing waiting list, a lack of crisis accommodation or a lack of financial means, and this forces many women to choose between sleeping rough or staying in a violent situation. When children are added into the equation, it makes it an even more difficult choice.

Domestic violence and relationship issues are cited as the most common cause for women seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services and account for 26.4 per cent of the reasons given by all people, male and female, that they are experiencing homelessness. Domestic violence is likely to be a higher percentage cause than this, because people might answer that the reason for their homelessness is financial difficulties. But they have financial difficulties because they have left a violent relationship. So that is the secondary cause there.

Nearly 5,500 Canberrans were assisted by homelessness services last year, but an additional 500 people were turned away. In fact, the ACT had the highest percentage of unmet need for short-term accommodation in Australia, with nearly half of the people needing it turned away. Can I say that I believe the use of hotels, motels and caravan parks is not an adequate solution for women escaping domestic violence.

I would like to applaud some recent changes whereby crisis services are increasingly allowing pets to accompany people in homelessness services. Domestic and family violence can include harming a pet in front of family members, and research shows that the threat of harm to, or death of, a family pet if the woman leaves sometimes convinces a woman to stay with a violent partner.

It is our responsibility to address not only the causes but also the consequences of domestic violence. We must continue to address the causes as well as seek remedies.

I would like to acknowledge the work of a great number of homelessness services and individuals here in Canberra who work tirelessly to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens. They work every day to end the cycle of homelessness, the cycle of violence, the cycle of despair and hopelessness.

Creating and participating in the public conversation about domestic violence will go a long way to raising awareness and bringing about change, and I would like to commend Mrs Jones on her motion recognising White Ribbon Day.

**MRS JONES** (Molonglo) (11.53): I will speak to the amendment and close, because we are supporting it. Sometimes in this place we speak lots of words and I worry about how they translate into actions. I worry about women today who are not sure what is going to happen to them tonight. I support the amendment the government has

brought forward, because it is essentially an explanation of how they are going to fulfil my demands. I commend the minister for having started on this work.

Yes, I had noted to mention in closing, Ms Berry, that violence is not only a physical matter. As Yvette says, psychological abuse is very real, and the results of it can last for a lifetime. Women have to suffer the silent treatment, being isolated physically or relationally, being spoken to with stupid or degrading comments, being blamed for things in the household or in life in general. Spiritual abuse, not being allowed to be who they are, because faith and religion is not something a person can be expected to separate from themselves for the convenience of others, financial control, mind games and psychological control and manipulation—all are equally as damaging as physical assault.

In fact, the psychological aspect of physical assault in and of itself often lasts for a lot longer than the damage done to women. I mean any action which undermines the value and dignity inherent in all women, at their birth, at their conception, such as trafficking in women. Chains are not always physical. It is not just domestic violence that women suffer. As I mentioned in my speech, it is a standard part of the prostitution trade that women are expected to cope with rape and physical assault on a regular basis.

So I applaud that part of the amendment which goes to the family violence intervention program that the ACT government have as their coordinated response to family violence incidents. I applaud the fact that that work that is being undertaken will be reported in the quarterly criminal data collection by mid next year. I am glad to see that the subcommittee of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council has started to deal with the need for these statistics. Minister Corbell has stated that by mid-2015 we should have such data available. I will watch eagerly to see what is in that data, if there is anything missing. I am glad to hear that the Victims of Crime Commissioner is involved.

Ms Burch has also committed to me that by next year she will have clear and better data to report on. So I am very happy to accept the amendment. I thank all those here for their statements.

I still go on worrying about how we actually make sure this motion impacts on some women in Canberra, in their daily lives, because many of them will not know what has been said in here. Many of them will not have even known about White Ribbon Day yesterday and many of them are probably too scared to turn on the TV in case they get into trouble for turning on the TV. We are talking not about the majority of women here but about those who are affected, whose lives are controlled and who, in many cases, fear how they will escape such a situation.

I commend all those who participated in the debate today. I will support the amendment. Let us hope that our actions have some practical impact on the lives of women suffering in this city.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

## **Economy—performance**

**MS PORTER** (Ginninderra) (11.58): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the underlying strength of the ACT economy and the strong prospects for long-term growth;
- (b) the decision by the ACT Government to:
  - (i) support economic and job growth in the ACT economy;
  - (ii) invest in a four-year \$2.5 billion infrastructure program to provide important facilities and services and boost growth;
  - (iii) implement stimulus measures to support the ACT building and construction industry;
  - (iv) support the private sector to grow, create jobs and diversify, particularly through the implementation of the Business Development Strategy;
  - (v) support innovation in the ACT through the launch of the Canberra Innovation Network;
  - (vi) encourage investment in the ACT through the creation of a dedicated investment facilitation body, Invest Canberra;
  - (vii) support key sectors of the ACT economy, notably tourism, construction and higher education; and
  - (viii) continue reforming taxes by phasing out inefficient taxes that hinder growth and distort investment and consumption decisions;
- (c) that Australian Bureau of Statistics figures about unemployment, retail trade, residential building approvals and wages growth indicate the negative impact of ongoing Commonwealth job cuts are having on our local economy;
- (d) the decision of the ACT Government to focus on four key areas of investment being health, education, public transport and resolution of the toxic legacy of Mr Fluffy asbestos; and
- (e) the likely impact of the Mr Fluffy asbestos buyback scheme on the ACT Budget; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) continue to monitor the impact on our economy of the Commonwealth jobs cuts;

- (b) work closely with the business and construction sector to maximise local jobs opportunities;
- (c) ensure that the strategic reforms underway across the ACTPS enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government services; and
- (d) make strong representation to the federal Government to resist any attempts to make further direct funding cuts to the Territory or to transfer Commonwealth public sector jobs from the ACT.

I am pleased to bring this motion to the Assembly today in relation to maintaining a strong economy in the ACT. It gives the Assembly the opportunity to discuss what we as elected members are doing to ensure the strength of the ACT economy is maintained and what long-term planning is necessary for economic growth that benefits the lives and futures of every citizen in the ACT. It also gives me the opportunity to detail how this government, even when the commonwealth turns its back on the ACT, has turned Australia's most livable city into the world's most livable city, as demonstrated by recent reports by the Property Council and the OECD. One does not get to earn the title of the most livable city by narrow conservative values that shrink the economy or threaten jobs.

It is the duty of every elected member in this place to protect jobs and to maintain confidence in the ACT economy and not to talk it down. As we all know, this includes those opposite. The ACT and surrounding regions are faced with a very challenging period as a direct result of the commonwealth's poorly thought-out budget cuts and other decisions surrounding federal government departments. The ACT was hit twice this year, experiencing not only the continued cuts to the Australian public service but also the dramatic fall in payments that will hurt ACT individuals and families. Both of these hits to our economy are out of the ACT government's control.

We have already seen the impacts these cuts have had on the ACT. Let me take this opportunity to go through some of the unfortunate facts and figures that illustrate the damage the commonwealth has caused to our great city. Unemployment figures show that in September 2013 the ACT had the lowest jobless rate in Australia at 4.3 per cent, and that has now risen to 5.4 per cent, our highest rate since 2001. The retail figures show that the ACT had the third best retail trade in September 2013 but is now equal to the lowest, with 1.7 per cent. Residential building approvals figures represent a decrease of 11.2 per cent from our September 2013 figure of 1.9 per cent, compared to an Australia-wide increase of 15.3 per cent. In September 2013 the ACT economy was amongst the strongest nationally, and this government will continue to support job growth and economic growth even when we are dealt with so poorly by the commonwealth government.

This government is the right government for this job. It is a government with vision that seizes and creates opportunities. This government will not pursue policies that have been shown to fail, policies which will destroy the very fabric of our society. We know if we cut spending, as the opposition suggests, we would compound the pain of the commonwealth cuts and deny our community the services it deserves and expects. People are not figures on a balance sheet to be moved around at will to assist the agenda of a federal government which wants to balance its budget.

This government is focusing on four key areas of investment: health, education, public transport and the resolution of the toxic legacy of Mr Fluffy asbestos. It is within these four key areas of investment that this government will continue to deliver what will undoubtedly benefit our community and continue to grow the ACT economy.

Keeping in mind the ACT is one of only two jurisdictions in Australia and only one of 26 worldwide that has maintained a constant AAA rating, let me use this opportunity to remind the Assembly of the great initiatives and economic stimulus measures this government has implemented and which have served to keep our economy strong. The ACT government has delivered a record investment of \$1.4 billion in health and community care and \$122 million in capital funding under the health infrastructure program. I congratulate the Chief Minister and the Treasurer for stepping in and funding the massive shortfall left after the careless cuts to health made by the Abbott government. This record investment will see much needed improvements to Calvary Hospital, including a four-year plan to deliver an additional 54 acute beds and an expansion of the lymphoedema, endoscopy and ophthalmology services. This government's investment in health is so significant that the OECD rated health in the ACT 9.9 out of 10. Even those opposite, with their relentless attacks on our health system and all those who work in it, should admit this is a very good result.

Again, this government is investing record levels of funding in education by investing even more than last year in better schools and teachers. This funding will see the new CIT campus developed in Tuggeranong as well as a new school built in Coombs. This significant investment in education supports Canberra's higher education sector, which is currently thriving, educating about 40,000 students and employing about 45,000 people in the region. Under this government the ACT continues to top the country in NAPLAN results, ranking first or equal first for grammar, punctuation and numeracy in all levels since 2009, and Canberrans are twice as likely to hold postgraduate qualifications as other Australians. We are truly an education territory.

Even under pressure from a pathetic commonwealth government, this government is not holding back on its vision to transform the ACT into a city with world-class infrastructure. The government is delivering on its vision by investing \$375 million in capital infrastructure during 2014-15 and \$2.5 billion over the next four years. This is the biggest spend by any ACT government, and the spending will include funding for the UC public hospital, capital metro light rail, city to the lake and new court facilities.

Even when we are faced with unforeseen challenges that impact our economy, the ACT government has made clear choices through its budget to support investment in the territory and to support job creation. During the past decade more than 35,000 new jobs were created in the ACT. That equates to almost 10 jobs per day for 10 years. The successful economic management by our Treasury and ACT directorates saw the ACT economy worth \$34.4 billion in 2012-13, with our economy growing by almost \$1 billion a year since 2000-01.

Mr Fluffy was a hard blow this year, yet this government remains strong and will deliver a resolution. Yes, the impact of Mr Fluffy will affect the ACT's bottom line, but in finding a resolution to this toxic saga the important thing is that families are

supported, are not left in the dark and know they can count on this government to help them through these very hard times. The ACT government believes the buyback and demolition scheme is the only way to conquer the Mr Fluffy issue once and for all.

Unfortunately, this scheme means there will be a minimum cost to the ACT budget in the order of \$300 million to \$400 million because the commonwealth did not take responsibility, given it was a commonwealth designed scheme. The ACT government will have to bear the costs and bring the community together to help share the expense for those affected by this tragedy. I make it clear to the Assembly that the ACT government will not profit from the buyback scheme. We all need to come together as a community to assist affected families.

The ACT government will continue to do whatever it can to support the ACT economy during hard times and will remain dedicated to the task of ensuring individuals and families are supported and that we continue to have a strong economy and a strong community.

I mentioned the four areas we will be continuing to concentrate on: health, education, public transport and the Mr Fluffy issue. Other members, I am sure, will want to emphasise different aspects of those four areas. I have not had time this morning to go through them all because there is so much this government is doing in all of these areas to maintain a strong economy and to make sure this city remains the most livable city in the whole world. It would take me quite a long time to list them, and I hope my colleagues will add to the list of the great initiatives of this government as we debate this issue this morning and this afternoon.

This government cannot and should not try to do everything by itself. We need to engage with the private sector, with business and construction sectors, to help them maximise opportunities for growth, to help them have vision, to help them make the opportunities we all know this city needs. We need to work with the community sector as well, another large employer of people in the ACT and a partner in many programs that support the most vulnerable in our community.

This is why our investment in the human services blueprint is so important. It enables the ACT government to work together with the community sector to make sure people are receiving the right service at the right time in the right place. I commend all those who have been involved in the directorate to bring this blueprint together. I believe the trial of the blueprint in west Belconnen will be extremely successful, and I am hopeful the blueprint will be run out across the ACT.

It is only by working together as a whole community that we can meet the challenges the commonwealth has thrown up for all of us. Therefore, I call on the ACT government to continue to make strong representations to the commonwealth to ask them to resist any other attempts to make further direct funding cuts to the territory or to transfer commonwealth public sector jobs from the ACT to other places. I think we would all agree that what they have been doing to this point has been a retrograde step, and I call on the government to make every attempt to ensure the damage being done to the territory by the commonwealth ceases. I commend the government for everything it is doing to make sure we continue to grow jobs in the ACT and to ensure our economy remains strong.

**MR SMYTH** (Brindabella) (12.10): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion, and I thank Ms Porter for bringing it on. It is interesting, though. You can question how many times members opposite can bring this motion on and attempt to deflect all the blame to the current commonwealth government when they were mute when the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments were destroying the economy of the ACT.

We all know that there are job cuts in this year's federal budget—about 16,500 across the APS. But from the Treasurer's speech yesterday you would think all those job cuts were directly attributable to what the Abbott government is doing. It is just not the truth. That is where the credibility of this motion goes out the door. There would be a taking seriously of the government's view if they had stood up to the Gillard and Rudd governments when they slashed 14,473 jobs, 89 per cent of the jobs that are currently mooted to go from the Australian public service. Those opposite in the Labor Party, assisted by the Greens, were mute.

There was no objection then. When we put motions forward, they would not support them or they would modify them. They did nothing while Mr Rudd in particular destroyed the public service in the ACT with his mammoth job cuts—job cuts that they never admitted to but that every federal public servant in this city knew were going on. The disharmony in the federal public service starts with the Rudd government. Those opposite did nothing to stop it, did nothing to fight it. Of course, Mr Barr has form on that. We know that, for instance, with the cuts to the cultural institutions, he was the chief cheerleader, saying that cutting the National Gallery budget was a good thing. We all know that that is not so.

So it is very hard to take this motion seriously. On the surface, the motion seems reasonable, but on closer inspection it is touting the same programs and initiatives to address the recent bumps in our economy. You only have to look at part (b), paragraphs (i) to (viii). They are basically the government bringing back programs it axed in 2006 or things that it has just rebadged. It is interesting. Let me just go to one of them, (1)(b)(vii):

... support key sectors of the ACT economy, notably tourism, construction and higher education ...

And then let me go to (viii):

... continue reforming taxes by phasing out inefficient taxes that hinder growth and distort investment and consumption decisions ...

Let me start with (vii). What is the number one call from the tourism industry in terms of productive infrastructure in the ACT? A new convention centre. Who is the only person in the territory that thinks the current convention centre is reasonable for the size of the city? The minister for tourism. He does not think it needs to be any bigger. He fails to see the opportunity and the frustration in that sector of the community at that recent comment from the Treasurer. It is huge and growing. People are shaking their heads at a government that just does not get the contribution of the business events sector to the economy of this town and the jobs it creates.

We just had a motion on White Ribbon Day. A lot of the jobs in the hospitality sector are part time. They suit women and families; they suit young women getting into the workforce; they suit women returning to the workforce. The opportunity to expand and have a new convention centre, which would bring with it extra accommodation, leads to jobs, particularly for women. But no. This is the Treasurer, the tourism minister, who thinks that the current convention centre is adequate and that his government does not have a great deal to do with it—that it is just a private sector initiative.

That flies in the face of what is going on around this country. There was South Australian government support for the expansion of the Adelaide Convention Centre. The expansion there is actually bigger than the proposed Australia forum. The fact that the New South Wales government is backing the total knock down and rebuild of the Darling Harbour convention centre and the Victorian government is backing doubling the size of the Melbourne convention centre says that this is a government, and a minister in particular, that is out of sync with reality.

Key support sectors, notably tourism? Not so sure on that one. Construction? What is the construction industry? The property industry, the construction industry, whether it be small builders or big builders—what are their problems? Their problems are things like DV306 and the lease variation charge. They were ignored on DV306; they were ignored on the lease variation charge; they were ignored on commence and complete. That is the problem. To say that they support key sectors of the economy, particularly in construction, is simply a joke.

You only have to look at how badly lease variation has performed for this Treasurer. It is rapidly becoming his mining tax—all promise and absolutely no delivery. I am sure that members would be interested to know that the actual outcome in 2013-14 for the lease variation charge was \$14,203,000. When it was first touted back in the 2012-13 budget, it was meant to be \$24 million. We have received almost half of what it was meant to give. In 2014-15, it was meant to be \$26,365,000; that was rapidly downgraded to \$14,580,000. This tax is a disaster. In the year to date, 2014-15, in the first quarter, it failed miserably. It only raised 1.3 million out of 3.6 million, 62 per cent below target.

This is the tax reform that the minister touts to be supporting the construction industry. In fact, it is hindering it. That is the reality when you have been there too long: you are out of touch and you do not understand how these industries work.

Let me go to part (viii), “reforming taxes”. Yes, they are reforming taxes, but they did not tell people they would triple the rates to pay for that. The commercial sector missed out on the first year of reforms, but they have been hit since then. We know that the policies of this government are hindering housing affordability, and we know that it is stopping construction.

Manhattan recently won the Australian property industry award for the development of the year. Manhattan was approved under the old system; it would not have gone ahead under the lease variation charge, because it would have been uneconomic. That is the sort of reform that Ms Porter thinks is good and that she touts as supporting key sectors of the ACT economy—for instance, construction.

So there you go. That is just part (vii). You can comprehensively rebut the notion that they are supporting the industry just on those few facts.

Let us look at what the IPA said about tax burdens, given the tax referral—the impact of the state and territory government taxes last year. The ACT had the highest tax liability of all jurisdictions, about eight per cent of the state average; the highest percentage of corporate tax income liability in the country, at 19.5 per cent; and the second highest stamp duties, at \$17,000. When looking at general business tax liabilities based on business scales, the ACT had the highest tax liability for the smallest reference business scale, 10 per cent of the normal size, at \$8,959. The next highest in this category was Tasmania, at \$5,142. Our taxes were \$3,817 more. The average nationally was \$4,623; we were \$4,336 more. No wonder our business survival rates are now the lowest in the country. These are not the signs of a government that is supporting business and the economy.

You only need to look at the latest report from CommSec, which had us as the worst performing economy in the country. In relation to the retail numbers alone—retail is the eyes of your economy—ACT retail experienced the second largest trade slump in Australia over August, and sales continue to fall. In six of the eight past months, the ABS reported negative seasonally adjusted retail figures for the ACT. By comparison, there had been only one decrease in the rate nationally.

This is a problem for this government. The government is quite happy to continue to blame the current federal government. I am always amused by Robert Macklin's comments in the *CityNews*. In his article on 3 April this year, he said:

**ANDREW Barr's** sudden discovery that “recession” was looming was equally unimpressive. Bleating is not an option, Andrew. Did you really not see the Abbott/Hockey steamroller coming down the track?

He did, because he was talking about it from 2010, but, like so much in this government, it is just talk; they did nothing real or meaningful to change the course. Indeed, when they had the opportunity to go to their federal colleagues and say, “Don't do this; stop it,” they were silent. They were mute. We heard nothing from them.

Ms Porter goes on to talk about the government's focus on four key areas of investment. You can say you have got the biggest budget in the country or the biggest budget in the history of the ACT for infrastructure, but it is about delivery—and it is about delivery on time, on budget and on scope. There are pitifully few examples in the last 13 years where this government has been able to deliver on time, on scope and on budget.

The new fire station at Charnwood is one example, but the best comparator is when we look at the work that has been done at the airport. When the Labor minister of the day was touting that he could build roads past the airport on time and on budget, the only way they could actually make it occur was to give it to the private sector—actually give it to the airport to manage the project. They did that. It was a great project—on time, on budget, on scope.

That is the problem. It is well and good to talk about the biggest spend ever. At the heart of it is the spend on the hospital, but there is confusion with the hospital spend: they go to tender, they have select tenders, there are businesses doing a lot of work and making a lot of effort at great expense, and then the government change their mind—and change their mind continually. That is the problem with this government in the delivery of capital works. Are you getting value for money? The GDE was five or six years late and four times over budget. What about the dam? Which number do you want to pick? Pick a number—145, 410 or anywhere in between. This government does not deliver on time and on budget.

Then there was the AMC. We warned them. Minister Corbell was saying, “There is capacity here for 25 years.” We said, “Don’t cut the size.” It was to be 374 beds; it was cut to 300. The gym was dropped; the chapel was dropped; other facilities were dropped. What are we doing now? What is the budget this year, Mr Wall? It is \$100 million extra for the AMC to do exactly what we warned the government they would have to do by cutting that. That is their record.

Let me look at part (2), which says “continue to monitor the impact on our economy”. They should be doing that anyway. It says “work closely with business”. You should work closely with business. But we have a Treasurer who says: “The private sector are not exactly stepping up to the plate at the moment, making large investments. Although we are seeking that, we are going overseas for that because we don’t think we’re going to get that locally.” The private sector is not stepping up? There is a lot of confidence there in the private sector.

The motion says:

... ensure that the strategic reforms underway across the ACTPS enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government services ...

Truly, that is a matter of course. It says:

... make strong representation to the Federal Government ...

If you wanted to have any credibility on the call to make strong representations to the government, you might have done it when you had maximum efficiency at the federal level, when it was actually your party in government. But you squibbed it. You squibbed it as you have always done.

The problem is that the government do not really have a view about the private sector. They talk the talk, but they never deliver. Chief Minister Stanhope said that we would always be a public sector economy. There is, on record, the current Chief Minister saying exactly that. And we have quotes from the Treasurer where he says that he does not care where the jobs come from, public or private. If you are talking about building up a private sector and you say, “I do not mind where the employment comes from, regardless of whether they are in the public sector or the private sector,” where is your commitment?

Let me go to page 42 of this year's budget paper 3. The Treasurer tells us:

The temporary deficits over the next three years reflect the Government's investment in jobs and services.

The temporary deficit? We know from documents tabled yesterday that it is going to be a lot longer than the next three years. What we do not have from the government is a plan to show us where the surplus is coming from, because we have a Treasurer who believes the deficits are temporary and that somehow, when the federal government starts spending, everything will be hunky-dory like it has always been.

There is an opportunity here to create a greater private sector in the ACT. The Canberra Liberals have stood up to both federal coalition and federal Labor governments and said, "No; don't slash public servants in the ACT as a balancing item on your budget." We have now had several Labor governments who destroyed the federal economy. We get Liberal governments that come in and clean it up. We need to make sure that we minimise the impact to the ACT. The impact on the ACT will not be minimised by motions like this. The impact on the ACT will be minimised by improving the private sector, getting the reforms right and having a long-term vision as to where the city is going—not, for instance, starting projects and saying, "We have got the city plan; we have got the city to the lake," and then saying, "They are now off the agenda or pushed back."

Businesses want certainty. They want to know what the government is committed to. The community needs certainty and the best long-term value from things like land sales, where we work out the best long-term use, not the short-term gain of a few bucks for the budget so that the Treasurer can attempt to balance his budget. We need to work out how we use land, which, of course, is a finite resource; they are not going to make any more. We need to make sure that we get it right for the long term so that we and the generations that come after us have a long-term future. The best way to achieve that is by improving, developing and growing the private sector in the ACT so that we all get the dividend and we all get what we should from— (*Time expired*)

*Debate interrupted in accordance with standing order 74 and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour.*

**Sitting suspended from 12.25 to 2.30 pm.**

## **Visitor**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, I acknowledge the presence in the chamber of one of our former attendants, Mr Peter Litchfield. Welcome back to the Assembly.

## **Questions without notice Canberra Hospital—emergency department**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health. It concerns delays in emergency surgery at the Canberra Hospital. In the *Canberra Times* on 22 November,

injured cyclist Mr Chris Burton reported that he had waited almost two weeks before receiving emergency surgery. On four days he was sent home before having to return to the pre-op room the next day. Mr Burton said that he had to fast each day from midnight in preparation for an operation that did not happen. Mr Burton said that staff had told him that two to four days wait was likely for emergency surgery and that “it had been like this for years”. In all, it took almost two weeks after his accident, with broken bones, before he had his surgery.

Minister, why is it regular practice for patients needing emergency surgery, and having been listed for operation, to have to wait almost two weeks for emergency surgery at TCH?

**MS GALLAGHER:** I am aware of the case of a Mr Burton from New South Wales who was booked in originally for emergency surgery on 30 October and ultimately had his surgery on 3 November.

In relation to the concerns that Mr Hanson has raised, I think it is important to understand that Canberra Hospital does all of the emergency surgery for Canberra and the region. On the days that Mr Burton was cancelled, there were a range of other operations that needed to be done more urgently than his, including, as examples, without wanting to breach anyone’s health records or privacy, repair of a ruptured or leaking aorta, retained placenta, craniotomy, abdominal aortic aneurysm, open fractures and emergency appendectomies. This is the nature of the emergency list. At times, people will have to wait. Mr Burton, as I understand it, was categorised as a category 4 patient in terms of the level of urgency for the surgery.

It is regrettable that there was a four-day wait, but the flip side of it is: should people whose injuries were more serious—who had more trauma and, at times, life-threatening injuries—wait in order for someone not to be cancelled? That is not the way the system works. The emergency list is managed over the weekends. There is reduced surgical activity over the weekends, but people are seen as quickly as they can be with the workforce that is available for those operations.

It is regrettable, and it is common with people coming in—perhaps not for four days. Cancellations of the emergency list are frequent because of the unpredictable nature of the emergency load. For example, you can be being wheeled into theatre when you are bumped for a more urgent patient. Staff at surgical bookings do an incredible job to manage it. We are looking at other ways to shift more elective work out of Canberra Hospital so that it can do more emergency work that is unplanned. The surgical-wide work that is happening across the two hospitals, between Canberra and Calvary, would provide some relief for that. But every hospital like Canberra Hospital will have to schedule patients around whatever emergency load comes in. It is reasonable and it is the only fair way of ensuring that everyone is treated on their urgency level, not for their particular injury.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, are people waiting longer than they need to for emergency surgery because the hospital is full or there are staff shortages, not just because higher priority cases eventuate?

**MS GALLAGHER:** No. If someone needs emergency surgery and it is clinically determined that they need to have it, and need to have it now, there is no question: a bed will be made available. There is absolutely no question about that. And that is why it is important to keep our bed turnover happening as soon as it can.

In terms of workforce, at times there are pressures. I am aware that if you want to open another theatre, on the weekend in particular, because the trauma load has increased, usually beyond doing 24 hours of emergency surgery on a day, if it goes over that time and other theatres are to be commissioned, if suitably qualified staff cannot be provided, that will limit the amount of emergency surgery that can be done. For example, if you cannot get a second anaesthetist to operate in a second operating theatre, you cannot open the operating theatre. But it is as flexible as it can be.

Absolutely everybody who needs emergency surgery will get their surgery. At times they will have to wait, and for good reason. I had a look at Mr Burton's case in particular. As I understand it there were a number of very serious operations, many of which took hours to perform. It was just one of those things, and it is very hard. For the most part people are really reasonable and patient. I think communication is one issue that we need to look at further, about how we let people know what is happening in the operating theatres so that they do not get frustrated. But in terms of changing decisions that were taken about that particular case, I do not think there is any approach other than the one that was taken.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, are people waiting longer than they need to for emergency surgery because priority is given to elective surgery?

**MS GALLAGHER:** No; absolutely not. Again, every year now there are 11,000 elective surgery operations performed. From memory, in the last calendar year there were 7,214 emergency operations performed. The emergency load is three-quarters of the elective load. On any one day at Canberra Hospital it will take up half of the operations being performed. For the benefit of those opposite, every single broken bone in the region that requires surgery will happen in Canberra Hospital—every single broken bone—because there is no private hospital offering that cover and there are limited offerings at Calvary in relation to emergency surgery.

The hospital does an incredible job. It services the region. I had dinner the other night with the mayors from the surrounding region. Without prompting and out of the blue, all of them spoke of how thankful they were that the Canberra Hospital was here for their communities, servicing them, saving their lives and fixing their broken bones when they need it. The care about that hospital from those people who do not live here was certainly something that I have never seen replicated in this place.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, why are waiting times for emergency surgery not reported regularly as key performance indicators for TCH?

**MS GALLAGHER:** Because there are no performance indicators for it, and none are required in any other hospital because it is impossible, I think, to manage.

**Mr Hanson:** It's not happening in any other hospital.

**MS GALLAGHER:** What a load of rubbish coming out of Mr Hanson—as usual—“It's not happening in any other hospital.” Of course it happens in hospitals all around the country. It is not a performance measure of how a hospital is functioning. It has an emergency load which is dealt with in times faster than category 1 elective surgery—much faster. I am not going to create a measure that puts more undue pressure on a hospital that is already dealing with an incredible amount of reporting and data requirements and performance requirements.

The data I see is usually how much emergency load there is—is it 24 hours in one day, is it 48 hours in one day—and how they get through that. For the most part, people do not wait at all because of the level of care that is provided. Where there are waits, it is for category 4—less urgent conditions that are not life or limb threatening.

That is my position. I am not going to change it. We report the amount of emergency work, and it is a huge credit to the hospital that it is able to deliver the standard of care and the volume of care on an annual basis without any support from private or other public hospitals in this region.

### **Transport—light rail**

**MR COE:** My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, I refer to an article by economist David Hughes in the *Canberra Times* of 17 November. Dr Hughes said:

According to the business case, replacing some buses with some trams on the road to Gungahlin will, among other things, increase economic growth, population, private investment, productivity, employment and business innovation in the ACT.

He went on to say:

Light rail is worse than folly. It is fantasy.

Minister, why will replacing some buses with some trams on the road to Gungahlin increase economic growth, population, private investment, productivity, employment and business innovation, especially when increased density can happen without light rail?

**MR CORBELL:** I thank Mr Coe for the question. Dr Hughes's views on this project are well known and they were well known before he had the opportunity to review the business case. I think he comes with a particular perspective in relation to these projects. This is the same Dr Hughes of course that, I think, is on the record as saying that he thinks public transport should not be funded by the public and that, instead, it should be only delivered if it is profit making. These are the types of positions that of course this government does not agree with.

Turning to the specifics of Mr Coe's question, I would simply state that what is well understood about the delivery of light rail projects is that they bring forward investment and productivity in areas that cannot be delivered through other types of transport infrastructure. This was most recently identified in the report from the Tourism and Transport Forum titled *Better public transport. Better productivity. The economic return on public transport investment.*

This report, produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of the Tourism and Transport Forum, has highlighted that, in particular, investment in rail infrastructure has significant economic benefits, brings forward productivity, brings forward development along the public transport corridors in a way that other public transport infrastructure cannot and certainly in a way that road-based infrastructure cannot. There is very clear evidence about the benefits of investment in these types of infrastructure projects.

We continue to hear from those opposite assertions that this is simply about switching people from bus use to tram use. That is simply not the case. What we know is that there are significant benefits associated with light rail infrastructure that cannot be delivered by bus-based infrastructure. We know, on the academic evidence, that people do prefer to complete their public transport journey by light rail instead of bus and that it is a significant driver in convincing more people to move out of their cars into public transport.

We also know that the benefits associated with investment in light rail extend beyond those who use the service. They benefit across the transport infrastructure, and some of those savings are clearly identified in the government's business case.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

**MR COE:** Minister, specifically what are the benefits that can be attracted through light rail that cannot be attracted through other rapid transit?

**MR CORBELL:** I draw Mr Coe's attention to my previous answer, which is that very clearly the capacity to attract people out of their cars and onto public transport is one of the real bonuses that you get from light rail. You get better modal shift. You bring forward development activity that would not otherwise occur. All of these benefits are outlined very clearly in the government's business case. This business case has been put together in a very robust way, with very conservative assumptions, by world-leading experts in this area of infrastructure economic analysis. It is a level of analysis that the government stands by.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

**DR BOURKE:** Minister, could you tell us more about the benefits of the capital metro project, particularly to Belconnen residents in my electorate of Ginninderra?

**MR CORBELL:** I thank Dr Bourke for the supplementary. Of course, these are exactly the same questions that were asked of me by Mr Wall in a recent public

hearing on the Capital Metro Agency. The points to be made about this are that, first and foremost, the business case outlines benefits to the ACT community of a billion dollars—a billion dollars worth of investment across the ACT economy. These are benefits that accrue across the economy and therefore benefit a whole range of participants in the economy.

But, in addition to that, of course, we have benefits associated with employment. We are talking about approximately 3,500 jobs during the construction stage of this project. That is larger—

**Mr Coe:** Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Stop the clock. Do you have a point of order, Mr Coe?

**Mr Coe:** Yes, Madam Speaker, on relevance. Dr Bourke's very good question related to the specific benefits for Belconnen residents, not the territory as a whole. I ask that the minister specifically talk about the benefits for the good people of Ginninderra.

**Dr Bourke:** On the point of order.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order, members! I would like to hear Dr Bourke.

**Dr Bourke:** On the point of order, I would point out that Belconnen actually is in the Australian Capital Territory.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order, Dr Bourke.

**Mr Barr:** Neither was Mr Coe's, was it?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Actually, if you listen to the ruling that I am about to make, Mr Barr, you might be disabused of that idea. In fact, I uphold Mr Coe's point of order because—

**Mr Barr:** Really!

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Do you want to do something about that? If you want to do something about that, there are means by which you can do it. But sitting there and making snide “ha, ha” comments is not one of them, Mr Barr. And if you are not careful, you will march. I uphold the point of order because, as the standing orders specifically say, the question should be directly relevant, and Dr Bourke asked about his electorate of Ginninderra. So I ask the minister to address his question to the benefits that accrue. He was asked to tell us more about the benefits of capital metro and how they would relate to Dr Bourke's electorate of Ginninderra.

**MR CORBELL:** Jobs, Madam Speaker—jobs. Madam Speaker, despite your ruling, I think the point is very clearly made; that is, the benefit to Dr Bourke's electorate is, amongst others, jobs. There is the opportunity to pay people, to put money in their

wallets, to put money in their purses, to allow them to spend money in the shops, to allow them to put food on the table—3½ thousand jobs right across the economy, including in the electorate of Ginninderra.

This is a project that is larger than the Cotter Dam project in terms of its employment benefit, larger than the Majura parkway project in terms of its employment, larger than the ASIO building. Do any of those opposite dispute the fact that those projects deliver benefits into each and every one of their electorates? (*Time expired.*)

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, why are you proceeding with this project, given the poor state of the ACT's finances?

**MR CORBELL:** This is a project that delivers economic benefits for our city. We have a robust and detailed business case that backs that up with the facts and the figures that withstand the scrutiny that some seek to put them under. We know there is significant economic benefit associated with this project, and this is a time when we need to grow our economy. This is a time when we need to support diversification of our economy, to create the places and spaces that encourage the economic innovation we want to achieve for our city.

We believe in the future of this city, unlike those opposite and their federal colleagues who are not interested in the future of this city and who are looking at moving jobs out of our city. This is the same Liberal Party that is shifting public service jobs out of our city. We want to invest in our city. We want to create a sustainable future for our city, and we want to invest in infrastructure projects that deliver jobs and economic opportunity for our city. This is a project that delivers just that.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Can we all come to order before I call Dr Bourke? As I have said, we are not going to listen to question time in silence—I do not expect that—but when I call people to order, Mr Hanson and Mrs Jones, I expect you to come to order. Dr Bourke.

### **Transport—light rail**

**DR BOURKE:** My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, last month you released the business case for the capital metro project. Can you please tell the Assembly more about this business case and how it informs the capital metro project?

**MR CORBELL:** I thank Dr Bourke for his question. It gives me the opportunity to reflect further on the very robust and detailed nature of the business case that the government has released for the capital metro project. I start by making the point that, unlike conservative governments around the country, this Labor government has been prepared to put the full, detailed business case as presented to cabinet on the table for public scrutiny. We have got the assistant infrastructure minister at a federal level, Mr Briggs, urging his state Liberal colleagues to do this and they are resisting it. Here in

the ACT we can be proud that we have adopted a transparent and open approach when it comes to disclosure of the economic analysis that underpins the government's decision to proceed with this project.

The business case contains a detailed outline of the project. It contains a detailed needs and benefits analysis. It includes economic analysis, along with a benefit-cost analysis. It also looks at different delivery models and it has a financial analysis. It is an important and detailed assessment. The business case clearly and objectively supports the case for building light rail for our city. This is a project that delivers \$1 billion worth of benefits to the ACT economy. It shows that for every dollar spent there is \$1.20 in economic return and economic benefit for our city.

This compares favourably with a number of other rail projects across the country, including projects that have been supported and built by state Liberal governments. For example, the light rail line to Dulwich Hill in Sydney, with a benefit-cost ratio of one, has nevertheless been delivered by the state Liberal government. Equally, there is the major north-west rail link in Sydney, with a benefit-cost ratio of 1.17. That is a project supported by the federal government and being delivered by the New South Wales Liberal government. So let us hear no more about so-called marginal BCRs when you compare them against the BCRs of rail projects that have been funded by Liberal governments in other jurisdictions in this country and which have been built or are under development.

This is a very important project. We need to look at what the business case tells us about the impact of not proceeding with it. We know, for example, that congestion costs are going to double by the year 2031 and will impact on our economy to the tune of \$200 million per annum. That is the cost: the lost productivity in our economy from not acting to address rising congestion costs and the cost to the economy—\$200 million. That is the federal government's assessment of the impact of growing congestion in our city.

This is also a project that delivers in the context of a significant capital investment commitment by the ACT government. Let us put the costs associated with this project in some context. Over the next four years this government has committed funding of almost \$2.5 billion for infrastructure projects—\$2.5 billion just over the next four years. (*Time expired.*)

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

**DR BOURKE:** Minister, can you elaborate on the billion dollars in benefits that are calculated in the business case?

**MR CORBELL:** I thank Dr Bourke for the supplementary. As I was saying, it is very clear when you look at the infrastructure spend of the territory as a whole that this is a project that is affordable. Turning to the issue of the \$1 billion worth of benefits outlined in the project, in addition to the 3,500 direct jobs and over 50,000 indirect jobs that will be supported out to 2047 by this project, there are other significant financial benefits. For example: \$222 million in transport time savings—that is the economic saving accrued through people having better transport journey times as a

result of this project; \$140 million in infrastructure efficiency savings—that is better use of infrastructure and significant efficiency improvements in city infrastructure; \$240 million in land use benefits associated with the increased capacity to bring forward development that would not otherwise be occurring along the corridor; \$13 million in environmental benefits; and \$5 million in walking and cycling benefits. Whilst this is a smaller figure in the overall benefits analysis of the project, it is not one that should be underestimated, given the very significant costs associated with growing obesity and lifestyle-related illnesses in our city and the impact they are having on our public health system. Finally, there is \$198 million in wider benefits across the ACT economy.

These are very significant benefits for the city as a whole. They are quantifiable; they have been developed consistent with accepted economic analysis practice; and they have been delivered by a firm with global experience in undertaking these types of assessments.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

**MR COE:** Minister, how much money has been budgeted for land acquisition along the route?

**MR CORBELL:** Land acquisition costs are expected to be marginal; indeed, it is possible that we will not see any land acquisition costs. To the extent that there are land acquisition costs, they are considered to be very marginal because we have a dedicated reservation for this project, with the land already within territory ownership. There is one small site on Flemington Road, but in that circumstance my understanding is that it is not about the cost of land acquisition; it is about a transfer of title between existing government landowners.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

**MS PORTER:** Minister, what else does the business case say about the benefits of the light rail project for the whole of Canberra?

**MR CORBELL:** I thank Ms Porter for the supplementary. I draw members' attention to those broader benefits associated with the indirect job creation opportunities of around 50,000 jobs between now and 2047. These, of course, are associated with the economic opportunity that light rail brings. It is about creating the spaces and places and the certainty in the investment environment that allows development to occur along the corridor. These are the objectives that this place has debated at length ever since self-government—the requirement to bring forward development to accommodate a growing population in a way which is a more sustainable pattern of settlement.

This project will allow us to meet those ends. We know there is significant capacity for growth along this corridor, to accommodate more dwellings, using the existing land use zoning along this corridor. It is not about changing the zoning; it is about bringing forward the capacity for that growth to actually happen.

By creating those spaces and creating those places, we also create the incentive for and the interest of those new economy businesses that this government is investing so much time and effort in—the innovation businesses, the businesses that spin out of our universities, that spin out of the CSIRO, that spin out of our research institutions. I refer to great companies like Windlab, for example, a leading Canberra company building into the new clean energy economy that is emerging globally. It has come out of the CSIRO and it is employing people right here in Canberra. Those types of businesses— *(Time expired.)*

### **Transport—light rail**

**MR WALL:** My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, I refer to a statement made by Matt Grudnoff, an economist with the Australia Institute, about the risks to taxpayers of the proposed public-private partnership to deliver the capital metro project. He said:

We should be worried ...

He also said:

Failed PPPs show that they don't always work, and the only way to get around that is a high level of transparency.

He also warned of the dangers of hidden clauses in the contracts described as commercial-in-confidence.

Minister, what commitment can you give that the government will be fully transparent about the terms of the PPP, including the cost to taxpayers over the life of the partnership?

**MR CORBELL:** I note the comments that Mr Wall refers to in relation to the full interview that took place with the gentleman from the Australia Institute. I know that overall his comments were very clear—that PPPs can deliver value for money for taxpayers, but they need to be structured carefully. The government agrees absolutely. The PPP needs to be structured carefully to make sure the risk transfer is effected and to make sure that, if there are problems associated with managing that risk, that cost is borne by the private sector partner and not by the taxpayer.

We will be very focused on the delivery of a PPP agreement and contract that reflects the importance of protecting the taxpayer and making sure that when risk is apportioned to the private sector it is genuinely apportioned to them and the risk does not come back to the taxpayer. We are very focused on that. Obviously, we are at the early stages of this process. Significant work is currently being undertaken by the government in developing the RFP framework, and we will be continuing that very detailed work.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

**MR WALL:** Minister, what confidence can ACT ratepayers have that the project will not fail, like the Clem7 tunnel in Brisbane and the Lane Cove and cross-city tunnels in Sydney?

**MR CORBELL:** I thank Mr Wall for the supplementary. I make the point that those PPPs failed because of the patronage risk assumptions taken by the private sector in those projects and the fact that they overestimated the amount of patronage, the amount of tollway revenue they would be getting.

In this project patronage risk resides with the territory. That is a very clear learning that the territory and, indeed, all PPP contracts around Australia have taken on board, which is: you need to avoid those issues by recognising that patronage risk is not something that is going to be borne by the private sector. And that allows the private sector to deliver more robust and realistic assumptions about their financing and their capacity to deliver the project.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

**MR COE:** Minister, why was the availability payment of perhaps \$70 million to \$100 million a year for finance costs not included in the full business case?

**MR CORBELL:** It was not included for reasons that I have previously outlined, particularly to the annual reports hearing.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

**MR COE:** Minister, has the ACT government decided to go for a public-private model because of the lack of transparency and the potential to hide various costs that would otherwise be able to be sought through FOI?

**MR CORBELL:** No, Mr Coe. I know he would like to build that conspiracy theory, Madam Speaker, but it is not the case. A public-private partnership allows us to transfer risk and deliver better value for money for taxpayers. That is why the government has chosen the model. We know that, when you look at the public sector comparator that is in the business case against the PPP option, the PPP option stacks up and is more favourable to taxpayers because the risk transfer delivers better value for money. That is why we are proceeding with this model.

### **Water—security**

**MS LAWDER:** As infinitely rewarding as questions about the tram are for my electorate of Brindabella—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Could you come to the question.

**MS LAWDER:** my question is actually to the Minister for Planning and it is about water security for Tharwa. Minister, the town, the Outward Bound facility and the surrounding area rely on personal water supplies, and in large part on a private tank

that supplies non-potable water and emergency water. That tank, as you know, is well past prime condition and is in danger of failing, leaving the town and districts without vital emergency water, or even triggering a small flood if the tank were to burst. Minister, you have indicated that a master plan and an infrastructure plan are being developed, but residents are still unaware of the future of their water security. Minister, when do you expect the master plan to be completed for Tharwa and when will residents be contacted?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Lawder for her question. We have been working with Tharwa residents with regard to water security. I personally have visited Val Jeffery at Tharwa to have a look at the water structure on a couple of occasions. I have given some direction to EPD to have a look at what can be done with the system there at Tharwa. As you are aware, Madam Speaker, Tharwa takes some water supply from the Murrumbidgee River. There are two pick-ups in the Murrumbidgee River and two pumps, and a catchment tank at the top of the Tharwa area behind Mr Jeffery's shop. I have visited and inspected—

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Do you have a point of order? Can we stop the clock.

**Mr Hanson:** on a point of order, as fascinating as Mr Gentleman's visits are, the question was very specifically about the timing for the master plan to be completed. Could he relay that information to the Assembly, rather than what he used to do as a candidate.

**Mr Corbell:** On the point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** On the point of order.

**Mr Corbell:** The preamble to the question related to water security matters and the need to address water security in the context of the master plan. I think Mr Gentleman, the minister, is appropriately replying in that context, as well as obviously still having three minutes to fully answer his question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I agree that he should be directly relevant to the question. Given the preamble, I think Mr Gentleman was being directly relevant to the state of the tank at Tharwa, which is a very important issue and is not a laughing matter. But I also remind Mr Gentleman to be mindful of the specific question that he was asked and attempt to answer it within the remaining three minutes and eight seconds.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I have mentioned, we are certainly looking at the water supply for Tharwa. I have given some instructions to EPD to act, even before the Tharwa master plan stage 1 is completed—to look at that situation and see whether we can help there. The Tharwa master plan stage 1 infrastructure study is underway, so we hope to see that released very shortly.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, what research or studies have been done to examine the possibility of a new tank for the Tharwa area?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Those studies are underway as we speak. As I mentioned, EPD officials are talking with Mr Jeffery and other residents of Tharwa and inspecting the tank.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Wall.

**MR WALL:** Minister, will the residents of Tharwa be connected to town water, given that they are ratepayers, like every other resident in the ACT?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** That is a consideration that needs to be looked at in more detail. It would be quite an expensive exercise to connect town water to some 26 residences there. Nevertheless, it is certainly something that could be investigated, and we will balance the value with whether or not we can supply the water in another way.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Wall.

**MR WALL:** Minister, as opposed to connecting to town water, what are the other supply options for Tharwa into the future?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** A very large river runs directly past Tharwa, and we are working to ensure that the current supply from that river can continue to occur. The water is quite good from the river; not a lot of treatment needs to occur for the current uses. I suggest that perhaps further work can be done on the storage area, and that is what we are looking into.

### **Budget—deficit**

**MR SMYTH:** My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, in the recently released September consolidated financial report, the net debt of the GGS, excluding superannuation investments, as at 30 September 2014 was \$526.4 million, a 66 per cent increase or \$213.7 million, from the 30 June 2014 result of \$312 million. Minister, what is the reason for this increase?

**MR BARR:** Principally it would be the drawdown for the territory's infrastructure program, but there may be some other factors around the timing of particular payments that would have some impact on that. It is always useful to look at the yearly results rather than quarterly ones, as the variation from one quarter to the next can be significant.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Treasurer, can you list the additional borrowings that have increased the net debt?

**MR BARR:** In terms of the bond issuance numbers, yes, we can provide that information. We tend to go to the market infrequently and for larger amounts. The last issuance was in the order of \$400 million or \$500 million.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

**MS LAWDER:** Treasurer, what are the timing issues and values for capital works payments that have led to net debt increasing?

**MR BARR:** Net debt was scheduled to increase as a result of increased borrowings to finance the territory's infrastructure program. That was outlined in the budget, so that can hardly be a surprise to those opposite. In the context of the quarterly report, I will provide the Assembly with some further information. I imagine that that detail will be forthcoming in a capital works update that is due in the near future.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

**MS LAWDER:** Treasurer, is the government anticipating further increases in net debt in the next consolidated financial report? If so, by how much?

**MR BARR:** Yes; over the course of this fiscal year there will be an increase in net debt as a result of increased borrowings.

### **Education—parental engagement**

**MS PORTER:** My question is to the minister for education and relates to how we engage with parents in their school community. Minister, can you inform the Assembly about the survey of public school parents announced this month and how this survey will help us better meet the needs of parents and students?

**MS BURCH:** I thank Ms Porter for her interest in the connection between the education system and Canberra families. We know that children do better when their families are engaged in their learning. That is why one of my priorities as Minister for Education and Training is to put parents and students at the centre of the things that we do.

Active engagement with parents and carers is vital for our students' success and I want to know what they think of our system. Understanding what families think about their schools and why they choose one school over another is vital to understanding what works and what needs to improve. This is why I have asked the directorate to find out what parents and carers in the public education system think about their children's schooling and how we engage with them.

Recently I announced a survey of ACT public primary and early childhood school parents to seek their feedback. Among other things, this survey asks parents and carers what is important to them when choosing a school for their child, what type of school parents recommend to other families, and how well our schools communicate with parents. The survey also focuses on the drivers and reasons behind parental choice of school, perceptions of the public and private education systems, and the type of information available regarding the public education system.

As an example, the survey asks parents how they obtain information on schools in the ACT, whether or not they would like a smart phone app to enable communication with schools, their opinion on school uniforms, and how important issues such as teacher quality and discipline are in the perception of their school.

We have a high quality, high performing public education system here in Canberra and parental engagement is a key factor in making it even stronger. Parent surveys such as this are good tools to test ideas and seek feedback from our parent and carer communities. I urge parents and carers who have not yet done so to take the survey and to let us know what they think. We will use the feedback from this survey to help frame government policy on public education and support decision making at a school level.

I am proud to say that parents and carers in the ACT are spoiled for choice. We have a wonderful public education system here and a very good non-government education system as well. This survey will go a long way to help us improve the way we engage with parents and carers, and to better understand their needs.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

**MS PORTER:** Minister, what has been the response to the survey so far?

**MS BURCH:** The response to the survey so far has been very strong indeed. As I understand, over 1,200 responses have been received so far, and completed surveys are still coming in. Our schools have done a good job in circulating the survey to their parents and families and encouraging them to participate in this important piece of parental engagement. It is pleasing that our school and parent communities have embraced this opportunity to give feedback on our priority to serve them better.

While the strong result is pleasing, I must say that I am not surprised by the level of interest and activity. Since becoming minister for education just over two years ago I have visited just over half of our schools, including 54 ACT public schools. At every school I have always been impressed by the willingness of parents and teachers to engage in conversations about how we make our system better for all students. The strength of the response that this survey has generated indicates to me the willingness of parents, principals and school staff to work together to make our systems even better.

It is clear that we have a very engaged and well-informed parent community and I look forward to working with them to implement exciting reforms and improvements across our already excellent system.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Ms Berry.

**MS BERRY:** Minister, how will the government use this information to ensure that our public schools better communicate with parents about what matters most to them?

**MS BURCH:** I thank Ms Berry for her interest. As I have said before, the government has placed parental engagement at the forefront of education priorities. I am constantly looking for ways that we can continue to improve our public education system and ways to better communicate the benefits of this system to our parents and carers in the ACT community in general.

The parent survey and associated work will help us ensure that we have a school system that is better serving its students and community. This survey is one part of a range of measures I have put in place to ensure that the government has the best information for families to ensure that our schools and processes are performing, that our parent and carer communities are engaged and play an active role, that pathways through all levels of schools are clear and meet the needs of our students, and that parents and students are part of the decision-making in their local schools.

These are commitments I made to the education community when I first became minister, and I am bringing them to fruition with the full support of parents, carers and teachers. We will have some interesting feedback, I have no doubt, from this survey, and we will work with the feedback from families. I am looking forward to receiving it. As I have said, we have a great education system here, but any government and any society can always improve on what is already good.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

**DR BOURKE:** Minister, what other actions has the government taken to ensure that schools are given the right tools and information to better engage with parents?

**MS BURCH:** I thank Dr Bourke for his interest in education. As I have consistently made clear, my aim as minister for education is to ensure that parents and families are at the centre of our system. Over the last two years, I have been very pleased to be able to announce and implement a number of policies and initiatives to ensure that this government is doing just that.

Members will be aware of the research project I commissioned with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, to conduct research on parental engagement and how to ensure parents have the skills and confidence to help their children with their education. We have introduced the preschool matters initiative, which provides small grants to preschools to support parental engagement in these very early years. The Education and Training Directorate has developed a “parents and students at the centre” webpage to highlight all of the good activities that our schools do. We have introduced online enrolment for our public schools, which has made life easier for families. I am also pleased to announce two policies, for gifted and talented students and for students with learning difficulties, to ensure that parents of these students have access to the most up-to-date information and research.

All these initiatives go to the heart of the government’s commitment to informing and engaging our parent and carer communities. In the coming years, I plan to build on these and to continue to ensure that our schools are the best across the country.

**Budget—deficit**

**MR DOSZPOT:** My question is to the Treasurer, regarding the 2014-15 budget. Treasurer, I refer to reports in today's *Canberra Times* that the impact of the Mr Fluffy buyback could increase the size of the budget deficit by \$524 million. Treasurer, are these reports correct, and is the ACT government now forecasting a budget deficit of over \$800 million in 2014-15?

**MR BARR:** If everyone takes up the offer of the buyback in the Mr Fluffy scheme in the current fiscal year and the full appropriation is drawn down then its headline net operating balance impact would be over \$500 million. The impact on the overall territory headline net operating balance for the current fiscal year would be in the order of what Mr Doszpot has indicated.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Treasurer, are you still forecasting that the ACT budget will return to surplus by 2016-17? If not, when are you planning to return to surplus?

**MR BARR:** Those matters will be updated in the midyear review in due course.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Treasurer, why is the government going ahead with an expensive light rail project, given the poor state of the ACT budget?

**MR BARR:** Firstly, the budget is not in a poor state. We are managing a challenging situation in relation to the Mr Fluffy buyback scheme, but that will be a one-off impact on the headline net operating balance. That will impact in the current fiscal year predominantly, with an expectation of some further impact in the following fiscal year.

As Mr Corbell has indicated in this place on a number of occasions, the way in which we are procuring light rail will have no fiscal impact in terms of availability payments and the like until such infrastructure is operating, in around five years time.

The government's fiscal strategy is to deal with the Mr Fluffy issues over the next four budgets. We also seek to address our infrastructure priorities in health, education and public transport, together with dealing with the Mr Fluffy issue. They are the four priorities for the ACT government in the context of our infrastructure program. We will meet those particular obligations and priorities. Other areas will, of course, be subject to annual budget consideration.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Treasurer, what capital works projects are being deferred to reduce the impact on the budget?

**MR BARR:** Elements of the city to the lake project—for example, the stadium, the time frame associated with a new theatre development and the time frame associated with new convention centre facilities. Those are three examples that we have already announced. We will look, in the context of the future capital works program, at a range of other projects, which I will not be announcing today as I want to save some interest for next year's budget.

### **ACT public service—bullying**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Chief Minister, regarding bullying in the ACT public service. In October Comcare reported to Senate estimates that the number of mental health claims lodged by ACT public servants in the 2013-14 financial year was 3.6 per thousand. This compares to 1.9 claims per thousand for the commonwealth. Chief Minister, why were the numbers of mental health claims lodged by ACT public servants so high and which directorates had the most complaints per thousand?

**MS GALLAGHER:** It is unusual that the ACT government is measured against the commonwealth government. We are the only state or territory public service that is included in the commonwealth scheme. A better comparison—I am not trying to avoid the issue here—is how we rate against similar public services providing similar jobs in those high stress industries like health, education, emergency services and corrections. When you see a measure of that, the ACT is often lower than other jurisdictions.

Also, mental health workers compensation claims have decreased in the past two years. The number of claims lodged is obviously a different measure to the number that are accepted as claims by Comcare, but we accept that we should be doing more to make sure there are even fewer claims lodged and fewer accepted by Comcare in relation to our own public service. A range of initiatives are underway to address that, including some of the work we have talked about: the RED framework, the code of conduct, the health and wellbeing policy, the policy on managing occupational violence, the ACT public sector performance management framework, counselling through the employee assistance program, New Access, which is the Medicare Local program that Mr Gentleman has recently promoted, and also participation in a trial of an online tool aimed at increased mental health awareness in the workplace.

I am not going to pretend that we would not like to see those numbers go down—we would. But I am confident that the administration is looking carefully at the rates of both lodgement and acceptance of claims and, where issues are identified, how to respond to them.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, what proportion of mental health claims lodged by ACT public servants was caused by or related to workplace bullying?

**MS GALLAGHER:** If I understand Mrs Jones's question properly, it is about what mental health claims were related to allegations of bullying. I would have to see if that

data is available. You would expect there to be a link between the two. I would say that workplace bullying, or bullying and harassment, is not exclusively related to a workplace. It can also be from customers or from dealing with external stakeholders. There are certainly claims of internal workplace bullying and harassment, but there is also acknowledgement in the state and territory public services dealing with often very difficult clients at times that there is a level of stress and mental health issues related to the nature of the work that is being performed. But I will see if there is any further data I can provide, Mrs Jones.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, have you done enough to limit bullying in ACT Health?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Sorry, Mr Hanson; I did not hear the beginning of that question.

**MR HANSON:** The question was: have you done enough to limit bullying in ACT Health?

**MS GALLAGHER:** At a system level, yes, but I am certainly not in every workplace watching every interaction between staff, patients, carers and other stakeholders to ensure that not one case happens.

I would say that bullying and harassment claims accepted in 2013-14 represent two per cent of all claims. I am sorry; I do not think Mr Hanson heard that, but for the benefit of members who asked the question, they represent two per cent of all claims and they have come down from five per cent of all claims from the previous year. It constitutes 26 claims in 2012-13 and nine claims overall in 2013-14.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, has the RED framework been rolled out in all ACT directorates yet?

**MS GALLAGHER:** Yes, it has.

### **Children and young people—trauma recovery centre**

**MS BERRY:** My question is to the Minister for Children and Young People. Minister, can you inform the Assembly of how the trauma recovery centre assists in helping children deal with the impact of trauma?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Berry for her ongoing interest in children and young people. I was very happy to launch the opening of Melaleuca Place as one of my first duties in becoming the Minister for Children and Young People, alongside former minister Joy Burch. Melaleuca Place is a multidisciplinary, holistic early intervention and prevention service. It is committed to supporting children and young people to heal from trauma. The ACT government committed \$3.05 million from the 2013-14 budget over four years to establish the service, as part of our commitment to protecting children from abuse and neglect.

Childhood trauma is one of the nation's most important public health concerns, with adverse childhood experiences being one of the strongest predictors for difficulties in life, including physical and mental health problems, social and relational problems and poor educational and vocational outcomes.

Melaleuca Place is a tangible response to intervening early to repair damage and to give children the best chance no matter what may have happened to them. Research demonstrates that many children involved in care and protection are exposed to a number of situations earlier in life that increase their risk of not only experiencing trauma and disrupted attachments but also developing mental health problems.

By the time a child has entered the care system, they may have already been exposed to multiple traumatic experiences, including abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, a family history of mental health, and drug and alcohol abuse. We know that children in care display consistently higher rates of behavioural and other mental health issues, as well as compromised cognitive and adaptive functioning, than children in the general population.

The ability of a child in care to make sense of these traumatic experiences and develop meaningful relationships or attachments that may assist them to overcome the trauma is hindered by their separation from family, culture, community, peers and, frequently, school environments. We know also how the brain is altered following prolonged exposure to trauma or stress. This can include permanent changes in brain structure and function. These developments have coincided with the emergence of new theoretical frameworks that focus on trauma-informed therapeutic approaches to working with children, and in particular focus on a child's developmental age and the importance of building safe and secure relationships as a means of recovery.

The children presenting to Melaleuca Place have symptoms such as being withdrawn and/or exhibiting aggressive behaviours. These behaviours are associated with complex trauma as a result of experiencing abuse and/or neglect that impact on their everyday functioning. Some of these children also have concurrent delays in their development such as delayed language and motor milestones or learning impairment.

The work undertaken at Melaleuca Place with children is in the context of their care and support networks, utilising trauma and attachment-informed interventions. These therapeutic interventions aim to provide a sense of stability and safety and incorporate consistency, repetition, nurturing and predictability, allowing children, young people, their carers and family the time and space to heal, recover and move towards achieving more positive life experiences.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

**MS BERRY:** Minister, how has Melaleuca Place assisted the sector to build its capacity in supporting children to recover from abuse and neglect?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Melaleuca Place has made a substantial commitment to building sector capacity through the provision of professional development opportunities and access to trauma-informed information and resources.

Over 700 staff across the ACT government and community sectors attended training opportunities in the 12 months up to November 2014. Melaleuca Place has hosted a range of specialist trainers and guest speakers, including Mary Jo McVeigh, Kim Golding from the United Kingdom, the Lighthouse Institute, the Australian Childhood Trauma Group and international renowned expert, Dave Ziegler, from Jasper Mountain in the US.

Melaleuca Place has made available a number of information resources to assist those supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma, such as the child development and trauma guides adapted from the Victorian Department of Human Services. These guides assist practitioners to understand typical developmental pathways of children and recognise indicators of trauma at different ages and stages.

A discussion paper about the development of a trauma-informed service is available, along with other fact sheets, newsletters, journal articles and the keynote address from the launch of Melaleuca Place in July this year.

Melaleuca Place, in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation, has been providing the graduate certificate in developmental trauma to 19 participants since June 2014. This course provides a postgraduate specialist qualification for those working with children who have experienced abuse, trauma and violence. The course will finish by February 2015. This will mean that 19 professionals in our human services, health and education sectors will have specialist qualifications to inform their work with children and young people.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

**DR BOURKE:** Minister, how has your directorate partnered with the University of Canberra in the landscaping design at Melaleuca Place and what significance has this for the therapeutic programs?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I am very excited about the partnership that has developed between Melaleuca Place and the University of Canberra, which engaged in a six-week project to design a landscaped garden concept where children can spend time outdoors as part of the therapeutic program at Melaleuca Place. This interdisciplinary project involved 45 students from both the landscape architecture course in the Faculty of Arts and Design and occupational therapy students in the Faculty of Health's Master of Occupational Therapy program. Eight student groups showcased their projects, which comprised physical models of the landscape design concepts and visual proposals, including site plans.

A key aim of Melaleuca Place was to create a safe environment in which children and young people, their families and carers can build effective, therapeutic relationships. The design of the outdoor space builds on what has been achieved to date in the fit-out of the indoor space. The significance of the designs for the outdoor space is multiple. The designs create an outdoor environment that is safe and soothing. This is integral to children who have experienced trauma, as they need to establish safety before they can begin processing the trauma that they have experienced. The designs also provide opportunities for sensory experiences which help children learn about their world and encourage their cognitive development.

Finally, the designs create a space for children and young people to engage in relaxation and calming activities such as mindfulness, breathing and guided visualisation. These skills are essential for self-regulation and emotional functioning.

The quality of these presentations was exceptional, and I wish to extend my congratulations and thanks to the students from the University of Canberra who were involved.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Supplementary question, Ms Porter.

**MS PORTER:** Minister, exactly what stakeholder feedback has your directorate received concerning Melaleuca Place?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Porter for the supplementary. In the short time that Melaleuca Place has been operational, it has received a high level of interest, with both Canberra and interstate services showing a keen interest in the model of service and its operations. ACT directorates such as Education and Training, Health, and Community Services have seen a steady stream of staff to the centre to gain an in-depth understanding of its workings in relation to the assessment framework and treatment methods. It has also enabled discussions on the essence of working collaboratively to meet the therapeutic needs of children who present with multiple and complex issues.

The chief executive officer of Parkerville Children and Youth Care in Western Australia visited the site last month. This meeting provided an opportunity to exchange information on best practice frameworks for service provision in residential, community, outreach and clinical settings to children, young people and families affected by trauma.

There has been interest from a number of services such as the Australian Childhood Foundation and the Australian Childhood Trauma Group Victoria, as well as policy areas such as the commonwealth Department of Human Services out-of-home care reform unit.

On a recent visit, a senior staff member from Berry Street in Victoria commented that they were “impressed and encouraged by the flexible and holistic approach to service delivery”. They felt that this enabled a more continuous flow in care planning from assessment to treatment, in comparison with other similar services in Victoria.

Melaleuca Place has also hosted visits from international services and experts in the field, such as Kim Golding from the United Kingdom, recognised for her work on attachment and dyadic developmental practice. Leanne Robins, senior social worker from Merlin Park children and adolescent mental health inpatient unit in Galway, Ireland, also visited the site and commented positively on the therapeutic space.

A common theme emerging from when carers and community agency staff have visited Melaleuca Place is how welcoming and engaging it is. (*Time expired.*)

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

## Economy—performance

Debate resumed.

**MR BARR** (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events) (3.42): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to speak on Ms Porter's motion today. I always enjoy debating the ACT economy and how the ACT Labor government is responding to the destructive decisions of the federal Liberals and the destructive rhetoric of the Canberra Liberals. As Ms Porter's motion notes, there is a great deal of underlying strength in the ACT economy. On average, Canberrans are the healthiest, wealthiest, most active and best educated Australians. Our city's long-term prospects are very bright. Our population is young and growing. We are diversifying and becoming more creative and more entrepreneurial every week, and this motion notes that the government is supporting that economic, cultural, social and jobs growth.

I have spoken in this place before, many times, about the measures the Gallagher government is taking, and this motion makes clear just some of the government's decisions, such as our four-year \$2.5 billion infrastructure program to provide important facilities and services and boost growth, reinforcing the progressive tax reform agenda this government is pursuing and our targeted support for the private sector and a range of key industry sectors in the ACT.

We are committed to focusing on four key priorities. Three of these priorities we took to the 2012 territory election at which the territory community voted to continue an ACT Labor government. These are health, education and public transport, most notably our commitment to deliver the capital metro project. The fourth priority, as I outlined in question time, is asbestos remediation and ending the toxic Mr Fluffy legacy. This is a new challenge we face but one that we must stare down.

Through the Chief Minister's leadership, this government has made a clear decision and a clear choice: we will resolve the Mr Fluffy issue once and for all for this generation and the next. That is what leadership is about. That is what hard choices are about. That is what Chief Minister Gallagher is about: priorities, choices, leadership, health, education, public transport and cleaning up the Mr Fluffy mess.

Governments have to do many things and we have priorities to help choose them. We are delivering on our priorities and we are delivering upon the important services our community deserves and our community expects. But let me be clear: we can deal with Mr Fluffy and have a great health system. We can build light rail and have great schools. Other priorities, such as parts of the city to the lake project, are being delayed somewhat, but they will still happen. We are committed to our four-year \$2.5 billion infrastructure program.

The commonwealth remains a key part of the territory economy and, as such, when the Australian public service is cut there are no two ways about it: it has a significant impact on our local economy. To look at just a few statistics, let us compare things pre and post the election of the Abbott government. Between September 2013 and

now our unemployment rate is no longer the lowest in the nation. Our retail trade has slipped behind the rest of the country and residential building approvals have fallen. The impact of the coalition's cuts and the hit to activity and confidence is abundantly clear. It is important to note that the impact of the election of the Abbott government on our city is far more than just the dollar value of those cuts. As well as the human toll on the people who are made redundant or who face the threat of being made redundant, there is a hit to confidence. If households are fearful for the future, that limits their consumption which, in turn, hits spending and activity amongst our local businesses. Combined with the Liberal cuts, the impact on the territory economy is clear.

This is not just about loyal professionals in the public service losing their jobs; it is about the plumbers, hairdressers, mechanics, cafe owners and other small businesses that rely on their custom. If the Liberals truly are the party of small business as they claim, why do they keep on sacking their customers? As I have said before in this place, the Liberals are the party of recession in Canberra. This city always performs better under Labor governments. Amid the pain caused by the Abbott Liberal government's cuts and the lies and the deceit—remember, no cuts to health, no cuts to education, no changes to the pension and no cuts to the ABC and SBS that we are seeing writ large now in our local community—this Labor government is getting on with the job of implementing our priorities, the right priorities for this city.

These priorities will impact upon our budget. All decisions do, but we are committed to making the right decisions and the tough decisions at this point in time. Let me be clear: this government will continue to fund our health system, with \$1.4 billion this year. There is more investment to come, including \$350 million in new initiatives over the next four years. We are keeping our commitment to deliver a world-class system, including this year meeting the shortfall in health funding caused by the coalition's harsh budget cuts. Remember the promise? No cuts to health or education. The reality is that the Abbot Liberal government, cheered on by the Canberra Liberals, has hacked into the health budget of this city.

We will continue to fund our world-class education system with \$1.1 billion this year in education and training, and there is more investment to come. We are setting aside funds from our asset sales and from our forward capital program for public transport improvements. The 2014-15 budget included a provision to pay for light rail. We will not pay for that build until the service is operational, running down Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue, and that will be in the 2019-20 fiscal year. We will pay to resolve the Mr Fluffy legacy, with minimal help, I might say, from the federal Liberal government. That cost will hit the territory budget and it will hit it most in the next two years. But because we are delivering capital metro through a public-private partnership, because of the way we will structure that procurement, we will not start paying for light rail for five years. The bulk of the cost of asbestos remediation will come in the next two years. The outgoing for these two priorities will be many fiscal years apart.

Resolving the Mr Fluffy legacy will pose a considerable cost to the territory government. As we have outlined in the discussion so far, our anticipation of the minimum cost to the ACT budget over the life of the scheme will be in the order of

\$300 million to \$400 million. The impact on the ACT's bottom line, on the headline net operating balance, will be felt most in the current financial year and, to a lesser extent, in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 budgets. As I indicated in the statements tabled yesterday, the total impact could be up to \$600 million over this period. But let us be very clear: our policy on Mr Fluffy is the right thing to do. The scheme is fair and measured and it will resolve this issue for good. It will not leave it to future generations of Canberrans to manage and it will ensure that those residents directly affected have a resolution and can move on from this tragic situation.

As I have just noted, the bulk of the cost will be borne in the current fiscal year and in the 2015-16 fiscal year. As one of the government's priorities, we are committed to resolving this issue. But we are also committed to delivering on our election commitment to deliver transformative and necessary boosts to public transport, the centrepiece of which is the construction of the capital metro project. We are a government that will keep to our commitments. We are doing this in a fiscally responsible way through the delivery of light rail as a public-private partnership.

We continue to deliver for the people of the ACT. We are investing in the long-term growth of our community. We are providing the right support at the right time to mitigate the harsh cuts that are coming from the Liberal Party. It is sad that, having promised no cuts to health, no cuts to education, no changes to the pension, no cuts to the ABC and no cuts to SBS, the Prime Minister and his Liberal Party have reneged on all of those commitments. They have cut health, they have cut education, they have changed the pension by downgrading pension increases in the future, and just in the last week we have seen the cuts to the ABC and to SBS. We are seeing the impacts that all those cuts are having on Canberrans and particularly on the diversity of media in our city. I note that my colleague in the government Minister Rattenbury has a motion where we can discuss the impact of the Liberals' cuts to the ABC on our city in more detail tomorrow. But for today, I thank Ms Porter for raising this important motion.

**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) (3.52): I thank Ms Porter for this motion today. The impact federal government cuts are having on the ACT is already visible, just as it was when the Howard government first came to power. Since the election of the Abbott government the ACT has seen a slowing of its retail and construction sectors and a rise in unemployment. The cause for some of these statistics is obvious. If the federal government reduces the workforce of the APS, there will be higher unemployment and people will feel more worried about their future wellbeing. Unfortunately, these effects are felt deeper and faster in the ACT compared to other regions in Australia. The impact on local businesses, large and small, is felt immediately. With fewer people earning money and spending it in Canberra, businesses have fewer patrons and therefore make less money. Fewer public servants are out buying lunch or getting a coffee of a morning. Fewer public servants are out on a Friday night having a meal and a beer to relax after the week. This then moves down into the retail and hospitality sectors. Businesses need fewer staff, people get fewer shifts and make less money, and on it goes.

While these impacts are real, it is important to remember that the ACT is a resilient community and this government is confident we will recover from these impacts. The ACT government is not sitting on its hands waiting for federal government spending to increase to see an amelioration of the downturn in the economy. The government is actively working in partnership with business and our community groups to deliver a comprehensive stimulus package through careful planning and direct economic support and funding.

In March this year Chief Minister Katy Gallagher announced a two-year stimulus package to drive the economy and prosperity and boost confidence in the ACT building and construction industry. This stimulus package was designed to continue to support local jobs, reduce fees on businesses and provide more certainty in the sector. Quickening the development of Moncrieff, estimated to have a value of approximately \$150 million, changing the lease variation charges and amending extension of time fees have all had a positive impact on the building and construction industry, making it easier to commence construction of projects and encouraging construction.

I am pleased to report this stimulus is rolling out in a targeted and deliberate way. Recently I was pleased the Deputy Chief Minister announced that seven Canberra based business have been given a financial boost by the territory through the innovation connect program. This money is set to go towards the development and manufacture of new products, from medical technology to smart phone applications. Most importantly, in relation to Ms Porter's motion today, the money provided to these companies will allow them to employ more staff and give a boost to the local economy, all while bringing new ideas to fruition. It is initiatives such as these which will keep Canberra one of the most livable cities in the world and protect our economy in the face of the cuts from the federal government.

The package of stimulus measures announced this year by the Chief Minister and Treasurer is what is needed for our economy and our community—not a slash and burn approach, not the approach the European Union countries have taken in regard to fixing their budget problems. While they slash and burn, they do not seem to have noticed the austerity program in the EU has not had the desired results. Austerity slows the economy and it does more damage than anything else. It is a policy that lacks vision. It is an approach that hurts the poorest first and the richest last, with no plan for the future. That is why it is so important for us in this place to try and counter these measures and protect the economy of the territory for the future.

Whilst speaking of austerity, I note the announcement that, due to \$254 million in cuts, the ABC will be making 400 employees redundant. While in Canberra we lose only approximately eight of those 400, it is this sort of cut which slows the economy and hurts everyone. I express my condolences to all those staff affected at the ABC and remind everyone of Tony Abbott's election promise—no cuts to the ABC and no cuts to SBS. Madam Assistant Speaker, on a personal note, I have heard just this morning of the devastating impact of these cuts on the ABC in the territory.

In order to maintain our most livable status in the ACT, visionary investment and city planning are needed. Planning helps encourage private sector investment and construction while creating efficient systems of public transport and other government service delivery. I wish to speak further on the impact of planning and amendments to the territory plan on economic growth in the city. The territory plan provides a mechanism where the controlled development of the ACT can occur. As such, it is an important tool to be used to stimulate economic activity when negative impacts such as federal job cuts to the public service occur. An example of the way variations to the territory plan can help stimulate business and the economy can be seen through the changes made to the territory plan in variation No 324, which commenced in April this year. This variation to the plan in Pialligo has allowed the approval of the construction of the IKEA project.

Through variation 324 to the territory plan, IKEA is able to construct a large store that will provide up to 280 new jobs for the territory when it is completed later next year. The recruitment of these positions has already begun. Not only has the planning variation provided the opportunity for these retail sector jobs to be created, but numerous jobs in the construction sector have also been created during the construction period. This project offers diversity to the ACT economy and shows the confidence that industry has in the market here, despite the slowing caused by the cuts to the federal public service. Since then I have had positive signals from other large-format retail chains that show they are also interested in Canberra.

An additional important and economically stimulating variation to the territory plan is variation 308, which allows a redevelopment of Cooyong Street in Braddon adjacent to the city centre. This variation will facilitate the removal of the Cooyong Flats and provide for the construction of high density, mixed-use residential dwellings. This is a unique opportunity which will provide construction jobs, business opportunities, and further sustainable high density housing in close proximity to the city. These planning initiatives, along with many others, will help strengthen the ACT economy during this period of short-term pressure from the federal government and push forward for positive outcomes for the territory into the future.

It would be improper not to mention the impact the Mr Fluffy crisis will have on our economy. Managing the challenges placed on the ACT government is no doubt one of the biggest hurdles this community will face over our lifetimes, but it is one I am certain we will be able to get through. This will be done through the buyback scheme, asbestos awareness training and looking at the planning tools we can use to help ease pressure on our own budget.

**MS GALLAGHER** (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (4.00): I welcome the opportunity to talk about the strength of the ACT economy and the strong prospects for long-term growth.

These are certainly difficult times for some in our community, and our economy clearly faces some challenges, but that makes us more determined on this side of the Assembly to ensure that we do our part to support the economy going forward. And

there are good reasons to be confident about the ACT economy. Through careful targeting of government investment, clear priorities and continuing to deliver our election commitments, we are working hard to ensure the economy is strong and continues to grow.

There remains underlying strength in the local economy, supported particularly by our \$2½ billion infrastructure investment program that the Treasurer outlined in this year's budget, and other measures to provide continued local service provision and a number of targeted business assistance measures.

We are, however, seeing the ACT unemployment rate grow to the highest level for some time. We still have the third lowest unemployment rate and the second highest participation rate in the country despite this. Overall, that is good news, despite seeing that overall rise.

Dwelling investment is increasing in line with national trends. There is also sufficient investment in the pipeline, particularly dwelling and ACT government investment, that will maintain economic momentum and resilience in the territory.

The low interest rate environment will support the housing market and hold up private consumption. But there are challenges to face in the medium term, including the reduction in the size of the commonwealth government, particularly direct budget and staffing cuts which have led to a decrease in economic activity recently, and indeed probably a decrease in confidence, particularly from those who may be working in areas where they are seeing these reductions roll through.

There are spillover effects to private sector business hiring and investment decisions are expected as the commonwealth government is a major, and remains a major, employer in the ACT.

We are very lucky to live in the ACT overall. We have been recently ranked the most livable city in the world by the OECD, across 34 nations and 362 regions. And as the Treasurer said, we are the healthiest and wealthiest Australians living in this country. So we do have a lot to celebrate, and we do have a lot of things that mean we can remain positive about future growth.

Canberra is clean, well maintained, unpolluted and very safe, with high quality recreational outdoor environments, educational opportunities, excellent healthcare services, employment and economic opportunities, and it has excellent road infrastructure with minimal congestion. These are all measures which have led to Canberra being ranked the world's most livable city. And these things do not happen, obviously, by accident. It means the government has been proactive in these areas. We must remain proactive. We must remain engaged with our community and have the vision to build and invest in infrastructure and projects of priority for the people of Canberra, not just for today but for the long term. We will continue to make decisions based on the long-term needs of this city.

In terms of the commonwealth job cuts, we are seeing it on a number of levels, not just in job reductions which are flowing through—we have seen thousands affected in

the last 12 months here—but also in the appetite of the federal government to look at ways to shift jobs out of the ACT into some electorates across the country where they do not necessarily have the expertise or have not had the focus in the past on the particular work areas that are suggested to be relocated there. An example is to move ABS functions to Geelong, presumably alongside the NDIS headquarters. Both of these should have remained in Canberra, and I would expect that there would be unanimous support for that across the chamber.

We are also seeing the idea of moving other functions to northern New South Wales coastal areas. This is a real worry, because I think the commonwealth government has an ideological view that is not necessarily supportive of the long-term growth of the nation's capital, or the fact that the commonwealth public service is our major employer—it is our BHP—and that the city was established to be the seat of government and have that focus; therefore our economy has developed around that.

With respect to our focus here, there are some things we can do to shield and protect the economy as we go through this period which we tend to see much more of under conservative governments, and certainly having regard to the vigour and appetite with which they are pursuing these cuts and reductions. These are going directly to the areas that the Deputy Chief Minister and I have been working on in the last few years around innovation and the digital side of our economy, and also around the higher education side, around attracting foreign investment and skills, promoting Canberra across the country with initiatives like Brand Canberra and some of the clever programs that have been run—the human brochure and all of those programs.

I refer also to the delegations that the Deputy Chief Minister and I have taken, particularly when we have gone to parts of Asia in the last two years to talk up Canberra and to make sure people understand the opportunities that are here, not just in development opportunities but in the richness of the institutions that are based in this town, the opportunity for research and partnering, if you look at higher education, with universities in other countries. There are such strengths here that are unique and particular to the ACT, and we have been out selling, talking about and promoting them for good reason. In the next 12 months some of that will definitely bring good results to the ACT.

Indeed the agreement that I signed with the Shenzhen mayor in October this year is already being utilised by different institutions and businesses in Canberra to promote connections, investment and opportunities with businesses in that part of China, in Shenzhen. I know we will have more to say on that in the not-too-distant future.

We have heard from other speakers about the Mr Fluffy buyback scheme. I was interested to hear the questions from the opposition today about the impact on the bottom line. The impact on the bottom line will be significant, particularly over the next two years. But as I said on the radio this morning, perhaps if you had modelled the impact on the bottom line it would have clouded some of our decisions around the buyback scheme, because the bottom line will be negatively affected by this buyback scheme, without a doubt, and we will have to show that in its full force either in the budget update or in the budget, depending on the timing of some of those decisions.

We are doing the only thing that we could possibly do in this situation. It is the right thing to do, to make sure that these 1,000 home owners have the opportunity to realise their financial investment, to purchase a home that is not contaminated by asbestos, and to move on. The previous commonwealth government, when deciding about the clean-up program, actually considered buyback and went for clean-up, and we now know that the clean-up program was not effective. So we are doing the only reasonable thing. We cannot leave these 1,000 home owners out to dry because it might have a negative effect on our budget over the next two years. I am very firmly of the opinion that it is something that we have to do, and we are going to press ahead and do it, and hopefully with the support of all 17 members of the Assembly.

The ACT government has a good plan in place. There are a number of responses in place to deal with some of the challenges that the economy is facing over the next year or so. We hope that the commonwealth at some point will stop the cuts. We hope that the commonwealth will give Canberra a break, just as it gives other areas around the country a break when things get tough. We hope they consider us to be just like every other Australian. I must say we have not been overwhelmed by a positive response to that, but we live in hope that at some point the federal government will ease back on their attacks on Canberra—give Canberra families and our community a break from the savageness of the cuts, the speed of the cuts and the unwillingness of the commonwealth to provide any structural support as we go through this transition.

In the absence of that, Canberrans know very well that when Liberal governments get into power they cut, and it is often up to Labor governments to work out a long-term solution and, through that, support the community with fairness and equity.

**DR BOURKE** (Ginninderra) (4.10): This government is committed to steering Canberra through these tough economic times which are not of our making. We recognise the underlying strength of the ACT economy and the strong prospects for long-term growth despite the harsh measures of the federal Liberal government. Despite the damage done by this “no surprises” but very surprising federal government, the federal Liberals continue to obfuscate about their pre-election commitments. It is hard to tell if they think they know what they are doing. We know they have no idea what they are doing in the Senate and we know that leaves Canberra’s citizens, businesses and the economy in an uncertain position. It seems that every pre-election “no ifs, no buts” statement of plain talking Mr Tony Abbott had a hidden footnote attached to it. So “no cuts” does not mean, as you would expect, no cuts.

They have told us we are stupid if we do not understand “no cuts” came with this hidden footnote pointing to “see terms and conditions”, such as “no cuts” may include a quarter-of-a-billion-dollar efficiency dividend and more job losses in Canberra. “No new taxes” means new Medicare co-payments, higher uni fees or reviving an old tax like the fuel excise levy. The Liberals’ Adelaide footnote apparently means a Japanese submarine dock. I am sure that the opposition are revelling in the possibilities regarding such barefaced effrontery when it comes to crafting their messages for the 2016 election. Tell them what they want to hear before the election then tell them they were not listening properly when you get caught out.

The ACT Labor government are committed to telling it the way it is. We are getting on with managing the Canberra economy for the benefit of the Canberra community in the long term and doing the best we can to weather the obstacles that the federal government keeps putting in our way. We are looking to the long-term future of the city, despite the economic uncertainty, through investing in our people, our economy, in local jobs and in our city.

The ACT government is focusing on key areas of investment—health, education, public transport and resolution of the toxic legacy of Mr Fluffy asbestos in over 1,000 homes in Canberra. This government will steer the territory to see the emergence of a stronger, more diverse economy supporting our community.

While the federal government is cutting federal public servants and shipping others off to more favoured electorates, it inevitably introduces uncertainty to the territory's economy. However, there are positive signs. The ACT economy is stronger, more diverse and more resilient now when compared to 1996. We look forward to growth in the medium to long term, after the current pause, as individuals and businesses take stock and wait to see what further surprises the federal government has in store.

Meanwhile the ACT government has had to deal with the legacy of loose-fill asbestos in over 1,000 family homes. On some issues governments can pick and choose the ideal time to tackle a challenge or fight the good fight. However, in the face of new evidence of the danger still lurking from loose-fill asbestos in our homes, we do not have a choice; we have to deal with it now. Doing nothing would expose Canberrans to the ongoing health danger for generations to come and surely bankrupt many families.

I know, from friends in Belconnen and constituents I have spoken to who face losing the homes they have lived in for many years, of the trauma, dilemmas and challenges involved. We all wish a previous government, ACT or federal, had known many years ago what we know now of the ongoing dangers, despite the earlier clean-up, and dealt with it once and for all. The Mr Fluffy program will have an impact on the ACT's bottom line but we see there is no choice. It is the right thing to do, and it is the right thing to do it right now. Buyback, demolition and rebuilding is the best way to resolve the Mr Fluffy legacy.

The ACT government is committed to supporting sustained growth and development of the ACT economy. In 2012 the government released "Growth, diversification and jobs: a business development strategy for the ACT". The strategy was a mix of program delivery and creation of the right business environment. It provided a clear framework for supporting and growing small, innovative businesses, which it has been doing consistently for several years.

I would like to outline a few cases of how this strategy has been supporting our local small and medium enterprises as well as illustrating some of the notable success stories we have seen. One example has been the government's contribution to the establishment costs of the Griffin accelerator program, which is an initiative of a group of ACT entrepreneurs who are prepared to fund, support and work with

selected companies. Following a rigorous selection process from over 40 applicants, five were selected to participate in the program. Each company received a \$25,000 investment in return for a proportion of equity in the company.

Of the five companies selected for the accelerator program, three had been beneficiaries of the ACT government innovation connect grant—Enabled Employment, Made for Me and Quizling. Following completion of the program all five companies are raising further capital for expansion. Enabled Employment, which connects experienced and capable people with a disability to employment opportunities, has over 40 employers on its books and has placed over 400 employees. The company is currently raising \$500,000 at a pre-money valuation of \$2 million and is over subscribed. Made for Me and Quizling were selected from over 400 companies to present to the Sydney Angels group last month. As a result both companies are in discussions with potential investors for significant amounts of funding. The early stage funding provided by our innovation connect program is an essential resource to enable small innovative businesses to navigate the early stages of the commercialisation process.

The ACT's trade performance continues to be remarkable, with a compounded annual growth rate in the value of exports of approximately seven per cent per year over the last decade. Over the last 12 months we have organised multiple delegations to key markets, including China, Singapore and the US. The trade delegation program is developed in close consultation with industry through our continuing connection with organisations including the Canberra Business Chamber and other industry organisations, as well as with bilateral business councils that connect Canberra to specific target markets.

Some of the notable trade development successes for local small businesses include IE Asia Pacific, a small business based in Canberra which is now providing niche radar and air traffic control solutions throughout Asia. Intelledox recently won two ACT export awards. On-the-Go, another winner at this year's export awards, also announced in Singapore a major deal to sell custom-made sports apparel uniforms to Anytime Fitness Asia, and are also exporting to the USA. Data-Pod has completed its first sale into the North American public sector market with the purchase of one of its unique modular data centres by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. Their growing list of clients includes CSIRO, BHP Billiton, Saab Technologies, Papua New Guinea Maritime and the Australian federal government. Seeing Machines was this year's ACT exporter of the year, and it has recently opened an office in California and has contracts in Latin America. It is also partnering with Toshiba to develop new uses for its technology.

The establishment of the CBR Innovation Network demonstrates the ACT government's willingness to adopt new approaches for even better outcomes for the ACT's small business community. Earlier this month the Chief Minister launched the CBR Innovation Network at its new premises in Moore Street—premises we provided at a peppercorn rental for two years. It provides a new location for the Entry 29 co-working space, a home for the Griffin accelerator program mentioned earlier, and it will soon host a best practice incubator for potential high growth companies.

The network is already bringing together our local businesses with major institutions including ANU, NICTA, CSIRO, University of Canberra, and UNSW Canberra, which have all signed on as foundation members and have agreed to contribute \$50,000 per annum per member to the network. It is a first for Australia. Already other jurisdictions are asking how we persuaded five nationally and internationally significant institutions to commit to the growth of the innovation ecosystem in the ACT.

Canberra continues to be one of the most small business friendly cities in Australia. We are doing all we can to stimulate our economy, to build confidence and to seek new investment in the ACT economy.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Molonglo) (4.20): I thank Ms Porter for raising this issue today. The Greens have confidence in the underlying strength of the ACT economy and the strong prospects for a sustainable and prosperous city into the future. We are, however, seriously concerned about the impact of the federal government's cuts to the federal public service. The number and proportion of jobs that have already been and are still being cut in the ACT are significant. The impacts are already starting to show. Not only is the ACT losing excellent people who contributed daily to the work of the federal government, but also Canberra, being the nation's capital and the home for these tens of thousands of public servants, has a services and hospitality sector that relies heavily on these public servants to spend their incomes.

The *Canberra Times* reported just last week that the federal government public service job cuts reached a rate of almost one in 11 Canberra positions last financial year. ABS employment data show the commonwealth workforce shrank by 1.7 per cent during 2013-14. The figures showed 7,200 federal job losses in the ACT over the year—a huge blow to this city's economy. I might note that Mr Smyth made some comments earlier about the Greens not acknowledging that this has been happening on both sides of politics. I think I can say that, going to the federal election, my colleague Simon Sheikh very clearly made the case that we were criticising cuts across the public sector by both sides of politics. So I reject that accusation.

Meanwhile, the ACT government's public service continued a five-year trend of growth. The ACT public service had 20,551 employees in June this year, up more than 2,600 from June 2010 levels. Sadly, the ACT was the only state or territory to record a jump in the latest unemployment numbers released this month, reaching levels not seen since July 2001. The ABS reported that the territory had a 5.4 per cent unemployment rate in October, the highest in 13 years.

In October, the ACT lost its status as the jurisdiction with the lowest unemployment rate in the country. And it is broader than that. The impacts extend right into the real estate sector and the building and construction industries; we see that flow-on happening from cuts to the federal public sector. In addition, the federal government's cuts to scientific research organisations such as CSIRO and to university funding are also having short-term economic impacts. Perhaps more significantly in the medium to longer term, these cuts are impacting on the industries of the future.

The combination of the impacts of these federal cuts with the blow of dealing with Mr Fluffy also puts significant stress on the ACT. Canberra is ideally placed to take advantage of the intellectual capital that exists in the town in areas such as medical research, renewable energy and information technology to provide the basis for cutting edge start-up industries with enormous export potential.

All of these areas have the real potential for growth into the future. If we want to be the knowledge capital, ideally that is done with continued federal government support for the research sector, including things like the cooperative research centres, many of whom are facing serious declines in their future funding, if not complete abolition. Canberra has the potential to lead and support economic and business development in areas such as health, sport, higher education, tourism and the digital economy.

As I spoke about yesterday, the Greens have long-term ideas for a positive transition of business to a clean, green economy in the ACT. It is vital that ACT government decision-making is consistent with that vision through fostering and showcasing sustainable and innovative ACT industries in the national capital. The government's business development strategy includes many avenues for this support. We are pleased that the government strategy itself has diversified over the years to enable the government to support small to medium enterprises, as well as smaller social enterprises, in many ways.

The Greens have actively worked with the government to improve the ACT's planning and regulatory environment for the ACT's small to medium enterprises. For example, in relation to sporting and cultural events and creative industries, as TAMS minister I am working to reduce regulatory and administrative burdens in these sectors. The ACT has many unique business opportunities. Working together with business, government and the community sector can best achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, significant innovation and more efficiency.

The Greens agree with the ACT government's taxation reform strategy, particularly increasing rates while decreasing stamp duty and other duties. We also support a price on carbon that helps to drive investment in the energy technologies of the future. This, of course, is out of fashion at the moment, but it was pleasing to see the impact that it had on clean energy investment over the short period that the carbon price was in place.

In the building and construction sector, we can work with industry to deliver high quality design and construction. In relation to transport, light rail will support business in the city and along the transport corridor. We need to continue to roll out energy efficient housing that addresses the challenges of urban infill and housing affordability.

As the minister responsible for TAMS, as I mentioned yesterday, I am supporting some of those things that help make areas more business friendly, with local shopping centre upgrades, 40-kilometre zones around town centres and the Bunda Street shareway. I noted Mr Wall's comment after I talked about those things yesterday. I certainly do not consider them to be the silver bullet or the one magic thing that is

going to fix it. There is no such silver bullet or single answer, but in putting these sorts of steps in place it is about creating that better business environment. We know that more people walking past shopfronts and cafes rather than driving creates more custom for the shops in these pedestrian-friendly areas. That is the point I was making in giving those observations yesterday.

We support a long-term strategic plan for business that drives the transition of a clean, green economy in the ACT and helps the ACT meet its climate change targets and address issues of food security and peak oil. I spoke yesterday about the opportunities for improving food production in the ACT.

From a social point of view, I think we can do more to support social enterprises that have the potential to affect positive social and economic outcomes, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups in the community. In yesterday's matter of public importance on small business I also spoke about the night-time economy and the opportunities there.

Resource recovery and recycling also offer a significant opportunity for the ACT. This further emphasises the need for a waste strategy that complements the green economy strategy. This is an area that can be either a burden if we do not get it right or a great opportunity if we support our local businesses to be a core part of the resource recovery chains.

As I said, I spoke about local food production yesterday. I think there are opportunities there. In an agricultural vein, when the laws are finally changed to allow for the medical use of cannabis, I think there is an opportunity for the ACT to play a part in the production and supply chain. I have certainly seen reports that the medical cannabis industry in the US is worth over \$2 billion a year. In the context of legalised usage, it makes sense that one might consider being part of the supply chain and creating a local employment opportunity.

The microcredit program was funded by the ACT government in the 2013 budget for interest-free and fee-free loans to eligible low income earners who wish to establish or expand a small business activity. This has been run by the Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre and has been backed up by private funding through the Snow Foundation. That is a parliamentary agreement item. Expanding the successful program from only being available for women was a Greens' election initiative. This program will now also be available to migrants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people and men on low incomes. This program has since been expanded to make larger loans available so that people can take their next steps in growing their businesses.

One thing I think the ACT government could do is look at how to better support employees who wish to work part time—and the federal government needs to do the same—as well as encourage more flexible working arrangements, such as working from home.

I have not mentioned the federal government's proposed cuts to the ABC. I note Minister Gentleman did, and we will obviously talk about this some more tomorrow.

This will not only impact on our local ABC directly. Cuts to the press gallery up on the hill will also affect Canberra. What is so frustrating about this move of the federal government in cutting thousands of jobs is that we know—and we have seen it many times before—that the government will cut jobs, pay out millions of dollars in voluntary redundancy payouts, pay more for consultants to do the same work and then slowly rebuild the public service because it will work out that it is cheaper than paying consultants.

Perhaps one of the most frustrating things with the federal government cuts to the commonwealth public service here in Canberra is the cyclical nature of it. I guess that is the way people do things, but it ignores the fact that this has a very real impact on people's lives. People go through significant upheaval in these processes. We could do with taking a more long-term approach in tackling some of these issues. If the budget is out of line, we should be thinking rather more strategically about how that can be addressed rather than just coming in and going, "It's easy to whack jobs in Canberra and we'll take that as the first order of business." That is a poor way to go about finding sustainability in the budget process.

I welcome Ms Porter's motion today as an opportunity to talk about where the Canberra economy is at and the impacts that are happening to it at the moment, as well as some of the areas where I think we can make progress in supporting both the economy but particularly jobs within the Canberra context.

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra) (4.31): Like many other people in this place, I have grown up in Canberra and I know just how much our city and my local community have changed. Belconnen has changed a lot since my time as a child. Our government has been delivering essential infrastructure and services, combined with a commitment to social justice, economic responsibility and environmental sustainability.

Our government has made clear choices to support investment across Canberra, to support businesses and to support jobs. The government's strategy is supporting the underlying strengths of the ACT economy and long-term growth. The ACT economy has been among the strongest nationally for a number of years, with high levels of productivity, strong growth and low unemployment. But while the ACT economy is relatively strong, there are some real challenges that we all face and we have been talking about them here today.

Of course, the federal government's savage and ongoing cuts to the public service, funding cuts to our schools and health services and recently announced cuts to the ABC impact on our economy, on the level of services in our community and personally on the many people who lose their jobs. There are many more people in our community living in uncertainty, with the prospect of more job cuts to come. While public sector jobs will be lost all across Australia, the ACT will be hit particularly hard and it will affect the ACT disproportionately because the cuts are concentrated here. Job cuts affect all aspects of the Canberra economy, particularly small businesses.

Mr Smyth can sit over there, look at the past and continue to blame things that happened in the past. He will not acknowledge—he refuses to acknowledge—that there are cuts happening now, bigger cuts that will hurt our community. They are

deathly silent on this. There has been no defence of the ACT community. There has been no criticism of the federal Liberal government by the Canberra Liberals or by their senator, Zed Seselja. The impacts of the federal government budget cuts are evident in our community. We see them in the ABS statistics on unemployment, retail, trade, residential, building approvals and wages growth, all of which indicate the negative impact on our local economy.

Of course, the Mr Fluffy program has had and will continue to have an impact. This scheme will have an impact on the ACT's bottom line. Our community will pay and will pay socially and for the ongoing health effects that become realised over the years to come. The government's scheme on resolving this issue once and for all is the right thing to do. The buyback and demolition program is the only way that we can solve the Mr Fluffy saga once and for all and make sure that families are no longer exposed to the horrible health risks associated with asbestos. The government will not be making money from the scheme. The minimum cost to the ACT budget of the scheme will be approximately \$300 million to \$400 million. Any income made from the scheme goes towards paying back the loan that the federal Liberal government so generously made to the ACT.

Beyond those that live in the Mr Fluffy homes and the impact upon the budget, we also need to safely dispose of the deadly asbestos. Much of the waste will be disposed of in west Belconnen. We need to make sure that the community in west Belconnen is reassured and that the program has regard for the safety of that community as trucks travel down the streets and dispose of this asbestos that is having such a terrible legacy on our community and many of the families that it is affecting.

I am truly outraged at the federal government's response to this issue. They are not equally sharing the burden with the ACT. Frankly, they should be ashamed for the lack of support that they are giving families who live in the homes with loose-fill asbestos. These issues have real consequences for us all indirectly and directly, and many thousands of people across Canberra will lose their jobs and financial security. Mr Fluffy home owners are dealing with a horrible legacy that the federal government are just simply not taking seriously enough.

Because of these factors, our budget will, of course, come under pressure. But the ACT government will continue to make the right choices to support the economy, to support investments and to support jobs—and not just jobs in hospitality. Whilst these jobs in hospitality might be a choice for some women, some women might choose to go into IT or health or education or higher education sectors that the ACT government continues to encourage investment in. It is why the ACT government is maintaining spending on these front-line services, like health and education, and investing in infrastructure through a four-year, \$2.5 billion program announced in the 2014-15 ACT budget.

The government has made a purposeful decision to focus on four key areas of investment across Canberra, those being health, education, public transport and responding to and resolving the toxic legacy of the Mr Fluffy asbestos. In my local community in Belconnen, we have seen a lot of investment already—more services and more staff at the Belconnen Community Health Centre and new walk-in centre, and in the future we will have the University of Canberra public hospital.

There have also been bus stop upgrades to Southern Cross Drive, increased weekend services in west Macgregor, road upgrades to Maribyrnong Avenue and Copland Drive, the upgraded College Street bus transit way, including park and ride, improved parking at Radford College and the Belconnen-to-city transit way, which is allowing for quicker and safer trips into the city for bus users and cyclists. The Belconnen town centre has seen many improvements, including investment in residential development. Ms Porter mentioned the fantastic work in our community around the development of the human services blueprint involving not just government services but non-government services and individuals and how we can better provide services for them.

These projects, big and small, deliver economic stimulus, jobs and social benefits across our city. They represent Labor's proud history of making Canberra the fair, progressive and prosperous place it is. Our investment delivers certainty for both the community and businesses. It also represents the delivery of successful urban renewal projects for many years to improve the lives of people across Canberra. They are investments that also support many families across Canberra.

We have a clear vision for our city now and into the future. In contrast, there has been no alternative given by those opposite. All they do is criticise and condemn. They do not speak up against their federal colleagues' cuts to Canberra jobs. They do not have an alternative. In this place we should strive to make Canberra better, but the opposition are determined to stir up fear and to pit neighbour against neighbour for their own benefit and political gain. If we listened to the opposition, they would have everyone believe that we live in the worst city, but the truth is that Canberra is the world's best city, the most livable city. That is in large part because of the leadership of this government and investment across our community.

The ACT government is showing leadership and working to support Mr Fluffy home owners and their families as best it can while the federal government have done very little. The ACT government's decisions are being made for the future of Canberra and our local communities. The government seeks to make our city even more sustainable—a city that is inclusive, a city that supports the vulnerable and those in need, a city that enables everyone to reach their potential and a city that fosters economic growth, jobs and innovation. I thank Ms Porter for bringing the motion to the Assembly today.

**MR HANSON** (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.40): I was not intending to speak to this wally motion, but I cannot allow Ms Berry's untruths to be—

**Ms Burch**: On a point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, I seek your guidance if “wally motion” is indeed unparliamentary.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Dr Bourke): Mr Hanson, you need to withdraw.

**MR HANSON**: Pardon?

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER**: You will withdraw.

**Mrs Jones:** Withdraw “wally motion”?

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** “Wally”.

**Mrs Jones:** On the point of order, please—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I have made a ruling, Mrs Jones.

**Mr Smyth:** So you are ruling under standing order 73—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I have made a ruling, Mr Smyth.

**Mr Smyth:** I am just seeking your guidance, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER** Mr Smyth, be seated.

**Mr Smyth:** Are you ruling under standing order 73—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER** Mr Smyth, be seated. Mr Smyth, you have got two choices: you can dispute my ruling or you can allow the debate to continue.

**Mr Smyth:** On a point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, under standing order 73—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** There is no point of order, Mr Smyth.

**Mr Smyth:** You have not heard the point of order. How can you rule it out of order before you have heard it? Under the standing orders, are you making a ruling that is binding on this Assembly?

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I have made a ruling, Mr Smyth. That is it. Let us carry on. Mr Hanson.

*Mr Smyth interjecting—*

**MR HANSON:** I withdraw, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Ms Berry:** On a point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, Mr Smyth just said that you should go back to Speaker school, which reflects on comments that you have made on this matter.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mr Smyth, would you withdraw your interjection.

**Mr Smyth:** If you could point to the interjection you want withdrawn, I am more than happy to withdraw.

**Ms Burch:** On the point of order, a request—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Take a seat, Ms Burch. I just need to consult. I will review the *Hansard* on that and come back.

**Mr Smyth:** Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I am happy to withdraw anything you find offensive.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson.

**MR HANSON:** I did not get very far, but I will not criticise the motion because it has now been ruled that to criticise a motion in this place is unparliamentary. That is an extraordinary step, I think, but it is a new precedent to say that one cannot criticise a motion that anyone moves in this place because that would be unparliamentary. From now on, in this parliament no-one will be in a position ever to criticise a motion lest it be ruled out of order. Extraordinary!

Let me go to the hypocrisy of those opposite. Note, I am not calling any of them individually a hypocrite—and this has been ruled on before, Mr Assistant Speaker. Let me go to the hypocrisy. Ms Berry just stood up in this place—and I would certainly grant her leave to correct the record for misleading this place, which she has done—and said in her statement, “Those opposite have not done anything or said anything with regard to federal government job cuts.” We do not like—

**Ms Burch:** On a point of order, just for clarification, a reference to a member misleading needs to be made in a substantive motion, I understand. Mr Hanson made reference that Ms Berry has misled this place.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I will uphold the point of order. Mr Hanson, could you withdraw that, please.

**MR HANSON:** I will withdraw and consider coming back with a substantive motion, unless Ms Berry does address the issue, because you cannot come into this place and not tell the truth. You cannot do that. Because Ms Berry is not particularly informed much of the time, she may be unaware of the very clear position that the opposition have taken, which is to be consistent. We say we do not want to see job cuts; we do not want to see positions removed from the ACT, whether it is federal Labor or whether it is federal Liberal. That has been our position, which is very different from that of those opposite, which is that only Liberal job cuts are a problem.

As Mr Smyth has outlined in this place on many occasions, of the 16,000 job cuts that had been experienced, 14,500 were made by federal Labor. So do not come into this place all high and mighty, using a political opportunity to criticise the federal government, and make excuses for your own poor management of the ACT economy when the reality is that 70 or 80 per cent of the jobs cut in the federal public service in the ACT were done by Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan. And those opposite who continue to bury their head in the sand about that, who continue to essentially rewrite history, are doing a great disservice to themselves.

There will be many more opportunities to debate this issue, I imagine, but I do invite Ms Berry to get her head out of the sand, to become aware of debates that have occurred, and to be aware of what people have said quite properly, before she comes into this place and maligns, where she does not tell the full truth and where she essentially just repeats Daddy’s lines, the unions’ lines, rather than actually getting across the substance of the debate.

**MS BURCH** (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Racing and Gaming, Minister for Women and Minister for the Arts) (4.47): I am very pleased to join Ms Porter and others on this side to acknowledge the underlying strengths of the ACT economy and what the government is doing to ensure that our community remains strong and prosperous. Indeed, if it has not been mentioned, let me repeat that the OECD recently named Canberra as the most livable city in the world, with the ACT ranking 10 out of 10 for safety, civic engagement and income; 9.9 out of 10 for health; and 9.6 out of 10 for jobs. The Property Council survey earlier this year rated Canberra as Australia's most livable city according to the residents' view of their own city. The strong support of small and medium enterprises in the territory for the ACT government was highlighted in recent Sensis surveys showing support for our policies was the highest of any state or territory government.

However, there can be no doubt our economy and community are facing some challenging times. The federal Liberals' drive to slash the public service will have a disproportionate impact on our community. Not only do many Canberra families face the prospect of job losses before Christmas but the ACT has also been hit by the commonwealth cuts to program funding in health and education, to name two. There is also, of course, the impact that Mr Fluffy will have on our community and economy. However, we are a strong community with a strong underlying economy, and we can and will weather the storm. We will weather it in part due to the clear and deliberate strategies from this government.

Everyone on this side of the chamber is committed to talking up this city and talking up the opportunities and programs which make Canberra such a good place to live and do business in. We will do all we can to support this city and ensure that our second century is as prosperous as the first. In this regard I am very pleased to be leading significant reforms in school and territory education to ensure everyone in Canberra has the skills and education necessary to lead productive, happy and prosperous lives. I am pleased to be working with industry and employers to ensure that this economy has the skilled workforce to drive growth for the ACT.

We are currently one of the most educated populations in the country. Compared to other jurisdictions, we have one of the lowest levels of unemployment and disadvantage. This government is determined to make sure it stays that way. Each year the government provides \$100 million in funding for training and skills development. Given the current issues facing Canberra, I am particularly pleased with the assistance provided for the reskilling of workers in a range of qualifications that directly align to areas identified as high need in the ACT. This ensures that industry has access to qualified employees and that students are engaging in study that will lead to better jobs.

The VET sector plays a vital role in maintaining the resilience and optimism of the Canberra community, especially where industry sectors experience downturns such as we have seen through the recent cuts to the commonwealth public service. I acknowledge the contributions of our public and private training organisations. They ensure our VET sector remains vibrant and effective. Collectively they directly employ 2,000 staff or more and provide services to over 30,000 students.

As I have said in this place before, the vocational education and training and higher education sectors have undergone significant and considerable reform, and they will continue to do so. As a result, our VET sector has developed into an adaptive and flexible system that responds to the needs of industries, students and the broader ACT community. To ensure we continue to have a strong vocational education sector, the government's policies focus on strengthening engagement with industry and business to match training to employment, targeting ACT government funding for training to meet the skills needs and to promote employment, ensuring the highest quality training, and providing better access to training through additional supports for the disadvantaged.

We want to ensure Canberrans can make informed choices about their education and training pathways and that the training available is well regarded by industry and aligned to industry needs. To do this, the government has announced the skilled capital program, which will provide \$21 million over three years to support training in areas most likely to lead to jobs. Skilled capital is based on a strong research and evidence base and has been informed and guided by industry to ensure that ongoing funding by the ACT is delivered to ensure the best outcomes for our community.

The key objective of the skilled capital program is to deliver a productive and highly qualified workforce to contribute to the ACT's economic prosperity. The list of skills identified for the skilled capital is informed by the evidence-based forecasting of industry needs and entitlement model. This model also provides the evidence required to determine the level of subsidy applied to different qualifications. Skilled capital will complement user-choice funding for Australian apprenticeships in the ACT and the range of programs offered through the Canberra Institute of Technology.

This comprehensive approach provides an entitlement for all Canberrans to access relevant and high quality training. These programs add to other reforms taking place in the ACT's VET sector, such as recent changes to the Training and Tertiary Education Act and changes to the Canberra Institute of Technology governance arrangements which were debated yesterday. The range of reforms being implemented and the introduction of the skilled capital in the ACT provide our community with access to quality training and reskilling. This government's approach to education and training and reforms will ensure Canberrans have access to the education and training that will continue to support our community.

I also point out that we continue as a community to have a higher education sector that is growing strongly. The sector currently employs 45,000 people in the region and educates over 40,000 students, one-quarter of whom are from overseas. There has been strong growth in the ACT's knowledge industry in recent years with more than 43,000 people employed across the education, scientific, technology and ICT sectors and more than 6,000 new jobs created over the past decade.

It is worth noting for members that more than 35,000 new jobs have been created in the ACT in the past decade, equating to almost 10 jobs per day each day for the last 10 years; our economy is worth \$34.4 billion, growing by almost \$1 billion since 2000-01; the ACT has the best, most educated community in Australia, with the ACT

leading the nation in NAPLAN results and Canberrans twice as likely to hold postgraduate qualifications than other Australians. I am sure the Treasurer can wax lyrical about the growth he has driven through our economy and the strategy he put in place to make sure we have an economy fit for the second century that can weather the storms brought about in many ways by the abandonment of the ACT and the Canberra community by the federal Liberal Party.

I look forward to seeing our community supported by all sides of the political divide. When we see job cuts affecting our neighbours, our work colleagues and people we know and respect in our community, it is something each and every one of us should stand up against. I thank Ms Porter for bringing this motion to the Assembly. For the leader of the Canberra Liberals to describe this as a wally motion is simply expected but completely contemptible. This motion notes the underlying strength of the ACT economy and the strong prospects for long-term growth. I do not know what is wally-ish about that.

**Mr Hanson:** Point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker. I ask you to rule on whether it is out of order for Ms Burch to describe what I said as contemptible. Is it okay for her to describe what I have said as contemptible when you have ruled that I cannot describe a motion as being a wally motion? Perhaps with this new standard you are setting in the Assembly you could rule on her description of what I said as being contemptible.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Dr Bourke):** There is no point of order, Mr Hanson.

**MS BURCH:** In closing, I thank Ms Porter for bringing this motion to the chamber, and I have no doubt it will be supported.

**MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (4.57),** in reply: I thank members for their valuable contributions to this important motion. It is good to hear all the wonderful initiatives this government has in place for the present and for the future to ensure the ACT economy remains strong and prosperous. These benefits will flow to ACT citizens.

In regard to Mr Smyth's contribution, we see him following the usual line of deflecting attention from the federal Liberals and the coalition government, trotting out the now discredited three-word slogan about rates and generally talking the city down. The evidence is that this government is maintaining a strong economy while the Abbott government turns its back on the ACT. I will not grace Mr Hanson's contribution and his extraordinarily personal attack on Ms Berry with any response.

As my colleagues have said today, the government is investing in four core areas: health, education, public transport and the resolution of the toxic Mr Fluffy saga. As the Abbott government makes cuts to health, this government has invested a record \$1.4 billion in our health sector. This government has invested in record levels of funding in education by investing even more than last year in better schools and teachers and all the things Ms Burch has just mentioned.

The government is delivering on its vision by investing \$735 million in capital infrastructure during 2014-15 and \$2.5 billion over the next four years. This government will continue to do whatever it can to support the ACT economy during

the hard times, and it will remain dedicated to the task of ensuring individuals and families are supported by a strong community. This means the resolution of the toxic Mr Fluffy legacy. As members before me have stated, the buyback scheme is the only way to rid us of this legacy once and for all. We have been left with a commonwealth-designed scheme and, as members said, the commonwealth has done little to resolve this and has left us with the problem. However, we are attacking the problem, and we will resolve it together.

We are bringing the whole community together and, in doing so, ensuring that the economy is thriving and that these benefits will flow on to all sectors of the community. We are building on what makes this city a great place to live. We are capitalising on all the opportunities it affords us. This government has vision, unlike those opposite. We will survive and we are able to thrive despite the Abbott government's challenges to this city. He uses this city as a dormitory and has little regard for it. Despite the uncertainty the daily Abbott backflips on his so-called promises create, we know this government will make this city thrive and will make sure this economy remains strong. I call on members of the Assembly to support this motion, to support their city and to support their community.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Mr Barr  
Ms Berry  
Dr Bourke  
Ms Burch  
Mr Corbell

Ms Gallagher  
Mr Gentleman  
Ms Porter  
Mr Rattenbury

Mr Coe  
Mr Doszpot  
Mrs Dunne  
Mr Hanson  
Mrs Jones

Ms Lawder  
Mr Smyth  
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

## **Arts—policy framework**

**MR SMYTH** (Brindabella) (5.04): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) the Arts Policy Framework was published in July 2012;

(b) key to the purpose of the Framework was to provide “a structure within which arts policy and the goals and outcomes associated with policy will be developed, and will guide the implementation and review of existing policies and programs”; and

- (c) during the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs annual report hearings on art, the Minister was not able to list the policy goals and outcomes achieved as a consequence of her framework; and
- (2) calls on the Minister to list all policy goals and outcomes achieved as a result of the ACT Arts Policy Framework to be tabled by the last sitting day in February 2015.

These days, the arts in this territory—I know you know this, Mr Assistant Speaker Bourke, because you are a big supporter of the arts—go beyond the simple “art for art’s sake” argument that we have had for so many years on the funding of arts. It goes beyond that because the arts are a key driver in the new economy, particularly the idea of the creative economy. That derives from an emerging concept. I want to quote from *The Economics of Cultural Policy* by Australian David Throsby. It is a fantastic read; perhaps the minister should get a copy. It says:

It derives from the emerging concept of the “creative economy”—the idea that a creative sector can be identified within the larger macro-economy which is a particular source of economic dynamism in the new information age. The idea has its origins in the proposition that creativity, whether in art, science, technology or commerce, is a key factor in generating economic success both for individual businesses and for whole economies. Creativity, it is argued, is a prerequisite for innovation, and innovation is the driver of technological change, which in turn boosts economic growth.

From the introduction, it goes on to say:

... a logical sequence can be established, beginning with art and proceeding through artistic creativity, creativity in general, innovation, technological process, competitive advantage, and leading in due course to growth in incomes, exports, employment and other indicators of economic success ...

The author goes on to conclude this:

... in many developed countries the cultural industries can indeed be shown to have grown faster than other sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture over the past decade or so when measured in terms of value of output or levels of employment ...

That is what we need to be talking about in this city today—the path that we will steer for ourselves and what we will base it on. In large part, it will be based on the arts and it will be based on the creativity that, as a natural consequence, comes from the arts.

When you have policy through which to ensure this, there is a policy process. In his book, in chapter 3, entitled “The policy process”, Mr Throsby says that the sequence of stages can be summarised as six steps. First, there is “specification of objectives of policy agendas, strategies or measures”. Perhaps the government have done that in their arts policy framework. It means “allocation of responsibilities”. Then comes “policy coordination”, followed by “choice of the policy instrument or instruments best fitted to achieve the desired outcomes”. Then comes “implementation of policy measures”. Finally, there is “monitoring and evaluation of the effects of policy action, and feedback to inform future policy development”.

I will just read the last outcome again for the benefit of the minister: “monitoring and evaluation of the effects of policy action and feedback to inform future policy development”. That is not what we are getting from this Minister for the Arts, who simply treats the arts as an opportunity to launch a document, to give away some money or to be at an opening but has not really grasped the nettle on the issue of how important the arts are to the future of this city, as an expression of this city, and to the economy of this city.

For members who do not know, Joy Burch MLA, Minister for the Arts, in July 2012 released the arts policy framework for the ACT. On page 7 of that framework, it says:

The Framework provides a structure within which arts policy and the goals and outcomes associated with policy will be developed, and will guide the implementation and review of existing policies and programs.

You can imagine that when the arts portfolio came up in annual report hearings, two years and four months after the release of the policy by the minister, one would have thought it was reasonable to go in and ask what were the policies that had been developed, what were the outcomes and what were the goals. The answers were stunning, absolutely stunning. There are none. There is no new policy. Two years and four months after release by the minister, there were no goals developed and there are no outcomes associated with the policy. How do we know that? Because the minister and the officials told us so.

Let me quote. I said:

In the policy framework, it says on page 7:

The Framework provides a structure within which arts policy and the goals and outcomes associated with policy will be developed ...

In the two years and four months since the minister launched the framework, what policy goals and outcomes associated with the policy have been developed? And could you table copies of them, please?

The official said:

No, we cannot table a formal development of a policy.

It is pretty stark, Madam Deputy Speaker. Two years and four months into this process, on perhaps one of the most valuable drivers of the modern economy, there is not a single measurable outcome. No new policy, no goals set and no outcomes.

It goes on:

**MR SMYTH:** So in two years and four months there have been no policies developed as a consequence of the framework?

**Ms Burch:** That is not what Mr Whitney said.

**MR SMYTH:** You cannot table a policy?

**Mr Whitney:** No; I cannot table the developments that you are asking for.

You would have thought that in 2½ years, at \$10 million a year, \$25 million later, the government might have something to show for the document that the minister tabled. I would hesitate to call it a wally document, because it would be ruled out of order and that would be most unfortunate. But the response from this minister is simply contempt of the arts community.

The official went on:

We certainly have been using the arts fund as a funding mechanism ...

That is the only outcome. They have changed the way that they fund things. This is so typical of a Labor government. It is all about the inputs. We put so much money into this that we spend all our time adjusting how we put the money into it. And that is because there are so many failures of this minister. Who remembers the fringe festival procurement that was not a procurement process that led to the appointment of a director who thought Nazi strippers at a family event was appropriate? And of course, the changes to the funding arrangements have led to the funding of what the head of the Gorman House arts community described as the puerile title “Kill climate changes”. They are the changes. We have dumbed down the funding guidelines; we have not done any policy. The government has not done any policy, and there are certainly no goals or outcomes that one can measure.

I said, “Okay, I’ll keep this simple.” I said:

Can you table your KPIs for the arts framework?

And they could not. The official said:

The arts policy framework principally is the driver for our arts funding; the outcomes of the arts funding, I think, would be the way to indicate that.

But it is not what the framework says. I will read it again:

The Framework provides a structure within which arts policy and the goals and outcomes associated with policy will be developed ...

After 2½ years, you have to ask who has failed here. Clearly, it is the minister for not enforcing the document that she said was guiding her time as arts minister. I then went on, and we got a further answer from the official:

Given the line of your questioning, we could certainly provide changes to the guidelines for the funding mechanism.

There is 2½ years of arts policy, with the section in community services that run the arts, and all they could table were the changes to the guidelines for the funding

mechanism. That is hardly policy development. And that is clearly an expression of the low regard that the Gallagher government has for the arts community and the inability of the minister to deliver anything.

I went on:

So the only policy we have inside the arts policy framework is the funding guidelines? Is that what you are saying?

The official said:

You are asking for documentation to be tabled, and I am providing you with an option where we can provide that ...

An option where they can provide the funding guideline? This is appalling. Minister Burch later went on to say:

We have been very clear in the arts policy framework that it is the driver of arts activity.

How would you know if it is or not? How would you know what is being driven if you have no goals and you have no outcomes? These are just simple measurements as to what value for money the community is getting for the artwork.

The minister went on to say:

If you want us to be able to table something on an A4 piece of paper ...

I said:

I would have expected something far more significant than an A4 piece of paper.

The minister went on:

You can keep on searching; you can keep on asking.

Then she said:

We are comfortable with the framework ...

Very comfortable? This is a very relaxed and comfortable minister. The arts community are not so comfortable. They are astounded at the lack of direction. They are astounded at the lack of arts. They are coming to me and they are saying, "Where's the review?" We will get to the review in a minute.

I went on to say:

You have said that there is good participation. Has that met the outcomes and the goals that were developed under the framework, and can you please table those goals?

The minister's response was:

What we will table is the arts policy framework.

Of course, that does not have any goals in it, does not have any outcomes. So there is no policy, no goals, no outcomes. I said:

So are there no goals?

Ms Burch said that they would table it. She said:

And every document that sits underneath that, which is all available publicly on the artsACT website.

It is sad that we get to this stage. I then asked the final question:

... what is the overall budget figure for the arts in the ACT?

The official said that it was in the annual report, but it was approximately \$11.3 million. I responded:

Government arts engagement—\$11,096,000 was the GPO. What is the difference between the \$8.5 million and the \$11 million?

The official said that it might be capital. Well, it might not be capital. Then it was:

It may well include the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

If they had turned the page, I think it is about \$16 million in total that is the approp for the Cultural Facilities Corporation. The chair said:

Can you take that on notice and get back to us?

The minister said:

Yes.

Of course, the minister has not got back to the committee yet.

The minister shows her contempt for the arts in the way that she behaves. The flippant attitude that she had at the hearings shows that we do not have a minister who is engaged in this issue. That is why I bring this motion on today. It calls on the minister to list all the policy, the goals and the outcomes achieved as a result of the ACT arts policy framework and for that to be tabled by the last sitting day in February 2015. It may well be an A4 sheet, as the minister threatened, because I suspect there is not a great deal that has come out of it.

Then we get to the whole issue of the review. There is a lot of consternation in the arts community about the arts review. The website says that the arts review will be conducted in 2014. It says under "Review":

The Framework will be reviewed in 2014 to ensure that it continues to be a relevant and engaged policy.

It is hardly relevant, because it has delivered nothing, and I do not think it is engaged, because it is not going anywhere. But maybe the review will answer that.

Let me go to Mr Doszpot at the same hearing of the education committee inquiry into annual reports. He said:

... can you give us an idea of what are the key initiatives that have arisen as a result of the review and update of the ACT arts policy framework?

The original answer from the official was:

What we need to do now is a sector analysis—to look at, across the arts, what is being served by the ... framework ...

How they will do the analysis without having any measures to measure it is beyond me, but good luck with that. Then we got to the nub of it. Mr Doszpot asked how the review was going to work and then he said:

Has the review of the framework now commenced?

The official said:

It has commenced internally within artsACT. We are proposing to have two elements ... One is to have an open questionnaire ... The other element ... will be to have a panel ...

Mr Doszpot said:

Who will be on that panel?

The official said it was not yet determined. I asked some questions there. I said:

When do you think the review will be done?

The answer was:

By the first half or quarter of next year.

Then the official said:

Yes. We have said that we would do the review for 2015, and we are proposing to have that completed by the middle of 2015.

I said:

The website says 2014.

The answer was:

We need to update the website.

Maybe you actually need to do the review, as was promised. So now it is 2015.

It is that attitude displayed that is really disappointing. It is very important that we get this right. If we do not get this right, you will never be able to measure the effect and you will not be able to work out whether or not we are doing right by the community.

Again, David Throsby, in his book, says:

Once any policy strategy or specific policy measure has been implemented, it is important for governments to know whether the desired objective has been achieved.

Well, apparently not. Apparently not, because we have no goals, we have no policy and we have no outcomes. I will just finish, Madam Deputy Speaker. I quote again:

Put in simple terms, the sequence begins with the articulation of objectives, proceeds through the choice of instruments and the business of their application, and culminates in the achievements or otherwise of desired outcomes that can be monitored such that lessons for further policy development can be drawn.

Nothing can be drawn from this because nothing has been measured. The minister will get up and no doubt say there has been lots of participation, but how would you measure whether that has improved or not since the framework? You cannot do it because it has not been done.

This is an important motion. The failings of the minister are obvious. We should be able to have, at annual report hearings, a reckoning of the expenditure in an output class and find out what the people of the ACT got for their taxpayer dollars. Clearly, in arts that is impossible because this minister has not done her job. It is not unreasonable to ask that by the end of February, the last sitting day in February next year, we find out the policy goals and outcomes achieved from the results of the ACT arts policy framework. (*Time expired.*)

**MS BURCH** (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Racing and Gaming, Minister for Women and Minister for the Arts) (5.20): The government will oppose this motion in its current form. I seek leave to move two amendments circulated in my name together.

Leave granted.

**MS BURCH:** I move:

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

“(c) artsACT is currently reviewing the Arts Policy Framework in line with commitments made in 2012, with the review to be completed in 2015; and”.

(2) Omit paragraph (2), substitute:

“(2) calls on the Minister for the Arts to update the Assembly on the review of the Arts Policy Framework as soon as practicable following its completion in 2015.”.

I know it is late in the afternoon, but back to this motion: it seems that only a month ago we were in the same place with Mr Smyth asserting that the arts sector was somehow failing to develop and not thriving. Again, I thank him for the opportunity to come into the Assembly and talk about the strengths of our arts sector and the significant outcomes achieved by this government since the release of the framework in 2012.

The achievements may not matter to Mr Smyth, but I am certainly proud of them, such as: one of our filmmakers winning the short film award at the Toronto International Film Festival; the success of *The Code* on ABC TV, funded by ScreenACT; and our very own glam folk duo, Sparrow-Folk, selected to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. At last night’s ACT arts awards I understand that many of the winners made a point of thanking artsACT and ScreenACT for the support over the years which has helped them achieve national and international success.

The arts policy framework is just that, a framework. It reflects the government’s continuing commitment to the local arts sector, outlines our priorities and articulates the guiding vision, principles and activities that support these priorities. It is a living document, and the principles of the framework drive every decision that is made every day by artsACT about funding, about projects, about fundamental changes to the arts landscape.

Let me go to some of the questions that Mr Smyth claims have not been answered. Mr Smyth asked: was the ACT arts fund implemented and reviewed? Yes, it was, Mr Smyth. The ACT arts fund is an ongoing program—

**MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Ms Burch, address your comments through the chair, please.

**MS BURCH:** Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, it was, Mr Smyth. The ACT arts fund is an ongoing program. Without it we could not have funded our key arts organisations or provided any grants to the artists. Mr Smyth also asked for a copy of the artists in residence policy. This is available on the artsACT website.

Mr Smyth asked for other policies to be tabled. If he were to check the artsACT website, he would also find the key arts organisation funding guidelines, the program organisation guidelines, the out-of-round guidelines, the project guidelines, the Llewellyn Hall fund guidelines—all of which are policies that sit underneath the arts policy framework. The framework guides the government’s policy on the arts and, as you can see, there is a substantial list of policies.

Let us compare that to the policies that we have seen come from the Canberra Liberals. I have seen two arts policies come out of the Canberra Liberals of late. They want to either ban it or they want to censor it. Mr Hanson, as the leader of the Canberra Liberals, has said, and I quote from *Hansard*:

We are very consistent. Ban all public art.

So the Canberra Liberals' view is very consistent. They have a view to ban all public art. As articulated by the leader of the Canberra Liberals: ban all public art. What a vision for our city that would be. I can only imagine how the Canberra Liberals would go about enforcing this. Would the statue of Robert Menzies have to be taken down? None of the Canberra Liberals could go to the unveiling of that statue of Robert Menzies. So it is a bit of a nonsense.

If the Canberra Liberals cannot ban public art then the next policy is to censor it. Under this policy the minister for arts would not take advice from local experts like Professor David Williams, Francis Owusu or Professor Jen Webb about what projects should receive funding. The minister would sit in his or her office with a texta and put lines through the applications, with no concern about artistic merit, just their censoring view.

It is quite clearly nonsense and it is quite clearly inconsistent for a group that want to ban all public art. Can I just remind Mr Smyth that when he was arts minister—I know it has been a long time since he sat on this side of the chamber—back in January 2001 when he was promoting the Multicultural Festival he said:

The statue of Ethos in City Square is the symbolic focal point of this year's festival ... 'The Spirit of the City'. During the program launch proceedings, the statue will be "wrapped" and will remain that way until the festival opens ... Her liberation will be a highlight of the festival's dramatic opening pageant.

There we have it in February 2001—this is from someone who wants to ban public art—

**Mr Smyth:** No, I never said that.

**MS BURCH:** That is the position of your leader. That is the position of the Canberra Liberals, that they will ban all public art.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Stop the clock, please. Ms Burch, sit down. We are not having a conversation across the chamber. You had your chance to speak to your motion, Mr Smyth. Ms Burch is now speaking to the amendment. You will allow her to do that, please, in silence, and we will have no further interjection. Ms Burch, do not address Mr Smyth across the chamber. Thank you.

**MS BURCH:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your guidance. From a position of where the policy is to ban public art—and I refer to Mr Smyth's comments

that I just seem to take a role of being minister for launching things and giving away money—Mr Smyth certainly had a good crack in public media around public art. Back in February 2001 he launched *Ainslie's Sheep*. It is a beloved piece of public art. He said:

The sculpture is sure to provoke curiosity and laughter ... It also signifies the commitment of the Government to making Civic a vibrant place.

In March 2001 Mr Smyth was at it again, with:

The Public Art Program brings artists and the public together in innovative ways.

Again:

Public art demonstrates the diversity and the range of ways that art can bring to public space.

Again, from the party that wants to ban public art, in April 2001 Mr Smyth said:

... in commissioning the sculptures, the ACT Government was acknowledging the historical association of local Indigenous people with the ACT region ...

This was in regard to three-metre by four-metre statues of bogong moths. For the benefit of those over there, five giant bogong moths landed near the National Museum of Australia. Mr Smyth, you did not show the same dignity to the bogong moths in Kambah. Then we have, in July 2001, Mr Smyth encouraging this new exhibition in Lanyon, saying it:

... is a celebration of fashions of the past (not to mention an opportunity to have a giggle at the clothes that the men and women of the early 1900s thought were all the rage!) ... you'll be fascinated by what's on show ... The display includes a selection of underwear ...

And he encouraged families to come along to *Boots, Brims and Bustles*. Underwear at a fringe festival cannot be seen, but Mr Smyth was encouraging families to see underwear back in 2001. And we go on. There are multiple opportunities for Mr Smyth to stand proudly next to public art.

But let us go to public arts policy. I did look at *Hansard* from 1998 through to 2001. The only document I found was a policy document released by Kate Carnell. It is undated. I am not quite sure when it was released. But there on one of the pages, under "Putting arts capital into practice", it talks about how the ACT government "will develop a strategy to ensure arts have a higher profile".

It talks about implementation plans but, of course, I have not been able to find any of the supplementary action plans, KPIs or anything that Mr Smyth cannot find, does not seem to be able to find or seem to be able interpret the right way. This is the document and it has nothing. Of course we know what the community thought of the government back in 2001 and they booted Mr Smyth out of office.

I do not have a textbook to quote from but I do have two publications, in fact, and they are publications, again, from when Mr Smyth had the opportunity to sit on this side of the fence. They are two Housing ACT newsletters. The first, back in January 2000, has a number of photos. I cannot remember; it could be 14 photos. Fifty per cent or more of the images are of Mr Smyth. He has used a government publication for nothing more than his own propaganda to get his name out. The publications back in 2000 were the Housing ACT newsletter.

This is Mr Smyth's policy development on the back page. It has a crossword—a crossword in an ACT publication—and the first crossword clue across, the number one clue, is: "ACT Minister for Housing". Mr Smyth, Brendan Smyth, is including his name in crosswords in government publications. That is what Mr Smyth's policy attributes are. He will do nothing, other than cheap stunts that use his name in the crosswords. He will use government publications that put him in 50 per cent of the images. He stands here as a so-called policy expert with a government, with an opposition, with a party that wants to ban public art but at the same time, when he gets the opportunity, he cannot stick himself in front of a camera quickly enough.

The arts policy framework has four overarching principles: to facilitate community participation in access to art, to support artistic excellence, to strengthen the capacity of arts to contribute to social and economic outcomes, to foster artistic innovation, creativity and sustainability. Let us go to the first principle. Some examples under this are—and the framework is guided by this and this is the result; this is the outcome—increased support for the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, with an additional \$100,000; delivered the artists in schools program; undertook a strategic asset management plan; strengthened arts hubs at Gorman House and Ainslie Arts Centre; built additional rehearsal rooms at Street Theatre; set up an online SmartyGrants application system for grants funds; and strengthened the Tuggeranong and Belconnen arts centres.

On principle No 2, some examples are: funded initiatives through the arts which allow artists to gain local, national and international success; introduced more flexible funding; established a coordinated artists in residence program and upgraded Strathnairn Homestead. On principle No 3, which is about sustainability, we have recognised that arts is a changing landscape. The Canberra Glassworks continues to grow and develop. Megalo is reaching unprecedented levels. The Tuggeranong and Belconnen arts centres are consolidating those roles and have been supported to meet new requirements.

We have also commenced scoping research to better understand the economic and social benefits of investment in the arts and have assisted in the merger between Music For Everyone and Canberra Youth Music, all part of strengthening the sustainability and capacity of our arts sector.

These achievements and many more are enormous outcomes for what is 0.6 per cent of the ACT government's budget. But this list does not even go near the detail of the work undertaken. I have outlined how this framework guides the government's policies in arts. However, as I said, the arts framework is a living document and it is therefore not necessary for it to be under everyday review as it is implemented, but the decisions are reflective of the goals and the ambitions of the framework.

I am pleased to confirm that the planning stage of the review is underway. I propose that the review will involve a survey of practising artists and organisations and interested members of the public. We as a government are ready to continue the conversation with the arts sector about the next steps in this policy journey, and I look forward to updating the Assembly. (*Time expired.*)

**MR RATTENBURY** (Molonglo) (5.35): I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter again today. I note that we last had a motion from Mr Smyth on the arts on 22 October. We are back for a further discussion, although I think there is less hyperbole in today's motion than there was on the 22nd. But today's motion calls on the minister to list all policy goals and outcomes achieved as a result of the arts policy framework, and we have just heard quite a comprehensive response from the Minister for the Arts, who has detailed a significant accounting of the outcomes achieved under the framework.

The minister also outlined the four policy goals of the framework, which are, in brief: facilitating community participation, supporting artistic excellence, strengthening capacity, and fostering innovation. These goals are of course easily available on the artsACT website, but they have now been read into *Hansard* for good measure.

The minister has circulated some amendments to Mr Smyth's motion which I will be supporting, because I think the minister's speech itself is a good summary of the state of play in the arts scene here in the territory.

I know there was quite a robust debate at estimates, but I think what we have seen in the minister's amendments is a pathway forward. I will keep my remarks brief, as I do need to briefly step out of the chamber. But I just want to briefly indicate that I will be supporting the minister's amendments today.

**MR SMYTH** (Brindabella) (5.37): What a betrayal of the arts community that statement from Mr Rattenbury was. I understand he has got to go away and do an interview, and that is fine. Yet again he squibs it. There was a chance today to hold the government to account, to hold his colleagues to account. We see Mr Rattenbury slipping closer and closer to the government as a minister ensconced in the cabinet rather than the independent, free-thinking crossbencher that he portrays himself as. That is the problem for the Greens. It is the dilemma of being in cabinet. You cannot hold yourself accountable because sometimes it means making a hard decision to hold a colleague to account. That is what should have happened today.

The choice today is that Ms Burch wants to give us an update on a review and the Liberals want to know what are the policies, the goals and the outcomes as accountability measures for a substantial expenditure of taxpayers' money. Being in cabinet counts for more than holding the Labor Party to account. It is funny; the shrill level of the response from the minister clearly shows how close to the bone this got with her. I suspect that if her office or her officials had spent a fraction of the time on arts policy that they spent on reading my very valuable reflections on the value of the arts then what a policy we would have here today. We would not be having this debate.

Rather than actually doing the job, we have a minister who is constantly on the defensive over her decisions and her management of this portfolio. One could well say that if the comprehensive list that Mr Rattenbury refers to is an outcome of the arts policy framework then why were the minister and her officials not in a position to tell the annual reports committee that? It is an interesting question, isn't it? If you had all this detail, why could you not tell the inquiry? The official said it most clearly when I asked, "You cannot table a policy?" He said, "No; I cannot table the developments that you are asking for."

Many of the things that the minister just read were already in the policy framework. They are things that had occurred. They were going to happen anyway. They did not happen as a consequence of the arts policy framework because they were already funded. To read a list and say, "We fund things," is the standard Labor Party approach. "We put more money, we put extra money, we put different money or we changed the money." They cannot table any outcome or analysis of the value for money or the benefit that the people of the ACT got from having this framework. The minister went straight to the old trick of taking credit for everybody else's actions: "We funded an artist and that artist got a prize; therefore, we're really good." But we were funding artists to compete, contribute, create and enliven and to make the city a better place anyway. Tell me the comparisons.

In the annual reports hearing I asked, "Can you tell me, as a consequence of the funding, whether the number of people engaged in the arts has gone up or down?" They could not tell us. That is the problem. This further shows the contempt that this minister holds for this portfolio. It is a further example of why the minister should not actually have the portfolio. Again, you go through the logical steps as outlined in the book called *The Economics of Cultural Policy* by David Throsby: the specification of objectives—you could say that that is the arts policy framework—but we have not had an allocation of responsibilities, policy coordination, the choice of delivery instrument, the implementation of the policy measures and the monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the policy and feedback to inform future policy development.

We could not even get the review done on time. It is a really simple review. It is a questionnaire and a panel. But, no, we could not even get that done in 2014. It will not be done now till mid-2015. So three years after the introduction of the arts policy framework we will still have no new policy, apparently. We will have no goals and we will not be measuring outcomes because we have no goals. To simply say, "People are participating because we put money in," well, that is what was happening before the arts policy framework. I know that there are people concerned. People have said to me that they intend to write to the minister to find out what is happening with the review. They are not happy with what is happening in the arts in the ACT.

I think it behoves the minister, the government and Mr Rattenbury to actually stand up for the arts community. Is it really that bad? Or is it that impossible for the minister at the end of February to detail the policies developed, the goals of those policies and the outcomes achieved? That is what the minister is actually saying. She is confirming, by moving this amendment, that there are no new policies, that no goals have been set and that she cannot measure the outcomes because they never had a starting baseline.

That is the problem with this minister's approach. She spent so much time trying to take the micky out of me. Good luck to her. We delivered lots in arts when we were in government. But we did not have a framework that said we would provide "a structure within which arts policy and the goals and outcomes associated with policy will be developed, and will guide the implementation and review of existing policies and programs".

They are your words. That is your objective. That is what you wanted to do, and that is what you have failed to do. Your officials outed you when they said, "No, I cannot table the developments that you are asking for." Why? It is very simple. They have not happened. The minister reads through the document of the existing things and says, "We've looked at the ACT arts fund and we've changed the guidelines." We had a framework and 2½ years and more than \$25 million worth of funding just to change the arts funding guidelines so that the minister can say, "We have spent more money and we have funded things."

It is a ridiculous notion; it is totally ridiculous. The problem is that it is not all about the funds. It is about the outcome. It is about what you are achieving with those funds so that it is not a puerile outcome, as one of the decisions of your arts funding guidelines achieved. It is actually about quality. It is about improving. It is about feeding into the creativity, including our kids at school. There was a very reasonable suggestion in the estimates report. I think it was the Childers Group that said they want a dedicated arts officer in the education department. But, no, we cannot even do that. It is very clear. Indeed, recently at the TEDx event that was held over at the Canberra Theatre a lecturer from the University of Canberra was saying that we need more kids playing musical instruments much earlier because it gets their creativity going, it improves their coordination, it improves their physical responses and it gets their brain function going. We know from Mr Throsby's view that it leads to much better outcomes. We see:

Creativity, it is argued, is a prerequisite for innovation ... a logical sequence can be established, beginning with art ...

Let us begin with art. What are the outcomes for the community? He says:

... beginning with art and proceeding through artistic creativity, creativity in general, innovation, technological process, competitive advantage, and leading in due course to growth in incomes, exports, employment and other indicators of economic success ... in many developed countries the cultural industries can indeed be shown to have grown faster than other sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture over the past decade or so when measured in terms of value of output or levels of employment ...

That is what it is about. It is about using the arts as a driver to happiness. Alain de Botton, the philosopher, in *Art as Therapy*, his most recent book, says that art can help heal individuals, it can help heal community and it can help build community. But none of that can be measured and none of that can be achieved because we have a minister who just does not get it, ably supported by the Greens, which I think is very disappointing. They are the great ones for accountability and indicators, but what Mr Rattenbury is now happy with is an update on the review. That is just obfuscation.

What there should have been is accountability. What there should have been is commitment to the framework. What there should have been is new policy. What there should have been is goals set. What there should have been is outcomes that we can all measure to know where we are going and what we are trying to achieve. That is why this motion, unamended, should be passed by this place today.

Question put:

That the amendments 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.

Amendments agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Dr Bourke): Before we move to the next item, earlier this afternoon a point of order was raised that an interjection by Mr Smyth reflected upon a ruling of the chair. I have listened to the tape and confirm that Mr Smyth's interjection did, indeed, reflect upon that ruling. This is disorderly, and I would ask Mr Smyth to withdraw.

**Mr Smyth:** I am happy to withdraw, Mr Assistant Speaker, but could you tell me which specific words I am withdrawing?

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER** Mr Smyth, they were your words. I have asked you to withdraw them.

**Mr Smyth:** I am not sure what I am withdrawing. If you have reviewed the tape and I have said something you find offensive, I am more than happy to withdraw it, but I would like to know exactly what it is I am withdrawing.

**Mr Corbell:** No, you just withdraw; you just withdraw.

**Mr Smyth:** You do not do blank withdrawals.

**Mr Hanson:** Mr Assistant Speaker, on a point of order, I think that if Mr Smyth is being asked to withdraw a comment, it is reasonable that you explain to Mr Smyth what that comment was. I think that it is impossible for him to simply withdraw unknown comments. That, again, would set a remarkable precedent for this place.

**Mr Corbell:** On the point of order, first of all, I would say that Mr Smyth is playing games with you, Mr Assistant Speaker, and is deliberately and wilfully ignoring the authority of the chair.

**Mrs Dunne:** On a point of order—

**Mr Corbell:** The fact is, Mr Assistant Speaker—

**Mrs Dunne:** On a point of order, please, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mrs Dunne, please.

**Mrs Dunne:** No, I have a point of order on the point being made—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mr Corbell has not finished yet.

*Members interjecting—*

**Mrs Dunne:** I have a point of order. I am trying to make a point of order. When a member wants to make a point of order they stand and everybody else—

*Members interjecting—*

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Members will be silent. Mrs Dunne, please be seated.

**Mrs Dunne:** I would like—

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mr Corbell will finish his point of order and then I will listen to you.

**Mr Corbell:** Mr Assistant Speaker, I understand that the words that most members in this place heard and which you have quite prudently sought to review on the tape are “you should go back to Speaker school”. That is clearly a reflection on the chair. Mr Smyth knows it, and he should adhere to your ruling and withdraw the adverse and unparliamentary comment.

**Mrs Dunne:** On a point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, during the comments that Mr Corbell was making in his point of order he reflected upon the character of Mr Smyth by saying that he was being tricky—I now cannot remember the words because, I am sorry, I have lost my cool—and he did reflect on Mr Smyth. They should be withdrawn. That was the point that I was trying to make when I took the point of order. The reflection was made, and that is when you make the point.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER** Mr Corbell.

**Mr Corbell:** I do not have anything to say.

**Mrs Dunne:** Mr Assistant Speaker, Mr Corbell reflected upon the character of Mr Smyth. That is unparliamentary by anybody's standards, and I would ask that you ask Mr Corbell to withdraw.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I am just going to take some advice. I will review the tape as to Mr Corbell's utterances. Mr Smyth, I again ask you to withdraw your reflection upon the chair.

**Mr Smyth:** I withdraw.

On a point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, could you please inform me, either in this place or in writing, exactly what I have just withdrawn? There is a technical thing: when you withdraw, the words are withdrawn from the *Hansard*. I am not sure what you want me to withdraw. I withdraw it; I withdraw it without reservation. But if you could please tell me those words, one, so people know not to say them in the future and, two, for the *Hansard*?

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mr Smyth, you are being asked to withdraw a reflection on the chair, which you have done. It is not the words; it is the reflection that is being withdrawn.

**Mr Smyth:** On a point of order, Mr Assistant Speaker, the reflection is in the words and how the words are delivered.

**Mr Coe:** Did you mime it?

**Mr Smyth:** No, I did not mime it. I have said that I withdraw. But it is reasonable to know what it is that one has been asked to withdraw. You have reviewed the tape. I have not had that benefit. Indeed, if I review the whole afternoon, I would not know which words you have just asked me to withdraw.

**Ms Gallagher:** You know, Brendan; you do know.

**Mr Smyth:** You were not here, Katy, so you would not know.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms Gallagher:** You said them.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Smyth:** No. What I have said is not what they have said.

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Mr Smyth, order!

## **Transport—light rail**

**MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.56):** I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes regarding the Full Business Case for light rail released on 31 October 2014:
  - (a) the benefit-cost ratio has fallen from the 2012 estimate of 2.34 to just 1.2;
  - (b) the business case does not include the cost of finance which is expected to be at least \$70 million per year;
  - (c) the ACT Government may adopt “high risk work components not within the potential control of the delivery partner” regarding the relocation of utilities;
  - (d) the cost of parking after light rail is operational is not disclosed;
- (2) according to former ACT Treasury official, Dr David Hughes:
  - (a) the business case understates the likely cost and overstates the benefits;
  - (b) of the \$984 million in published benefits, \$579 million are unsubstantiated increases in land values and productivity; and
  - (c) the transport benefits to cost ratio is just 0.5; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to cancel the project.

The government may simply brand this motion as the latest annoyance in their efforts to foist light rail onto Canberrans. But for the opposition and for thousands of Canberrans, this capital metro project is not the right priority for Canberra and is iconic of a government making extraordinarily expensive partisan decisions regarding transport infrastructure.

This government is doing a disservice to light rail. Rail enthusiasts everywhere should be disappointed with the way in which the Labor-Greens government is tarnishing the reputation of light rail. Light rail can work in certain circumstances. However, the circumstances here and now are not conducive to the efficient delivery of rail from Gungahlin to the city.

I have said before that I believe a route from Belconnen past UC, Canberra stadium, CIT Bruce, Calvary, ANU, the city, the convention centre, CIT Reid, Russell and the airport might be a better starting point. It would have several employment hubs in addition to the city and Russell, four education institutions, numerous destinations such as the stadium, hospital, convention centre and airport. Does this route stack up? Who knows? Maybe it does; maybe it does not. But it simply was not considered.

If this government were serious about light rail and genuinely committed to sustainability and viability, it should have assessed every option and then chosen the best starting route, the best staging and the best mode. Instead the government has blindly, ignorantly and foolishly used politics to choose a route and mode, despite the limited advice they had which suggested that bus rapid transit was considerably better.

I imagine right now that there are some staff in the Capital Metro Agency and perhaps in government agencies listening to this via the webstream. My message to those staff is that I respect the work they are doing and their service to the government. There may be some public servants that personally agree with light rail and some that do not. But all are professionally undertaking the work tasked to them by the government, and we respect that.

My colleagues and I have been vocal about the decision to construct light rail and our opposition is only going to get stronger. I say this to emphasise that our issue is with the Chief Minister, Minister Corbell and Minister Rattenbury, who, along with their colleagues, are responsible for the multibillion-dollar Labor-Greens deal to go ahead with light rail before having evidence to support their decision.

*At 6 pm, in accordance with standing order 34, the debate was interrupted. The motion for the adjournment of the Assembly having been put and negatived, the debate was resumed.*

**MR COE:** The opposition will continue to do what we have an obligation to do—to challenge the government, hold them to account, criticise bad decisions and suggest alternatives. Our parliamentary democracy depends on oppositions doing these tasks and we will do so with vigour.

The reality of the political genesis of this project is captured on page 13 of the full business case. I quote:

Given the background to this project, including analysis previously performed and decisions already made by Government, this Full Business Case considers the business case for a 12km light rail route from the City to Gungahlin. It does not extend to an analysis of alternative transportation means or routes.

This is an important paragraph in the full business case. In effect, it says that the Capital Metro Agency is tasked with justifying building light rail from Gungahlin to the city. The experts cannot determine the need, they cannot determine the route, they cannot determine the mode and they cannot determine the staging. That was all done by a few MLAs. Of course, there are many very capable and competent people working in the Capital Metro Agency and elsewhere in the government, and it is a shame that the government did not put these questions to them regarding the need, route, mode and staging.

For a couple of years the government has been spruiking the benefits of light rail because of the benefit-cost ratio of 2.34. In fact Minister Corbell put this in context a year ago, on 27 November, when he said:

Anything over two is considered a beneficial project in terms of return to the economy.

What does that say about a BCR of 1.2? On 6 August he said:

Infrastructure Australia's general position is that any project that achieves a cost-benefit analysis of over two is a viable project worthy of further consideration. So we are in a strong position in relation to that cost-benefit analysis.

Again, what does that say about a cost-benefit ratio of 1.2? Reality is catching up with Mr Corbell and Ms Gallagher. On 16 May 2013 Minister Corbell said about light rail:

The cost projections have been continually revised downwards over the last six to 12 months, and that is as a result of more detailed analysis occurring.

Yet somehow the cost has gone from \$614 million to \$783 million. And that does not include the real risk of this government blowing yet another infrastructure project, as this government has done so many times before. Minister Corbell has tied himself in knots on numerous occasions, and that is what happens when you reverse-engineer a business case to suit an outcome.

Does anyone in Canberra actually think that the ACT Labor government can deliver this highly complex project in a PPP and not get taken for a ride? The full business case states that the recommended delivery model is an availability public-private partnership. This means that we pay nine, 10, 11 or 12 per cent finance. It is fascinating that the full business case does not mention this. It does not mention the fact that we could be paying \$100 million per year in interest every single year for 30 years. So it is not \$783 million for this project—it is considerably more. It does not take into account the interest we are paying over 20 or 30 years at nine, 10, 11 or 12 per cent.

They could have gone to a bank and got four per cent. They could have got an intergovernment loan and got four per cent. Instead they are going down the path of a PPP and they are going to be paying nine, 10, 11 or 12 per cent finance. It could very well end up costing \$100 million per year in financing costs.

It is fascinating that the full business case does not mention this, and even the Australia Institute has come out in criticism of this delivery model. Of course, we would all be aware of the advice provided to governments of different persuasions by David Hughes. In his latest piece in the *Canberra Times* on 17 November he said:

Land use and wider economic benefits valued at \$579 million are described in a few paragraphs in the business case. The appendix provides some of the assumptions used in modelling. But there is no evidence or analysis to explain how these benefits have been estimated or how they are connected to the light rail project.

He went on to say:

The business case says 'there will be over 3,000 additional public transport boardings each day across the network by 2031'. This equates to 1,500 return trips. Half of these will be in off-peak periods, when congestion and travel times are not a problem. To put this in perspective, at a cost of about \$90 million a year under a public private partnership agreement, the project will change the commuting habits of 750 Canberrans by 2031. About 200,000 Canberrans travel to work each day.

This is the project which the government wants to squander hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars, on—to change the commuting habits of 750 people in a city of 385,000. It is no wonder that David Hughes gave that summary.

For months the government pointed to the full business case as being the concluding piece in an open-and-shut case. Well, once again, the government have overpromised and underdelivered. They talked down the price, and it came up higher than expected. They talked up the BCR, and it came in at half. They talked up patronage, and it is comparable to the buses. They talked up travel time, and it is slower than the Red Rapid.

I am sure that the government is going to compound the folly—or should I say fantasy—and go from the absurd to the ridiculous by flippantly announcing an ACT-wide light rail network in a desperate attempt to change the politics of this situation. However, to be honest, with this government there is no guessing as to whether they will do this or announce another unsubstantiated billion-dollar project which was decided flippantly by a few MLAs.

In the interests of all taxpayers and all Canberrans, the opposition will continue to do all that we can to oppose this project. The genesis of this project is a political deal done by Mr Rattenbury and Ms Gallagher. That is why we are seeing the biggest capital works project ever in the ACT with a business case which simply does not support it—a business case which is fraught with risk and unsubstantiated claims and shows that, at best, we are going to get our money back in a roundabout way. However, what is more likely, if you look at the transport benefits alone, is that we will spend a billion dollars and we will get \$400 million or \$500 million back. That does not even include the finance costs.

This is a real worry for the people of Canberra. It is a worry for the opposition, and we will continue to do all we can to oppose this project. I urge members to support the motion.

**MR CORBELL** (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (6.08): I move:

Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute: “notes that:

- (1) the full business case for Capital Metro was released on 31 October 2014, along with calls for expressions of interest to build and operate the light rail system;
- (2) the business case was produced using analysis performed by internationally renowned economic advisers EY, which delivered prudent and conservative economic analysis of the project;
- (3) the business case was developed using best practice, robust methodologies from technical, financial, community and social sectors;

- (4) release of the business case is an unusual step for governments to take, and shows the Government's commitment to making this an open and transparent project;
- (5) the business case analysis shows that Capital Metro stage 1 will produce nearly one billion dollars in benefits for the ACT's economy, a return of \$1.20 for every \$1 spent on the project. This includes:
  - (a) \$222 million in transport time savings;
  - (b) \$140 million in infrastructure efficiency savings;
  - (c) \$198 million in wider economic benefits;
  - (d) \$240 million in land use benefits;
  - (e) \$13 million in environmental and other benefits; and
  - (f) \$5 million in walking and cycling health benefits;
- (6) without Capital Metro, adopting a business as usual approach, in 2031 the car journey from Gungahlin to the city in peak times will be over 50 minutes. Travel time by light rail over the whole Capital Metro route will be around 25 minutes;
- (7) the light rail project will create 3,500 jobs in the construction phase alone, which is of particular significance to the ACT in light of the decline in the ACT economy on account of Commonwealth Government cuts; and
- (8) the Government is proceeding to the Expressions of Interest stage with release of RFP scheduled for the second quarter of 2015."

I will take a moment to dwell on the government's open and transparent approach to this very important project. We are committed to providing the public with a very high level of information. We greatly value the community's engagement in and understanding of this project, and the government understands that people want the facts and the figures. They want the information to be used by the government to make the relevant decisions, and we are pleased to be able to provide it. At the end of October this year the government demonstrated this level of openness by releasing the full business case for capital metro. This is the business case that went to the cabinet for its consideration. This is an unusual step for government to take, and I know many will watch with interest the response that has been taken.

Let me give you some context about how unusual it is to release a business case in this manner. The Queensland Liberal government did not release the Gold Coast light rail business case. The New South Wales Liberal government has only released a business case summary for the CBD and south east light rail projects. Of course, we all know that the Napthine Liberal government in Victoria has not yet released the business case for the east west link, although I note this major infrastructure project, worth over \$3.5 billion and being funded by the federal Liberal government, is reported to have a benefit-cost ratio of less than one.

This ACT government is not interested in hiding information on this project. We have a very strong focus on making sure that all information is made available to the public wherever it possibly can be. There has been a lot of discussion about the benefit-cost ratio—or BCR—for the capital metro project. Indeed a number of ratios have been developed for different purposes. I want to emphasise today that all of the government's economic analysis consistently confirms that light rail for Canberra delivers a positive economic return—that is, the benefits outweigh the costs. I note Mr Coe's grudging acknowledgement of that fact today.

The economic analysis of the light rail project first developed back in 2011 for the Infrastructure Australia submission on the city to Gungahlin transit corridor was developed without any specific or detailed engineering analysis beyond a very high level of assessment. Transport investment project BCRs can vary significantly, even for a single project, depending on the options, assumptions and impacts included. That is why it is very important to re-evaluate as the project progresses, to test and test again those assumptions.

Let me put the capital metro benefit-cost ratio of 1.2 in contrast against other light rail projects that have been funded and delivered by other state governments, notably state governments of a Liberal persuasion. The Dulwich Hill light rail line, a BCR of one: funded and delivered by the New South Wales state government. The north west rail link, a major heavy rail project being delivered in Sydney by the New South Wales Liberal government: a BCR of less than 1.2, but still being funded by that government because they recognise the significant benefits the project brings. We hear from those opposite all the time that anything less than two is not satisfactory. Well, just go and have a look at the other public transit rail projects being funded by other state governments with BCRs of less than the capital metro BCR of 1.2.

The Capital Metro Agency was formed to deliver stage 1 of this project. As with other major infrastructure projects, once an option is selected and fully designed, a more detailed business case can be developed. This is a significant investment for the government and checks and balances are included at each stage in the planning process. In undertaking this detailed economic analysis, the agency has been able to increase the accuracy and understanding of project costs, something that was not present with the initial submission to Infrastructure Australia.

This understanding includes providing a P75 and a P90 estimate. The cost estimate is based upon a detailed concept design produced by the Capital Metro Agency's technical advisers and through a risk quantification process. For example, the P75 estimate means that sufficient risk provisions have been included to provide a 70 per cent level of confidence in the cost estimate. Unlike the previous estimate, the latest analysis includes a contingency and cost escalation. The assertions from Mr Coe are just wrong. He asserts that the figure put to Infrastructure Australia was \$614 million and the new figure is \$783 million. But he fails to acknowledge that the \$614 million figure had no explicit contingency or escalation, whereas the new cost estimate does.

We are refining our analysis and approach, providing more and more information as the project proceeds. The agency has applied industry standards to the business case, ensuring a conservative approach to the benefits and being careful to accurately calculate the costs, including risk.

The opposition is also keen to assert, as Mr Coe does in his motion, that the cost of financing is not reflected in the business case. He is just wrong. Financing costs are embodied within the public-private partnership proxy figure, which is in table 45 on page 134 of the business case. To give Mr Coe some further guidance, the references to the PPP proxy contained in financing costs are also contained in sections 9.1.1, 9.1.4 and 9.3. I quote from the business case on page 132:

The PPP proxy model therefore incorporates the following key elements:

Capital and operational expenditures;

Bid cost and financing costs (including capitalised interest during construction, and debt interest during operations); and

Equity distributions.

Mr Coe is wrong to assert that financing costs are not included in the business case. I doubt, though, that we will get any apology from Mr Coe.

It is exceptionally unusual for governments to release details of the net present cost outcome of their PPP proxy model. Given PPP proxy models are not usually in the public domain, it is perhaps understandable that one might not appreciate that it includes a finance component, even though, as I have just demonstrated, it is explicitly stated in the business case. Let me be very clear: the PPP proxy provides the present value of payments and it includes the cost of finance.

The government has released a great deal of information: capital delivery estimates, operating cost estimates and the net present costs of availability payments. The government does not intend, as I have stated previously, to make available any financing assumptions or possible availability payments on an annual basis during the procurement process. Such information is highly confidential. We do not wish to pre-condition the market or compromise the capacity through a competitive process for taxpayers to get value for money.

Mr Coe expresses concern that the government will pay for the relocation of utilities and roadworks. Of course there is a cost for the relocation of pipes and wires, just as there is a cost for tracks, depot and light rail vehicles. Relocating and protecting utility services is part of any major construction project, and allowance for this has been made in the project's cost estimate. In addition, a great deal of work is presently underway to understand and articulate the risks associated with utilities and where risks associated with those utilities best lie. Some risks will be transferred to the private sector; some will be borne by the territory. The apportionment of those risks will guide the timing and form of payments to be made by the territory.

I also add that a great deal of work is also underway to reduce utility risk. Local supplier south Canberra firm Leach Steager has been on the alignment for the last few months surveying the route to determine the location of utilities. The topographic, geotechnical and contamination works are carried out predominantly by Canberra- and Queanbeyan-based companies. Therefore it is worth emphasising local firms are already benefiting from our investment in this project.

It needs to be restated that the economy as a whole benefits through the creation of over 3,500 jobs during the construction stage of this project. This is a very large capital works project—larger than the Cotter Dam, larger than the ASIO building, larger than the Majura parkway project. Can anyone seriously doubt that these jobs will not be beneficial to Canberra at a time when we are suffering a significant economic slowdown?

Mr Coe's initial motion has asked the Assembly to note that the cost of parking after light rail is operational is not disclosed. But this, again, is wrong. The full business case did not require or ask the government to make a decision regarding the cost of parking after light rail's operation and nor has the government made any decisions regarding the cost of parking after light rail is operational.

Future decisions regarding parking charges will no doubt be shaped by a range of factors, from community needs to supply of parking spaces, demand in different locations and parking costs at non-government-operated sites. These are all normal issues to be taken into account.

Mr Coe calls this motion an opportunity to discuss the economic analysis of individuals who have been featured in the press. While I will not respond directly to every ad hoc calculation that has been done without the consideration of detailed technical advice on design, risk consideration or application of industry guidelines, it is evident that those who criticise this project do not recognise the land and productivity benefits associated with transport infrastructure investment.

Indeed, to suggest as Mr Hughes does that land use and productivity benefits should not be taken account of in the benefit-cost ratio ignores the different approaches that are taken commonly around the world on this question. As far back as 2001 the federal government's then road infrastructure agency, Austroads, stated:

There is no question that transport influences land use development and that the effects of each on the other need to be considered in an evaluation.

This nonsense—and it is nonsense—we hear from Mr Hughes and Mr Coe that we should not take account of land use benefits simply flies in the face of an accepted position that even a federal government as far back as 2001 acknowledged as needing to be taken into account.

In January this year the UK department of transport provided guidelines that clearly advise that if only direct user impacts were considered, significant economic impacts would be missing from the economic appraisal. The guidelines acknowledge that

indirect impacts can be large and are therefore an important part of the overall appraisal of a transport scheme. Further, research by Curtin University has found that increases in land value around rail infrastructure can provide real financial returns to government in excess of 60 per cent of the project capital cost over a 30-year period.

The federal government has released its own new infrastructure projects assessment criteria to acknowledge the broader economic benefits such as improved productivity. The current federal minister, Mr Briggs, has said the guidelines will lead to more holistic approaches to assessing development that would better reflect community expectations and achieve value for money. So to suggest we should only look at the direct transport benefits and not the broader benefits flies in the face of research done by Curtin University, adopted by the UK department of transport, adopted by Austroads as far back as 2001 and now reflected in the new guidelines released by the federal Liberal government in relation to their infrastructure assessment process.

I do not accept and we cannot accept the silliness from the Liberals on this matter. This is an important project for Canberra, one that delivers long-term economic benefits, one that gives us the opportunity to shape our city in a more sustainable and efficient manner and which gives people real transport choices as well as delivering significant economic benefits across the ACT. (*Time expired.*)

**MR RATTENBURY** (Molonglo) (6.23): I am pleased that Mr Coe has brought the issue of light rail to the Assembly once again, because it gives us a chance to talk about what is going to be a fantastic initiative for our city—an investment that looks far into the future, a welcome public transport project, a catalyst for quality redevelopment, a smart response to threats such as peak oil, climate change and urban sprawl, and an initiative that has the strong support of the majority of members of this Assembly.

It is in the parliamentary agreement, and I am proud to say that it is an initiative that the Greens have championed over many years in the city. I am very pleased to partner with the Labor Party to bring this long-term project to fruition after it has been discussed in Canberra for many years. For a long time people in the city have talked about the benefits of bringing light rail to Canberra, and this partnership between the Greens and the Labor Party is finally bringing this long talked about project to fruition.

It is no surprise that it is not attractive to the Canberra Liberals. They remain uninterested in long-term projects for the future and are focused on a slogan and a campaign message that they think will win them the 2016 ACT election. We know that issues such as peak oil, climate change, urban sprawl and improved public transport are clearly not on their agenda at all. These are issues that some future policymaker and some future government here in the ACT are going to have to deal with, because if the Canberra Liberals have their way this generation will not deal with them.

Of course, the Labor Party and the Greens do support light rail; therefore the Liberal Party must oppose it by default. It is kind of like the high school debating team that always has the negative case. I noted, for example, Mr Coe's recent response to the

announcement that light rail will accommodate bicycles so that people can use multiple sustainable modes on their trip, and so the catchment for light rail is wider. Mr Coe responded negatively to this idea. I cannot believe the Liberal Party's opposition to light rail is so blinkered that they cannot even acknowledge when positive elements of the project are coming forward—one that has clearly proven to be popular with potential users of the service.

I will address briefly some of the specific issues in Mr Coe's motion today. Firstly, I refer to the issue of the benefit-cost ratio, which I note Minister Corbell spoke about as well. The BCR for the project is assessed by the business case as 1.2. Mr Coe refers to that as "just 1.2", as though this implies that this is a terrible result or somehow that it is too low. Opponents have even taken to calling this BCR marginal. We have heard Minister Corbell make a number of comparisons today regarding that BCR, and putting it in perspective. I had certainly intended to make some similar observations, because it clearly is a positive result. In the interests of time I will keep my remarks in this area short, but it is worth looking at what some other jurisdictions are doing, including in Liberal state government jurisdictions around the country.

The Melbourne Metro project, for example, is high on Infrastructure Australia's project list and, initially supported by the Victorian Liberal government, also had a BCR of 1.2. In 2012-13 the Liberal government in Victoria sanctioned \$50 million for the planning and development of the Metro rail project. Then this year Denis Naphine decided to axe the project and replace it with a different project, the Melbourne rail link. And what is the BCR for that project? Well, we actually do not even know, because Mr Naphine has not released a business case for that project.

This contrasts to the approach here in the ACT where the government has been willing to show the highest level of transparency, which is certainly something very important to the Greens, and we are happy for scrutiny of this project. Therefore the government has released the full business case. Governments in other jurisdictions have gone so far as battling in court to prevent the release of those documents.

Another interesting benefit-cost ratio is that of the Brisbane cross-river rail project, with a BCR of 1.34. Even the Pacific Highway corridor upgrades, supported by the New South Wales and federal governments, have a BCR of around 1.5. So this leads to an interesting question that Mr Coe might like to answer in his closing remarks: when is the BCR suddenly unsatisfactory? If it is at 1.5—which is still not two—then the Pacific Highway upgrades are no good. If it is 1.3 then Brisbane's cross-river rail project is considered to be a flop. And if it is 1.2 then Melbourne Metro is a failure. So where is the cut-off for what is considered an acceptable BCR?

The second observation I would make is that we do not want to put too much emphasis on the BCR either. It is only one number in what should be a much broader assessment of projects. If we are to make a list of projects ranked in order by their BCR number, and then only build them in order, we would most likely have a terrible outcome for the city. Particularly with public transport, special emphasis needs to be put on multicriteria analysis. It is well documented that a BCR analysis alone, when applied to public transport projects, does not give the full picture. It is a limited means of assessing public transport. As I have said, 1.2 is a positive result, and particularly so for a public transport project, but it does need to be read in context.

I see that for the foundation of this motion Mr Coe has used the criticisms of the business case made by Mr David Hughes, a local resident who at one time worked for the ACT Treasury. No disrespect to Mr Hughes, but the government has used experienced and highly respected professionals, as well as best practice and robust methodologies, to undertake its business case analysis. I have read Mr Hughes's criticisms, and to me it seems that in a general sense he does not like the way that cost-benefit methodologies are applied to public transport projects.

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

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## **Housing—public**

**MR CORBELL** (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (6.31): Last Thursday I had the pleasure of attending the high density housing project's wood workshop at the Currong apartments on Ainslie Avenue. At this event I facilitated the donation of woodwork and garden furniture to Ainslie school's principal, Kate Chapman. The beautifully crafted woodwork and furniture has been restored and constructed by participants in the wood workshop, and it will be raffled at the school's end-of-year concert.

The funds raised will go towards the Ainslie school equity fund that allows disadvantaged kids, including Ainslie Avenue kids, to participate in school excursions, camps, music programs and after-school care. I met a number of the men and women who participate in the wood workshop. They explained to me that this weekly wood workshop provides them with a safe environment to learn woodwork skills, build positive relationships with their neighbours and find out how to access services.

The wood workshop is a very inclusive program with people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds participating. In fact, the group were quick to tell me that even though the workshop had initially been set up as a men's work shed, the large number of female residents joining in the workshop since its inception meant it had to promptly change its name to the "wood workshop". The workshop was delivered as part of the government's high density housing safety and security project. This project is a multi-agency initiative aimed at targeting improved safety and security and building a sense of community at seven public housing sites along Ainslie Avenue. It was initiated in 2008 by the Labor government to support our property crime reduction strategy and continues to be an important component of the current strategy.

Research informing the strategy indicates that victimisation concentrates in certain areas, and public housing estates have increasingly become sites of economic and social disadvantage, physical deterioration and crime. The project has made significant inroads to addressing safety and security issues through community-building programs that involve Ainslie Avenue residents.

The donation of woodwork and garden furniture built by men and women who are doing it tough to help kids at Ainslie primary was a great example of the growing sense of community in the Ainslie Avenue public housing area. The event last Thursday also included a handful of Ainslie Primary School kids. Together we were able to view the wood workshop and appreciate the various awards, one by Reclink Australia, the on-the-ground service providers of the high density housing program. We were also able to appreciate the photographs displaying the many programs run by Reclink since 2008. These included before and after photos of the community gardens, now operating from Kanangra and Jerilderie courts public housing complexes.

I particularly commend the hard work of Mr Mark Ransome, the on-the-ground manager, for the close rapport he has built with Ainslie Avenue residents, which was so clearly on display at this event. The sense of community that has been built by the activities facilitated through this program has meant the people doing it tough in public housing were able to build great woodwork that, in turn, has helped support kids at the local school.

Through the delivery of various programs and activities, the project continues to have significant success in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour in and around the Ainslie Avenue public housing area. As part of the projects, residents have built a number of highly productive vegetable gardens in common living areas at Kanangra and Jerilderie courts. The development of these garden beds has not only promoted healthy eating and exercise but is also allowing residents to reclaim public spaces and turn them into safer residences that they have ownership over and which they can enjoy.

Highly visible and positive programs like this have improved residents' perceptions of crime and violence and how prevalent it actually is in their neighbourhood. It has helped them feel more comfortable within their neighbourhood, and it has helped reduce crime in their neighbourhood. The high density housing project is a great example of government and the community sector working together to make a difference to the health, wellbeing, safety and security of all the public housing residents who live along Ainslie Avenue.

### **Ms Samantha Jayne Steele**

**MR HANSON** (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (6.35): I rise tonight to pay tribute to a remarkable young Canberran who sadly is no longer with us—Samantha Jayne Steele. Although I did not personally meet Samantha, I know people who did and I know her story. I know her tragic loss was overshadowed by the vibrant joy she brought so many people, how highly they thought of her and how much she meant to all who knew and worked with her. When I heard her story, I asked if it would be possible to offer our condolences and pay tribute to the life of Samantha here in the Assembly. With the permission of Samantha's parents, who are with us here tonight along with her brother, Greg, her grandmother and many friends, family and work colleagues—I acknowledge you all here tonight and thank you for coming in—I would like to take a few moments to pay our respects. I also acknowledge all her friends who are not here tonight but who may have the opportunity to read this speech in the future.

Samantha was born in January 1988, the daughter of Andrew and Anne, a granddaughter to Elaine, William and Dorothy and later a big sister to Greg. At six weeks of age Sam was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. Naturally, the entire family was devastated. But to borrow from family friend Don, Andrew and Anne soon realised that they had the opportunity to give Samantha the best life she could have.

Samantha started life in Higgins before the family then moved to Conder. Sam attended kindergarten at Gordon Primary School and then the newly built Conder Primary School. It has been said that Samantha and education went hand in hand—she loved to learn and excelled in all areas.

In 2000 the family travelled to Disneyland. It was a trip that sparked her taste for travel, a passion she followed her entire life. In her gap year she took a three-month journey to over 30 countries, including stays in London and Paris. In 2013 she travelled to Canada, Alaska and Hawaii. That is an impressive list of destinations. What is even more impressive is that she was doing all this when she had only 20 per cent lung capacity.

While studying for her Bachelor of Medical Science at the ANU she attended a guest lecture that inspired her and showed her the professional path she would pursue. One morning a guest lecturer from the Canberra Hospital was invited to speak to students about life as a genetic counsellor. Sam was so determined to pursue this profession she volunteered at the hospital and undertook her postgraduate studies in this complex, challenging but very rewarding field.

In 2014 she achieved another dream: to work at the world-leading Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute in Melbourne. After this, she returned to Canberra and took up a position in her home town, sharing her experience and professionalism, helping those facing life's most difficult challenges, even as she faced the most difficult challenges herself. Despite this, her colleagues at work described her like this:

... a dynamic, caring woman. She had a remarkable moral and ethical base to her work, always the patient advocate and compassionate.

Sam displayed empathy beyond her years. Sam was also a great mate. She was going to be an exceptional genetic counsellor.

Sam was an exceptional colleague. Just listening to her answer the phone would make your day better.

That is what I am told Sam did—she made people's days better.

Sadly, earlier this year Sam's amazingly valiant spirit started to succumb to the difficulties of her disease. I understand this did not stop her—not her spirit, not her dreams, not her positivity. She was transferred to St Vincent's Hospital Sydney where the family waited for a donor transplant. Sadly, despite best efforts, those donor organs did not arrive in time and Samantha Steele passed away.

Her passing was marked by a huge outpouring of grief and a service that included people from all areas and people that Samantha had touched—I think many more than she could have ever realised. That is why I am speaking tonight—to pay my respects for this remarkable life and to let the friends and family know that she is known and respected in a much wider circle than she thought. And when a life is spent the way Sam lived hers—when you spend your life so dedicated to others—then that life spreads out like ripples from your immediate friends and family right throughout our community.

My colleague Vicki Dunne, the Speaker of the Assembly, has asked me to also pay her respects. Vicki has two children herself who have CF and has used the services of the unit where Sam worked. I know she is also deeply moved.

At Sam's funeral a family friend, Don, read a poem called *Newsmaker*, noting that Sam's passing may not be seen as front-page news when so many other things are. I want to tell her friends and family and colleagues that she is a newsmaker to us. When you face such deep adversity with such outstanding courage, that is newsworthy to us.

I know it is a concern of parents and friends who lose someone so bright and young that the person will be forgotten soon. I hope the words we say here tonight may help redress that. Tonight will be part of the record of our parliament through *Hansard* forever, and Sam will now forever be part of that record.

On behalf of my colleagues and I and this whole Assembly, I offer my deepest respect and condolences to the family and friends of Samantha Steele. May she rest in peace.

### **Ms Samantha Jayne Steele**

**MS GALLAGHER** (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (6.41): I rise to add some comments on behalf of the government to the heartfelt speech just made by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the passing of Sam Steele. I also extend my own condolences and the condolences of the government to Andrew and Anne Steele, her family, her friends and all of those who join us here tonight. I thank Jeremy, who has just given such a lovely speech and has also provided me with the opportunity to follow with some words tonight. I thank and acknowledge her colleagues, who have helped provide me with some words to speak tonight, to put in the *Hansard*, in the historical record of this Assembly.

Sam worked as a genetic counsellor at Canberra Hospital and also at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre as a locum prior to starting at Canberra Hospital. Her role as a counsellor was to help patients across pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, paediatrics, oncology, neurology and cardiology where a question had arisen about a genetic condition in an individual or family—conditions including cystic fibrosis, which she herself had as a condition.

Her colleagues advise me that her drive and determination were an inspiration. She was passionate about genetic counselling and worked her way up from administrative officer in the genetics department at Canberra Hospital to become an extremely valued and respected genetic counsellor. She was caring and diligent and always demonstrated wisdom and empathy well beyond her 26 years.

She was spoken of by her work unit as an inspirational woman who was remarkably organised, intelligent, clear-thinking and focused. Her approach to her life and her work will remain an inspiration to her colleagues and to those touched by her diligence and empathetic nature. She was considered the central pivot in the genetics team and was very well respected by all of her colleagues for this.

Sadly, Sam passed away while waiting for a lung transplant. We all know the importance of organ and tissue donation. Here in the Assembly, we discuss it from time to time. At any one given time there are about 1,500 people on the Australian organ transplant waiting list. In the first nine months of 2014, 290 Australian organ donors transformed the lives of 851 transplant recipients. This opportunity tonight to think of the work and the dedication of Sam Steele also provides us with the opportunity to remind people about how organ and tissue donation can transform the lives of others.

I never personally had the opportunity to meet Sam, but I know she is greatly missed in her workplace, in particular, for her passion, the skills she brought to work and the positive impact she made on so many lives—all of this despite her young age and the condition she lived with throughout her life.

Sam made a difference. She helped people. She loved people and was loved in return. Too often we hear stories of wonderful people, wonderful Canberrans, whose lives are cut short through illness or injury for which there is really nothing we can say that can ease the pain and the loss for those people left behind. But Sam Steele will be remembered. She was a valued colleague, and I know that, in time and if appropriate, there will be ways to formally remember her not just in the *Hansard* but as a valued member of ACT Health.

### **Women—prostitution and human trafficking**

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (6.45): Yesterday I spoke about part of the journey that Mrs Jones and I made earlier this year, and I will continue that narrative today.

On 22 April, in that week beginning at that time, the group met with Kajsa Wahlberg, the national rapporteur on human trafficking. Superintendent Wahlberg is Sweden's foremost and most authoritative expert on the implementation of Sweden's prostitution laws, as she has held the same position since 1999. She asserted to us that the laws had been effective in curbing but not stopping prostitution. She strongly rejected the notion that the 1999 laws had driven prostitution "underground" because prostitution relies on customers being able to find prostitutes, and if customers can find them, the police can also find the purchasers.

We also met with Anna Skarhed, the Chancellor of Justice, who described her job as something like an uber ombudsman. Chancellor Skarhed, over the period 2008 to 2010, investigated Sweden's purchase of sex laws. Her review found that there was strong public support, consistently 70 per cent, compared to 30 per cent when the laws were passed. There was no evidence of a more rapid increase in internet prostitution in Sweden than in similar countries like Norway and Denmark. There was a huge "normative effect" caused by the law. While the law had not eliminated sex trafficking, there was a strong law that functioned as a protection from major trafficking. There was no evidence of any increased violence against women. The review recommended a permanent, long-term government strategy and consistent investment to continue to achieve these results.

We also met with Patrik Cederlof, the national coordinator against prostitution and trafficking; Hans Lundborg, the ambassador-at-large for Sweden on human trafficking; and Petra Ostergren, an author and PhD candidate who is currently researching why Sweden is opposed to commercial sex. She is an outspoken critic of the law and believes that Sweden is a "progressive utopia" and these laws are discordant with Swedish ways. One of the arresting comments made by Ms Ostergren was that "men did not want to have sex with trafficked women". When pressed on this statement, she said that she "hoped" that this was the case.

We also met with representatives of Swedish women's organisations and social workers, and we visited the Skogsbo Centre, clearly the most beautiful women's shelter that you have ever seen.

Sweden's prohibition on sex purchasing came into force in 1999 after the passage of the violence against women act. It was a cobbled-together coalition at the time, but since then support has grown and every party in the Swedish parliament now supports the law. Every official encountered admitted that trafficking had not been considered when the legislation came into effect, and in fact Sweden did not have anti-trafficking laws until 2002. However, it soon became clear that trafficking is less of a problem in Sweden than in other countries in Europe, and that is why France has adopted this model.

In London in early May, I had the opportunity to meet with Mary Honeyball, a Labour MEP, who had just steered a resolution through the European parliament proposing that the whole of Europe adopt the Swedish model for reform of prostitution. Our discussions centred on the passage of the resolution, and the views of supporters and opponents, and we had a general discussion on the disposition of parties and individuals in Australia on the adoption of the Swedish model. Ms Honeyball was disappointed to hear that the so-called progressive parties in Australia were largely supportive of prostitution.

I also met with Gavin Shaker MP, the Labour Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade, which recently published a report called *Shifting the burden*. The report highlighted that England's prostitution laws were fragmented, uncoordinated and patchily implemented. They also recommended the adoption of the Swedish model and better coordination.

One of the things that was quite startling was that, contrary to the hope expressed by Ms Ostergren in Stockholm, research undertaken by the all-party group indicated that British purchasers of sex did not care about or bother to discover whether women were trafficked or coerced. This view has been supported by recent material that Mrs Jones spoke about today as well.

The clear message from what we saw in Sweden, England and France is that all countries need a coordinated approach to tackling the problems of violence against women through trafficking and prostitution. Australia as a federation has a clear problem in that the commonwealth is responsible for trafficking and the states and territories are responsible for prostitution. This division of responsibilities could militate against a coordinated approach, especially when it comes to trafficking and dealing with the fundamental issues of violence against women.

I commend the more fulsome report that Mrs Jones and I have prepared on this matter, which is on the Assembly website. I hope that it will be useful reading for others.

### **Macgregor Primary School—40th anniversary**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra) (6.50): On Saturday, 22 November Macgregor Primary School hosted its first fete in eight years to celebrate the school's 40th anniversary, with an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 people joining in the day's activities and supporting their local school. It was a great afternoon of fun for the whole community. There were market stalls galore, a white elephant stall, book stall, food stalls, pony rides, live entertainment from all the students, a monster raffle and many more stalls and entertainment than I could mention in the five minutes that I have tonight.

Macgregor Primary School is a school of considerable baking prowess and there was, of course, the all-important cake stall. This happens to be my favourite stall because baking cakes is not a strength of mine and I was happy to volunteer to sell the super-tasty treats, as well as purchase a few for myself.

It was a wonderful event and I want to make sure that those people who worked so hard to make the day such a success are acknowledged. The whole school community worked together to support the fete, including the preschool; Lana Read, the school principal; the deputy principal, Chris Shaddock; all of the teachers and supporting staff; the out of school hours care team; the students and their parents; the P&C; the school canteen; as well as many people from the broader community of Canberra who donated items and their time leading up to the event and on the stalls on the day.

There were many volunteers. More than 60 people helped out on the day as well as an amazing and dedicated core group on the organising committee that I would like to acknowledge: Belinda Clear, Lauren Cornish, Rebecca Moroney, Beck Adams, Alexandra Hunter, Erin Swinsburg, Lyndal Keen, Alison Elliott and Tenai Luttrell. One of the committee members, Beck Adams, said to me that this event was more than a fete; it was a community establishing itself as a strong, dynamic and diverse neighbourhood that can achieve anything when it works together, and I could not agree more with this statement.

It is also important to acknowledge that the committee was made up entirely of mums, all of whom have paid jobs, with the majority working full time. The committee worked very hard, often out of hours, late at night, and some even took annual leave from their jobs to organise and run the fete. I want to thank each and every one for working so hard to deliver such a fun and successful community gathering for both adults and children alike. I know how much work, time and energy each person must have put in to make this day happen, and that is on top of their normal lives of juggling home and work responsibilities.

I want to thank everybody that came down to say hello and support this local west Belconnen public school. Special thanks, of course, go to the Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, who came down to show her support.

**Ms Gallagher:** I got the best banana cake.

**MS BERRY:** Indeed. I am grateful that we have such a dedicated group of parents, carers and school community that are committed to supporting their school. Congratulations to everyone involved. You should feel proud of your efforts that led to such a successful and fun day.

### **St Vincent's Primary School**

**MR COE** (Ginninderra) (6.53): I rise this evening to talk about St Vincent's Primary School. The school is a Catholic co-educational primary school located in Aranda. It was formed in 1970 and currently has 189 students enrolled. Although it is a small school, it has a lot of spirit. This was certainly on display at the fete.

The fete is held every two years and is a major fundraiser for the school. However, St Vincent's principal, Marg Koenen, told me it is about much more than raising money; rather, it is about creating community spirit and showing what a wonderful group of families attend St Vincent's. In particular, she was most pleased by the multicultural aspect of the school that was on display at the fete, with a barbeque run by the Korean community from the local parish, a yiros stand run by some of the Greek parents and, for entertainment, a group of students, who were trained by one of the Indian parents at the school, performed a traditional Bollywood dance.

Planning for this year's fete commenced 10 months ago and was coordinated by parents Justine Moloney and Sonia Bowditch, both former St Vincent's students. Justine and Sonia say they have many fond memories of fetes from their youth at St Vincent's and it was these memories that got them thinking about putting their efforts into fete day.

One way the St Vincent's fete committee put the fun back into the fete was through initiatives such as "Rock on, Santa!"—a rock painting competition where students painted a Christmas scene on a common garden rock. So seriously did the fete committee take this competition that they secured the services of Dr Sarah Engledow, curator and historian at the National Portrait Gallery, to judge the competition. In her capacity as judge, Sarah announced she was looking for works that showed originality, creativity and, above all, a sense of joy.

It was this sense of joy that also saw a group of St Vincent's mothers attending a series of craft nights throughout the year, where they worked together to produce some delightful items for the fete, such as kewpie dolls and fabric birds that hung from tree branches on the day.

Aside from the fete coordinators' role, many other St Vincent's parents went above and beyond the call of duty to make fete day a success. Chris Daly, for instance, a civil engineer, was happy to put his hand up as the chief logistics person, ensuring the event's infrastructure was well handled. He even camped overnight at the school to keep an eye on the stalls set up the night before.

Similarly committed parents were Erin Brown and Leanne Dann, gardeners extraordinaire, who nurtured and fed a bevy of plants throughout one of Canberra's coldest winters so that they could be displayed, admired and sold on fete day. Thanks must also go to all the parents and staff who committed their time to ensuring the success of the event. They all did a great job.

The St Vincent's school fete is supported not only by the whole school community but by the St Vincent's parish and local businesses. I would like to thank the long list of supporters and sponsors who helped to make the fete so enjoyable. The school estimates that around 1,000 people attended the fete, despite the wet and windy conditions, and over \$18,000 was raised, which the school will use on literacy resources and outdoor equipment.

For St Vincent's, the fete was also a chance to show off its new classrooms, which were recently refurbished through the capital grants program. One of the new classrooms was used as the cafe on the day. Other activities on offer at the fete included a lob-a-choc trailer, where kids threw coins for chocolate, a dunk-the-teacher booth, where the kids coughed up lots of coins to see their favourite teacher drenched, and a Christmas craft stall.

I would like to acknowledge the staff of St Vincent's Primary School, including Marg Koenen, Lisa Harris, Natalie Currie, Sonia Mattiske, Emma Russell, Courtney Crivici, Christine Johnson, Hamish Meagher, Lisa Harris, Lynne Hellyer, Anna Zaja, Darren Roberts, Charlotte Fitzpatrick, Sue Abbott, Anna Marzano, Rita Evans, Donna-Lea Collins, Jenny Grierson, Nicole Watson and Jacinta Putt.

I would also like to acknowledge the school council members for this year. They are Patrick Willix, Richard Milczarek, Fiona van der Plaat, Sonya Bowditch, Genny Newton, Chris Daly, Tina Majstorovic, Alister Pardew, Rachel Stannard, Helen Walker, Father Michael Mullen, Jacinta Putt and staff representatives Marg Koenen and Lisa Harris.

I thoroughly enjoyed the fete and I encourage all members to attend the St Vincent's fete when it is next on. For more information on the school, I encourage all members to visit the website at [www.svdp.act.edu.au](http://www.svdp.act.edu.au).

## Roads—cycle lanes

**MR RATTENBURY** (Molonglo) (6.58): I rise to update the Assembly on the progress of an important trial that is occurring in Queensland whereby drivers of motor vehicles are required to leave at least one metre when passing a cyclist. The policy is often referred to as the “metre matters” policy.

This is especially relevant to our Assembly because, as members will recall, following the Assembly committee report on vulnerable road users, the government agreed to trial a minimum passing distance rule in the ACT. This will require vehicles to leave a minimum overtaking distance of one metre in speed zones of 60 kilometres an hour and below, and a minimum 1.5 metre passing distance in speed zones above 60 kilometres an hour.

The anecdotal evidence on the progress of the trial in Queensland has been very good. A letter forwarded to me from the Hervey Bay cycling club has some interesting facts and observations. This is a particularly interesting club in that it is made up of an equal number of females and males, which is not always the case in a cycling club, and because the majority of its members are older riders who are over 60 years old.

The club say that since the trial began they have noticed far more courtesy shown towards their riders and reduced road rage and abuse directed towards them. They say that “motorists are generally giving us far more room when overtaking”, “more motorists are waiting until it is safe to pass where there is limited room”, and “there seems to be a general feeling among our members of increased safety when we are on the road”. They concluded by saying, “Generally speaking, the new trial rules have had a very positive effect in our region for cyclists.”

As another example, in November this year a group of 30 cyclists, including 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Rochelle Gilmore, are riding from Brisbane to Airlie Beach, raising awareness of cycling safety. Rochelle Gilmore said that this year’s event marks the first time riders have toured Queensland under new minimum overtaking distance legislation and that it was “quite overwhelming to see the change” in driver behaviour. She said:

I can’t believe how much respect we’re getting ... It’s an obvious indication people are getting the message ... There’s a significant difference in the feeling of motorists towards cyclists.

Very recently the anecdotal evidence has been backed up with more formal statistics. The Amy Gillett Foundation commissioned independent market research to identify and track the awareness and effectiveness of the Queensland government’s minimum overtaking distance legislative trial. The key market research findings were very positive and included results such as 75 per cent of frequent drivers being aware of the minimum overtaking distance legislative trial and 70 per cent of all road users being aware of the trial, 67 per cent of road users agreeing with the legislation, 67 per cent of all road users believing that the “Stay Wider of the Rider” awareness campaign—

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Lawder): The time for the debate has expired.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 7.01 pm.**