



Debates

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Wednesday, 25 March 2015

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Wednesday, 25 March 2015

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.

**Senator for the Australian Capital Territory—casual vacancy
Paper**

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (10.01): In accordance with the provisions of section 44 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, I advise the Assembly that I have received a notification from the President of the Senate that the place of the Hon Kate Lundy, a senator for the Australian Capital Territory, has become vacant before the expiration of her term of service. I present the following paper:

Notification of a vacancy in the Senate—Letter from the President of the Senate to the Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory, dated 24 March 2015.

I move:

That consideration of the choice of a person to hold the vacant place of a senator for the Australian Capital Territory shall proceed forthwith.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Paper

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (10.01): I propose that Katy Gallagher be chosen to fill the casual vacancy for a senator for the Australian Capital Territory. I present the following paper:

Casual vacancy in the Senate—Statutory declaration made by Katherine Ruth Gallagher, dated 24 March 2015—Stating that she is eligible to be chosen as a senator and that she is a member of the same party of the senator whose place has become vacant as required by section 44(3) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918.

I move:

That Katy Gallagher, a person who is eligible to be a senator and is of the same party of the Hon Kate Lundy whose place has become vacant, be chosen to fill the casual vacancy for senator for the Australian Capital Territory until the expiration of the term of the outgoing senator.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Centenary of Anzac

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.02): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that 25 April 2015 marks the centenary of Anzac;
- (b) the significance of Canberra as the National Capital and home of the Australian War Memorial in commemorating the centenary of Anzac;
- (c) the service and sacrifice made by the men and women of the Australian Defence Force over the past 100 years;
- (d) the ongoing contribution of ADF members to peacekeeping missions and conflicts around the globe;
- (e) the significant number of Canberrans who are currently serving or have served in our Defence Force;
- (f) the sacrifices made by Defence families; and
- (g) the important role played by Ex Service Organisations in supporting veterans and their families in Canberra and their contribution to our community; and

(2) commemorates the sacrifice of those Australians who have lost their lives or been wounded in war and express its support for the defence community in Canberra comprising ADF members, defence families, veterans and Ex Service Organisations.

Members, in one month's time we will all pause at about this time to remember the Anzacs and reflect on their legacy after 100 years. As there is no sitting day prior to that special moment, it is appropriate that we take the opportunity today in the Assembly to pay our respects and commemorate that occasion.

The Anzac centenary is a milestone of special significance to all Australians. Gallipoli in many ways has helped define us as a people and as a nation. We should not just remember the original Anzacs who served at Gallipoli but also those who served on the Western Front, and commemorate more than a century of service by Australian service men and women.

The story of the Anzacs is a remarkable one, and it has been told many times—how, on the morning of 25 April 1915, Australian and New Zealand troops amongst others made a landing on a hostile shore along the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey. Some saw it as Australia's "baptism of fire" and "the birth of nationhood".

Australians saw many positive characteristics displayed by their troops that they would continue to identify with in later wars and conflicts and in other crises and hardships faced by the nation. These characteristics, like courage, duty and mateship, have in many ways become defining national characteristics.

The troops, mostly from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, the Anzacs, landed at night on the western side of the peninsula. They were put ashore about 1½ kilometres north of their intended landing beach. In darkness, the assault formations became mixed up, but the troops gradually made their way inland under increasing opposition from the Ottoman Turkish defenders.

Not long after coming ashore, the Anzac plans were discarded, and the companies and battalions were thrown into battle piecemeal and received mixed orders. Some advanced to their pre-designated objectives while others were diverted to other areas and then ordered to dig in along defensive ridge lines. Although they failed to achieve their objectives, by nightfall the Anzacs had formed a beachhead, albeit much smaller than intended.

The exact number of the day's casualties is not known. The Anzacs had landed two divisions, but over 2,000 of their men had been killed or wounded, together with at least a similar number of Turkish casualties. The number of casualties continued to escalate until some months later when the Anzacs withdrew under the cover of darkness in what was quite a remarkable withdrawal operation.

Many of those who served at Gallipoli then went on to serve on the Western Front, in one of the most bloody and despairing series of battles experienced by mankind. Tens of thousands were slaughtered on an industrial scale, but amidst the carnage were countless stories of extraordinary individual courage, of mateship and of compassion.

Many of our ancestors—including those of many in this place, I am sure—served either at Gallipoli or on the Western Front, and it is true that at the time almost no Australian or New Zealand family was left untouched by that war. Indeed my grandfather never fully recovered, and died as a young man after his experience on the Western Front, and my wife's great uncle, a Kiwi, lies in a grave in France. In total, 61,516 casualties of the First World War are remembered on the honour wall at the Australian War Memorial.

Canberra had a particular role to play in this important period in our history. The Royal Military College, Duntroon, was opened on 27 June 1911 by the then Governor-General, Lord Dudley. It was situated on the Campbell family homestead in Canberra, which had been named Duntroon after Duntroon Castle, the Campbells' ancestral home in Argyll, Scotland.

General Bridges, who established the college, was the commander of the 1st Australian Division, which landed at Gallipoli, and he was killed by a sniper some days after the landings. He was notable for always being at the front with his troops. His grave is on Mount Pleasant, overlooking Duntroon, the college that he helped establish, and that has produced officers who have led troops in every conflict since.

Our city and the surrounding area provided young men, many of whom never made it home, just as every township, hamlet and city in Australia did.

Canberra is also home to the Australian War Memorial. As the national capital, we will be taking a leading role in commemorating Anzac Day on 25 April. The War Memorial's mission is to assist Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society. I think we would all agree that it does so exceptionally well.

I take this opportunity to particularly commend Brendan Nelson and the council, who I think are doing a magnificent job, and certainly have done an amazing job when it comes to the new World War I galleries. I would urge members and everybody in the community who have not at this stage gone to those new galleries to take the opportunity to do so.

In the 100 years since 1915, over 100,000 Australians have lost their lives in war or have been wounded. The First World War was cited as the "war to end all wars", but, as we know, tragically this has not been the case. The casualties include 39,648 who were lost in the Second World War, 340 in the Korean War, 521 in Vietnam, two in Iraq, four in East Timor, one in the Solomons, and 41 in the recent conflict in Afghanistan.

Others have been lost in peacekeeping missions and other conflict zones throughout the world. I take this opportunity to remember Captain Peter McCarthy, a former instructor at Duntroon whose widow Sue and daughter Sarah live in Canberra.

On Saturday the Chief Minister and I were at the welcome-home parade from Operation Slipper—Australia's commitment to Afghanistan. I commend the three speakers there, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition federally, Mr Bill Shorten, and the Chief Minister, Mr Barr, for their speeches. As Brendan Nelson, the director of the War Memorial, read the names and ages of the 41 fallen, nobody could have been left untouched by the tragic loss of life and the knowledge of the trauma experienced by so many families.

One of those names, that of 23-year-old Private Robert Poate, from the 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, was particularly poignant. Robbie was born in Canberra in 1988. He attended Canberra Grammar School and enlisted in the Army in 2009. He was fondly remembered by what he called his "brothers of choice" from the 6th Battalion as a larrikin and an incredibly professional soldier. He was very proud of his family and his military service, and of his Canberra origins as well. I send my condolences to Hugh and Jenny, who I know still suffer greatly from his loss. Many of us would have seen them around town on a great many occasions.

Today there are hundreds of ADF members from across Australia who are deployed in hostile places across the globe, from Iraq to Afghanistan, and we all hope and pray that they return safely to their families.

I also note that as operations become more complex we have seen increasing numbers of AFP and Australian public servants deployed to support military operations. We certainly saw that at the return from Operation Slipper, as they proudly marched with their ADF colleagues on Saturday. Their role is just as essential as that of their military counterparts. In places where we are trying to restore the rule of law and civil infrastructure it is in many cases the civilians who can create a lasting peace.

Many of our service members come from Canberra, where we have a disproportionately large defence community. There are many thousands of ex-service personnel in the ACT, of whom about 15,000 have been on active overseas service. Approximately 5,000 serving defence personnel work and live in Canberra, many of whom have seen active service overseas or may soon be deploying overseas on a variety of missions.

The unique nature of military service creates a particularly difficult environment for those veterans integrating into civilian life after military service, which is especially true for those who have been physically or psychologically affected by their service. Military service provides service members with skills and experience, but it also results in equally significant sacrifices and challenges for both themselves and their families. Many veterans, regardless of age, face challenges arising from their service, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Self-harm and suicide rates have increased within our veteran community and are of great concern to our broader community.

The unique nature of military service creates a particularly difficult environment for those veterans who are integrating into civilian life after military service, which is especially true for those, as I said, who have been affected.

If we are to avoid another generation of service men and women who are placed in difficult circumstances, be it through our neglect, we must do everything that we can to highlight those who have given their service and do everything that we can to support them. For many of those who are still serving, and for those that have retired and left the service, the support they are provided by ex-service organisations is vital. It is good to see a representative of those ex-service organisations here in the chamber today. Welcome.

We have a large number of veteran organisations in the ACT, including the RSL, Legacy, Soldier On, the Vietnam Veterans Federation, and many others who dedicate themselves to looking after veterans. Numerous organisations and programs provide a broad spectrum of benefits and support services that assist veterans and eligible beneficiaries, while other organisations provide comradeship for veterans.

A number of organisations are focused on the dependants of veterans. These include Legacy and the War Widows Guild. All organisations focus on remembering the contribution and sacrifice made by those veterans who did not return and those who returned damaged by war.

I would also like to mention the sacrifice made by defence families and the support they provide, particularly when service members return wounded or traumatised by

war. At its most extreme, families can experience the loss of a loved one, but just being the spouse or the child of a defence member comes with enormous challenges. Canberra is host to thousands of defence families. To those families, we salute you.

I put on the record that Mrs Jones is the wife of a serviceman. I recall that during the 2008 election her husband, Bernard, was serving overseas. A staff member in my office will see her husband deploy soon to Afghanistan.

The motion reads:

That this Assembly:

... commemorates the sacrifice of those Australians who have lost their lives or been wounded in war and express its support for the defence community in Canberra comprising ADF members, defence families, veterans and Ex Service Organisations.

In anticipation, I would like to thank all members for their support and again express our enduring respect for those who have served, who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, for those who support them from the defence ex-service organisations, and for the families that support them.

Madam Speaker, I also thank the broader Canberra community. It is always inspiring when you go to an Anzac dawn ceremony and you see the many thousands of Canberrans there, often freezing cold, before dawn on Anzac Day, to commemorate the sacrifice of the Anzacs. It is also inspiring for those who march on Anzac Day to see so many people lining Anzac Parade and recognising the service of those who have deployed overseas on a variety of missions.

I hope today that what we are doing is upholding the fine tradition of Anzac Day in this community and Australia wide, and making it very well known that this Assembly will not forget, that we will remember them. Lest we forget.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (10.17): I certainly welcome the opportunity to speak about the importance of the Anzac centenary, how it is being commemorated here in Canberra and how the ACT government is supporting the defence community in the ACT. As the Leader of the Opposition indicated, it was indeed a great honour and privilege to participate in the Canberra welcome-home parade for about 2,100 men and women who served this country so bravely and stoically in Afghanistan as part of Operation Slipper.

There were about 34½ thousand Australian personnel deployed to Afghanistan over the period of the operation from 2001 onwards and, of those, more than 750 who served as part of this campaign were born in Canberra. And there were many more from the region and also those who have obviously chosen to build their military careers here in Canberra. Forty-one of those 34½ thousand paid the ultimate price by their sacrifice. Just as those who sacrificed their lives on the beaches of Gallipoli, they will never be forgotten.

In 2011 the then Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, formed the ACT Veterans Advisory Council to keep the ACT government abreast of veterans issues in the ACT and to advise on possible commemorative events for this year, the Anzac centenary. The council is made up of representatives from a variety of organisations who serve the veterans community. These include people with a direct link to defence service or to a veteran. So this could include widows, partners, former partners, children, parents, siblings and relatives of ex-service men and women. I will have the opportunity to meet with the council this Friday and I am looking forward to working with them to serve the interests of veterans in this community.

Upgrades to the ACT memorial just across London Circuit from this building are almost complete. The ACT memorial honours men and women with an association to the territory who have served in war, conflicts, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions and related service throughout the world. Aside from the physical tribute, more than 3,700 names have been added to an online honour roll on the ACT memorial website and the community has an opportunity to nominate those who should be recognised.

Originally designed by Canberra artist Matthew Harding, the memorial is currently having new lighting, seating and interpretive signage added. Three poignant words are being added to the central stone sphere: “mateship, courage, loyalty”. I am sure all members would agree these are entirely appropriate and it is fitting that the memorial receives an upgrade in this year of the Anzac centenary. The works are due to be completed by the end of the month. This work was done in consultation with the Veterans Advisory Council, and I thank them for their input.

The ACT memorial is an important site of remembrance and contemplation. It is also a place of commemoration, and it is my hope that once the upgrade is complete it will be increasingly used by veterans and veterans organisations for important commemorative activities over the coming years.

It is appropriate that Canberra, as the nation’s capital, is at the centre of commemorative activities for the Anzac centenary. Canberra is a destination to truly discover the Australian story. Our past and present service men and women have played an instrumental role in creating the country that we know and enjoy today. The 2015 commemorative activities will encourage reflection and give all Australians and international visitors the opportunity to discover and to comprehend the continuing significance of Australia’s military history. The Australian War Memorial, of course, is the centrepiece for these commemorations. Following this weekend’s welcome-home parade and memorial service for Operation Slipper, the memorial is now gearing up for one of the biggest days in its history, the 2015 Anzac Day commemorations.

At a local level, we recently experienced a fitting tribute to the men who served this country at Gallipoli through the Canberra Symphony Orchestra’s Anzac tribute on the eve of Canberra Day. Personally, I am very pleased to say that I will be hosting a reception for World War II veterans and their wives later this year.

I have also invited the crew of the recently commissioned HMAS *Canberra III* to exercise their right of freedom of entry to the city of Canberra later this year. I hope we will be able to work with the ship's crew to find an appropriate time for this to occur. HMAS *Canberra* has a long history, and the crew of HMAS *Canberra II* last conducted a freedom of entry in Canberra in 2005 just prior to the decommissioning of the vessel. Freedom of entry is the highest honour a city can bestow upon a military unit and it will be wonderful to welcome the crew of the new vessel and to continue our long history together. The reception and freedom of entry are both suggestions of the ACT Veterans Advisory Council, and I will be pleased to host these events as commemorative activities for this centenary year.

In a few weeks, students from four ACT high schools will be heading off on an experience of a lifetime to the Gallipoli commemorations. This year's winning students are Ms Angela Liao of Radford College, Ms Ineka Voigt of Canberra High School, Ms Jasmine Lyons of Trinity Christian School, and Mr John Dykstra of Campbell High School. They will participate in a series of commemorative activities organised by the Australian War Memorial. This will include visiting Istanbul, Troy and the Gallipoli Peninsula. The students will be able to gain valuable insights into the battlefields of the Gallipoli campaign. They will participate in the dawn service at Anzac Cove and lay a wreath on behalf of the ACT. These students will no doubt return to Canberra quite changed by this moving experience and be able to share some of their learnings and their experiences with their fellow students. The prize has been running for three years now and has contributed to ensuring that the legacy of the Anzacs lives on in future generations.

I am pleased to be able to share some of the commemorative activities and support the ACT government provides to veterans. The Australian Defence Force makes up an integral part of our relatively small community. Five per cent of our territory's workforce is defence related, and given all the support the Australian Defence Force provides to the Canberra community and to the Australian people at large it is imperative that we support and look after these veterans who served this country with such commitment and such courage. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this motion forward today. I look forward to supporting it.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (10.25): I appreciate Mr Hanson's bringing this motion forward today to provide us with an opportunity to reflect on Australia's military history as we proceed towards the centenary year of Anzac. There is no doubt that those who sign up to go to war for their country deserve our respect. Those who lose their lives, or who are injured or suffer mental health issues as a result of war, deserve our care and our compassion. On behalf of the ACT Greens I wish to offer our condolences in the lead-up to this year's Anzac Day commemorations to all those who have been affected by the impact of war, serving their country in our defence forces.

This year's Anzac Day is somewhat of a special one, being the 100th anniversary of the battle that in many ways has come to define Australia's military history, particularly in recent times, the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War at Gallipoli. Of course, the First

World War was not the first time Australian forces, albeit the colonial forces, had been involved in global conflict situations; Australians also served in China, New Zealand and South Africa.

But Gallipoli was the first major conflict, a conflict that took 8,709 Australian lives. Australians in the First World War also served in the Middle East and Africa, in Papua New Guinea and in Europe on the Western Front, in France and in Belgium. In total, 61,522 Australians lost their lives in the First World War; 152,284 were wounded. Allied military losses were around six million in total. Central powers' military losses were around four million. In total, including civilians, around 16 million people lost their lives and around 20 million people were wounded. Little wonder they called it the war to end all wars. If ever there was a demonstration of the great losses that war brings to a society, a country and to families perhaps that was it.

But surely war is never the preferred outcome when resolving conflict between nations. While governments and leaders throughout the decades and centuries have advocated that war is not their preferred option at any particular point in time, it has not stopped them investing in building up their arsenals or positioning themselves in ways that make slipping into war more inevitable.

Australians have served in a number of conflicts since the First World War: the Second World War, the Korean War, the Malayan emergency, the Indonesian confrontation, the Vietnam War, the first Gulf War, the Iraq War, the Afghanistan War and most recently the military intervention against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, otherwise known as ISIL. Australia has also had peacekeepers in the field with the United Nations continuously for over 50 years. In Indonesia in 1947 Australians were part of the very first group of UN military observers anywhere in the world. A peacekeeper role can include being military observers, police or being involved in humanitarian operations.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our service women and men over the past 100 years and beyond for their commitment and the sacrifices they have made and continue to make. I want to say thank you to their families, ADF families, for whom life is at best sometimes disjointed and at worst is full of grief and loss for their loved ones. My colleague Christine Milne said recently:

There is no more grave responsibility governments assume than when they commit troops, young men and women, to war and no greater responsibility when those men and women return, often physically or mentally scarred, than to look after them and their families.

Senator Milne's comments were made on welcoming home Australian ADF personnel from Afghanistan. Forty-one Australian service personnel lost their lives in Afghanistan—41 people who were loved by someone; 41 people who are missed every day. I support her call to wholeheartedly thank those who served in Afghanistan. As she notes in her press release, the Greens actively campaigned against Australian involvement in Afghanistan, but I do not believe that precludes us from thanking those who served at the behest of their government, even while disagreeing with the government decision that sent them.

I guess it will not come as a surprise to members here today that, while acknowledging the sacrifices by our Australian Defence Force personnel and the service they have given, I would like to spend some time talking about the making of peace. Indeed, I am sure that many of our service men and women who have seen active service and have witnessed the horrors and the damage that war can bring to people, their countries, their arts and culture and their environment would compel us to always be thinking about how we can make better peace.

At the heart of Greens' values are four pillars which form the underpinnings of Green parties around the world. One of those four pillars is non-violence, which speaks to the value of rejecting violence as a means to overcoming opponents. In policy terms, the Greens are advocating that we think much more about making peace than avoiding the escalation of violence. Non-violence is necessarily about being passive. It is, at its core, specifically the absence of violence, a choice to do no harm or least harm. It is clear to me that to practise non-violence is a very difficult thing for people to do, and equally difficult for governments. But one lesson to take from the theories of non-violence is that violence rarely resolves conflicts for the better or with a positive outcome.

On that note I would like to take a moment here to thank all those who work hard to make peace. They can be both peace activists and political leaders, and their work often goes unseen. But they are focused on finding a better way besides armed conflict, and for all the conflicts that might have been entered into there must be many that did not eventuate due to the work of those who seek peace. They often have a thankless task as, by arguing for different approaches, often at times of great national tension, they are often painted as cowards by the media and by others who cannot imagine a different outcome. But I believe that, on the contrary, peace activists often show great courage as they speak out.

I would like to make one further point about our commemorations of war and how they impact on our collective understanding and experience of war and peace. This is an issue explored in a discussion paper by Professor Joy Damousi on how our emotional response to war can stop us having a critical and political analysis of war.

It is noticeable in the active and growing commemoration of Anzac Day that, in parallel, a somewhat mythical perspective of our Anzac diggers has developed, yet many of our young people have not been actively exposed close up to the horrors of war or the political context in which they occur. It is noticeable in the United States, where the death toll from the Iraq War was substantial and where the community was affected by family and friends returning with damaged bodies and damaged minds, that the appetite for engagement in further conflict is very much diminished.

Perhaps that was why we saw such protests at the time of the Vietnam War, because those who had lived through the Second World War remembered the grim realities and the extensive impact that war has on a generation of lives. It is very important that, through education and analysis, the decision-makers and the community do not remove themselves from the grim realities, that we are also able to critically assess other options and that those are part of the public debate and part of our public policy.

So as the centenary of Anzac draws closer and we reflect on the bravery, the sacrifice and the human toll of those who have served in Australia's military forces, let us also renew our efforts to find peace and to strive for a world where we can resolve conflict not through war but through diplomacy, understanding and the seeking of common ground.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Roads and Parking, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (10.34): I would like to thank Mr Hanson for bringing this motion to the Legislative Assembly today. As we have heard, next month, 25 April, will mark the centenary of Anzac. Anzac Day is an important day for us as Australians and for us as Canberrans.

As the centenary of Anzac draws closer, paying tribute to those who have fought for our country by commemorating their efforts is a priority for the ACT government. As part of this, the ACT government believes it is important to honour and to recognise those members of the ACT community who have served. To do this, and to involve the ACT community in this, the ACT government has been involved in the organisation and promotion of special events.

One such event, as we have heard, was Canberra's Anzac centenary tribute concert, a special one-off concert that was held earlier this year, on 8 March, at the Patrick White Lawns in front of the Library of Australia. The concert featured a traditional beating retreat ceremony by the Australian Defence Force and a performance by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. The Canberra Symphony Orchestra presented a program of music culminating with Tchaikovsky's rousing *1812 Overture* performed alongside the combined bands of the Australian Defence Force with guns fired over Lake Burley Griffin. Approximately 13,000 people attended Canberra's Anzac centenary tribute concert, which was funded through a partnership with AGL.

As we have already heard this morning, and as Mr Hanson's motion states, Anzac Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli in 1915. It is the day on which we remember Australians who served and died in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

As Canberra is the nation's capital and home to the Australian War Memorial, there is an important role that we as a community play in commemorating such a significant occasion. The ACT government has acknowledged this and, through Visit Canberra, has partnered with the Australian War Memorial to market the significant First World War and centenary of Anzac commemorations to an interstate audience through the whole of this year.

The partnership will see an investment of \$300,000 from the special event fund in marketing the Australian War Memorial's commemoration events throughout 2015. The funding will also be matched by the Australian War Memorial. The partnership will see the Australian War Memorial's major events, performances and exhibitions promoted to interstate audiences throughout 2015. These include Anzac Day, marking the centenary of the Gallipoli landing; Remembrance Day; the newly opened First World War galleries; the Roll of Honour soundscapes project and name projections; and daily Last Post ceremonies.

In addition to the events and exhibitions promoted across the centenary year at the Australian War Memorial and the ACT government's involvement in the marketing of these, the ACT Heritage Library also this year has a number of other activities planned to acknowledge the contribution of ACT men and women in World War I. These activities include a virtual calling of the roll of the 520 ACT men and women who served in World War I, through social media. This is taking place from March through to 11 November, Remembrance Day, through Libraries ACT and social media outlets. The library will also pay tribute to each of those men and women and share their stories with a younger audience who will engage through this digital platform.

Many Canberrans and other Australians have family who served in World War I. My grandfather, Walter Hamilton Gentleman, was one of those. He served in the 6th Light Horse Regiment. The 6th Light Horse Regiment was raised in Sydney in September 1914 from men who had enlisted in New South Wales and became part of the 2nd Light Horse Brigade. They sailed from Sydney on 21 December 1914. The regiment disembarked in Egypt on 1 February.

The 2nd Light Horse Brigade became part of the Anzac Mounted Division, and in April 1916 joined the forces defending the Suez Canal from the Turkish advance across the Sinai Desert. It fought at the battle of Romani on 4 August and Katia the following day, and participated in the pursuit that followed the Turks' retreat back across the desert.

The regiment spent late 1916 and early 1917 engaged on patrol work, until the British advance into Palestine stalled before the Turkish bastion of Gaza. It was involved in the two abortive battles to capture Gaza directly on 27 March and 19 April, and then the operation that ultimately led to its fall, the wide outflanking move via Bathsheba that began on 31 October.

With the fall of Gaza on 7 November 1917, the Turkish position in southern Palestine collapsed. The 6th participated in the pursuit that followed and led the capture of Jerusalem in December. The focus of the British operation was then moved to the Jordan valley, and in early 1918 the 6th was involved in the Amman battle, on 24 to 27 February, and assault, on 13 April to 4 May. Both of those battles were tactical failures but helped to convince the Turks that the next offensive would be launched across the Jordan. Instead the offensive was launched along the coast, in September 1918, with the 6th taking part in the subsidiary effort east of Jordan. It was part of the force that captured Amman on 25 September, and that proved to be its last major engagement of the war. The Turks landed on 30 October 1918, and the 6th Light Horse were employed one last time to assist in putting down the Egyptian revolt of early 1919. They sailed home on 28 June.

The ACT government is proud to be involved in commemorating 100 years since our nation's involvement in the First World War. I again thank Mr Hanson for the opportunity to speak on this motion and look forward to paying tribute to those who fought for our country by paying tribute to their efforts as part of the national Anzac Day ceremony, which will take place at the Australian War Memorial next month.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (10.41): I thought I would add a few words, using not my words but the words of CEW Bean, as to what actually happened that day. It is from volume I of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, the chapter entitled “The landing at Gaba Tepe”, starting at about page 250. It reads:

There was still no sign of any sort from the shore. The water was as smooth as satin—a gloriously cool, peaceful night. In one of the central tows, carrying the 10th Battalion, the steamboat had already cast off the rowing boats. Only the soft dip of the muffled oars in the water broke the silence. They were forty or fifty yards from the shore. “There’s no sound,” whispered Colonel Weir to the officer beside him.

It goes on:

The eleven other tows must have been very close, but they could not be seen by one another. The northernmost had swung to the left and then back again, nearly colliding.

About this moment from the funnel of one of the northern most steamboats there flared out a trail of flame. Special instructions had been given to the crews to prevent this occurrence, but it is not easily avoided. Three full feet of sparks and flame continued to trail for twenty or thirty seconds. A high plateau of land was above the boats at this moment, with a round jutting knoll, 200 feet high, at the foot of it. It was Ari Burnu point.

The voice of Commander Dix broke the silence. “Tell the colonel,” he shouted, “that the dam’ fools have taken us a mile too far north.”

Just then—at 4.29 a.m.—on the summit of another and rather lower knoll a thousand yards south there flashed a bright yellow light. It was seen by almost everyone in the boats; some took it for a signal lamp; others for a bright flare of shavings or a small bonfire. It glowed for half a minute and then went out.

There was deathlike silence for a moment. Then suddenly: “Look at that!” said Captain Leane in one of the northernmost boats. The figure of a man was on the skyline of the plateau above them. A voice called on the land. From the top of Ari Burnu a rifle flashed. A bullet whizzed overhead and plunged into the sea. A second or two of silence ... four or five shots as if from a sentry group. Another pause—then a scattered, irregular fire growing very fast. They were discovered. After the tension of the last half-hour the discovery brought a blessed relief.

At this moment the twelve tows were very close together, running in to the foot of Ari Burnu knoll. The knoll juts out in a small cape, and the boats of the 9th and 10th Battalions, striking the point of this, were the first to reach the land.

It goes on to say:

The larger “launches” and “pinnaces” grounded in deeper water, whereupon the men tumbled over the bows or the sides, often falling on the slippery stones, so that it was hard to say who was hit and who was not. Most were up to their thighs in water; some, who dropped off near the stern of the larger boats, were immersed to their chests. Others, barely noticed in the rush, slipped into water too deep for them. The heavy kit which a man carried would sink him like a

stone. Some were grabbed by a comrade who happened to observe them; one was hung up by his kit on rowlock until someone noticed him; a few were almost certainly drowned.

It was at 4.30 a.m. on Sunday, April 25th, half an hour before the opening of the British bombardment of Cape Helles, that the Australians landed at Ari Burnu.

And so the legend began. As you read through the rest of the chapter and the other volumes of Bean's history of World War I, what quickly emerges is the stoic humour of the Australians. A couple of pages later it says:

In one boat an oar was splintered, and a corporal tried to sound the depth with it. The water, by its colour, was shoaling fast. A "tag"—

which I understand to be a joke—

was current in the 11th Battalion, based on the statement of a sergeant, that bullets made a noise like small birds passing overhead. At this crisis Private "Combo" Smith, of the 11th Battalion, set one whole boat laughing by looking at the sky and remarking to "Snowy" Howe: "Just like little birds, ain't they, Snow?"

I have never been there and you cannot appreciate what they were going through, but it is interesting that at that time of great crisis the humour of the Australians came through and I think in many cases probably sustained them for the length of the war.

Many have spoken of the large scale, the large numbers—the huge numbers. But, of course, war is a tragedy at the personal level. I suspect there is not a member here whose family does not have some connection to the First or Second World War or subsequent wars. It is about remembering the ordinary soldier, in this case—or the airman or the sailor. It is important.

Like Mr Gentleman, I will relate the story I know best; it is the story of my grandfather, Patrick Joseph McCauley. Who would have thought an Irishman would have a name like that! Patrick Joseph McCauley was born at Ballymena, County Antrim, Ireland. He signed up. At his time of signing up at Lockhart in New South Wales with his brother Tom, he was 20. He was 5 feet 4½ inches tall and weighed 140 pounds. He joined the 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment and was a horse handler in the regiment.

He sailed on the *Clan MacCorquodale* and joined the unit when the light horse went ashore in late May to Gallipoli. My pop got there on 15 July 1915. He was wounded in action on 8 August, when he took a bayonet through the left knee, and subsequent to that was admitted to hospital five times over the following years, including on one occasion for breaking his leg—"fractured left leg: severe; injury sustained while playing football while on military duty: not to blame; no one else to blame". So there was that other side of military life which was a bit of rough and tumble. As with Mr Gentleman's relative, he served throughout the desert campaign and was lucky enough to come home. He arrived in Sydney on 24 April 1919. He was the lucky one. There are many that did not get home, and their names are there at the War Memorial. One of things I particularly like now about the War Memorial is the tradition of putting poppies against names. Long may that continue.

The thing that we need to keep in mind on this day, as we have in this debate, is that the 100 years of the Anzacs is a very important thing, but it is important to remember what they did so that we do not repeat those mistakes again. As Mr Hanson's motion says, the ACT Assembly "commemorates the sacrifice of those Australians who have lost their lives or been wounded in war" and expresses "its support for the defence community in Canberra comprising ADF members, defence families, veterans and Ex Service Organisations"—a representative of which is with us today.

This is an important motion. Next month will be an important month for this country. We need to remember so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. I think the future is in good hands, as Mr Hanson said, with the number of people, particularly the young people, that come every Anzac Day. On my first Anzac Day at the memorial, I was lucky enough to be inside. The ceremony used to be that small. We all used to go into the Hall of Remembrance. I can remember the crunching of boots coming up the driveway and up those marble steps in quite a heavy fog. I will always have that memory. It reminds me of the painting of the Menin gate that sits in the memorial. It is great that we now cannot contain the ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance; it is great that particularly young people are coming; it is great that we continue to honour these soldiers and the others that have served over the last 100 years; and it is great because, hopefully, it will stop us repeating the folly of war ever again into the future.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (10.49): I also thank Mr Hanson for his motion today and acknowledge his own contribution to the Australian Defence Force over many years. I acknowledge also the service and sacrifice of all the men and women of the Australian Defence Force over the past 100 years, particularly as we look towards celebrating the Anzac centenary.

As a community we have different ways of acknowledging and interacting with past and present members of the ADF. The Australian War Memorial is obviously an important place in the hearts of Canberrans and the country. It is the place that we go to to learn about one important aspect of our past and to remind us that our peaceful country, our country of opportunity, was hard fought for. It is a reminder that we should not take this for granted. Our children learn this at school and, of course, on Anzac Day each year as a community we commemorate the service of all past and present members.

This year's centenary is particularly important. I especially acknowledge the ongoing contribution of many Canberrans to current and previous peacekeeping and conflict missions around the globe. I would especially like to acknowledge the many Gungahlin families who serve in the Australian Defence Force. In my own children's school many of their friends have parents, usually fathers, who serve in conflict and peacekeeping missions. They are often away for months at a time, returning to "normal" family life. I often wonder what it must have been like serving in Oruzgan Province in Afghanistan for months on end, in the dust and in the conflict, and returning to this most peaceful city, this city of opportunity.

I know those serving make enormous sacrifices, in some cases the ultimate sacrifice of their own lives. Their families, as has been mentioned, often make significant sacrifices as well. They sometimes miss the birth of their children; they miss birthdays and anniversaries; they miss their children's first days at school. In our own school and in many schools across Canberra I particularly acknowledge the work of defence school transition aides in a number of schools who work with the children of defence families as they transition into new schools and find themselves in cities and towns all across Australia—as diverse as Canberra, Townsville, Darwin and Puckapunyal.

The Australian Defence Force, through the Defence Community Organisation, works hard to ensure that families are supported as they move around the country every few years. I also acknowledge Defence Families Australia, the official body appointed by the government to represent the views of defence families. They advocate strongly for the experience of defence families and for support for them.

I also acknowledge the ex-service organisations who work with veterans of current and past missions. The grief and trauma veterans experience are often not obvious. In particular, those suffering one of the most hidden of injuries, post traumatic stress disorder, are now more likely through the work of these organisations to be acknowledged and receive the support they need to fully recover.

Before joining the Assembly I spent many years working with ADF personnel and civilians in my roles in the New South Wales Police Force, the Australian Federal Police and the commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. Many serve alongside law enforcement and other public servants in offshore missions. The long history of service and professionalism of so many ADF personnel will always stay with me. Their sacrifice and service ethos is obvious. I was especially pleased to work alongside women serving in the ADF and I am very heartened to see the cultural transformation underway to improve gender equality in the ADF, which can only strengthen the organisation and our country.

Much of this work in places like East Timor, Afghanistan, Sudan and the Solomon Islands was to maintain peace, build communities and build vital infrastructure. The work of many ADF personnel is in community and infrastructure building and in furthering relationships with local communities. Although the Anzac spirit is undeniably linked with Defence Force personnel, it is also a commemoration of peaceful activity and community and nation building.

As a dual Australian and New Zealand citizen, the Anzac spirit has special significance for me. Australia and New Zealand have a shared history in the special Anzac centenary year, a history that makes citizens of both countries feel at home with each another. There is nothing quite like the relationship between Australians and New Zealanders. To close, I acknowledge the ongoing and profound contribution of Defence Force personnel and defence families to the Australian community in this special Anzac centenary year.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.54), in reply: In closing, I thank all members for their support. It is greatly appreciated and I am sure it will be

greatly appreciated by the broader defence community. I acknowledge that the government have done a number of things in this area previously and also in the Anzac centenary year. I thank them for it.

I am particularly glad to see that the local memorial, which a number of my staff attend each Anzac Day by themselves, is going to be upgraded so that it more reflects a memorial and the sacrifice that has been made by Canberrans. I think that is a good initiative. I note that you, Madam Speaker, and other members were at the Anzac tribute with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and members of the Federation Guard. It was a tremendous event.

Reflecting on the role of HMAS *Canberra*, I think it is a good initiative that the crew be granted the freedom of the city. Many may be unaware that our coat of arms that sits above you, Madam Speaker, was commissioned in 1927 specifically for the first HMAS *Canberra*. That is the reason we have that coat of arms. HMAS *Canberra* was lost at sea in engagement with the enemy in 1942 and 84 lives were lost. I recommend that those who are calling for a change to that coat of arms reflect on its proud history and the fact that it is the coat of arms that went down with the ship and those 84 people.

There is no doubt that Mr Rattenbury and I will have different views on a few things but I thank him for his contribution that highlighted not only that we lost so many at Gallipoli and post-Gallipoli but that there were Australians who fought in the colonial wars—the Boer War and others—who were lost.

Indeed, I acknowledge that those people out there who are advocating for peace do so with the very best of intentions. I know from my own personal experience that wars will always be unpopular. Some wars seem to be more supported by the populace than others. I am glad the terrible experience of those who returned from Vietnam has not been repeated. Because of a political decision, many people were drafted and sent to Vietnam. They had no choice in the matter or if they did volunteer they did so because they were doing the right thing. But then they were blamed by the community. They bore the brunt. They were only welcomed home in a parade in 1987.

I am very glad that that is not being repeated. It is great to hear from everybody in the political spectrum that, whether you agree with the conflict or not, they will support our men and women who serve. Certainly that was my experience when I served in Iraq which, it is fair to say, did not have popular public support by its end. People would say to me, “I do not agree with the Iraq war but we support you and others that serve.” It makes an amazing difference. That is why I think this Assembly motion and the events that we see on days like Anzac Day are very important for those who serve. They know that they have the community’s support.

I do believe that sometimes we must fight. We should always seek to negotiate, to work through dialogue, but ultimately when we are confronted by people like the Taliban who are supporters of terrorism and supporters of the most disgusting treatment of women, it is right to stand up. When we see ISIS, which are a cult bent on murder, on torture and on rape, it is right that we stand up to defend the defenceless. I know that members of the Defence Force are proud to do their bit for those causes.

I thank Mr Gentleman for his contribution and his recollection of his grandfather, I think it was, and an important part of our military history that he contributed to. I also thank Mr Smyth. The works of Bean are a monument. They are an extraordinary testament to the man's courage and dedication to recording the history of World War I. It is the legacy of Bean that we see not just in that work but also in the War Memorial of which he is the inspiration and the founder. He is the father of the War Memorial. I also thank Mr Smyth for the recollection of his grandfather who served.

Ms Fitzharris, your role as a Kiwi is acknowledged. It is good to have an Anzac partner here to share in that experience and to highlight the challenges of contemporary service life. It is very difficult for service personnel. You asked the question: what is it like to return to Canberra after being at war for months? Let me tell you that for me personally that was the most joyous moment in my life. I flew into Canberra from Sydney, after many months in Iraq, in a little bug smasher aircraft. I looked down and saw that landscape of Canberra. I knew that my wife and family were there waiting for me. It is moments like that when you really do appreciate how awesome Canberra is. It really is.

Madam Speaker, as we know, there are many out there doing it tough. There are many families out there doing it tough. There are many who have got partners deployed, who are about to deploy or who are still grieving the loss of a loved one. There are many veterans still doing it tough and there are many of those working tirelessly in the community to support veterans—in Legacy, for the widows; in the RSL, people like Jim Gilchrist, who is here today in the chamber. For those of you who may not be aware of this, he is the president of the Woden Valley sub-branch of the RSL. I should declare a conflict of interest: I am a member.

As we commemorate Anzac Day this year, let us spare a thought for what it means for those in Canberra who have served and who are still serving, many of whom are still paying the price of that service. I thank members for their support today.

Motion agreed to.

Education—Canberra Institute of Technology

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (11.01):

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that access to high quality skills education is necessary to the ongoing prosperity of the community;
- (b) that a well funded public TAFE system ensures that all citizens can gain access to skills education and training opportunities;
- (c) that the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is the ACT's sole public TAFE provider;

- (d) the important role CIT has played in the economic and social life of the ACT;
 - (e) CIT's consistent delivery of high quality courses and outcomes for its students;
 - (f) the high confidence in CIT expressed by industry, employer groups, graduates and students;
 - (g) the ACT government's ongoing commitment to CIT and public TAFE; and
 - (h) the recent amendments by the ACT government to the CIT Act to ensure that CIT remains a strong and viable provider of skills education and training; and
- (2) calls on the government to:
- (a) ensure that the ACT continues to benefit from the economic and social benefits of skills education and training;
 - (b) ensure that ACT residents continue to have access to high quality public TAFE through CIT; and
 - (c) ensure that CIT remains a high quality and responsive training provider that meets the needs of its students, employers and the broader ACT community.

I am pleased to be able to move this motion today on the importance of public technical and further education in the ACT. As you know, last week in the Assembly we debated the importance of growing the higher education sector in the ACT. Much of that debate focused on building on the strengths of the university sector, attracting students to the ACT and creating jobs. These are invaluable objectives in sustaining the ongoing prosperity of our community and are equally applicable to the vocational education and training sector—that is, the VET sector. It is timely to talk today about the contribution of the VET sector, in particular the contribution of the Canberra Institute of Technology—fondly known as the CIT—to the ACT economy.

As members know, CIT has been providing vocational education and training to countless numbers of people in Canberra and beyond our borders since the 1920s. Over its impressive history it has proven itself to be adaptive to changing circumstances and has diversified what it offers to respond to changes in order to continue to deliver high quality skills education and training. CIT provides an extensive range of vocational education programs from trade and other certificates to diplomas and advanced diplomas, delivering advanced technical education and training. It also provides a small number of niche higher education degrees and has a range of strategic partnerships with universities and other educational organisations to jointly deliver programs and provide pathways to further training.

The provision of VET through CIT is an important element in the ACT government's commitment to assist people of the ACT to become part of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce that will promote a strong and vibrant ACT economy. CIT's delivery forms an integral component of the ACT government's VET commitment. CIT maintains close links with the University of Canberra, the Australian National University, the Australian Catholic University and Charles Sturt University via formalised course articulation arrangements and strong partnerships.

CIT plays a vital role in improving and promoting student pathways from school to CIT and then on to further VET training or higher education and also from higher education to VET training. CIT continues to offer "taster" opportunities to students in schools to assist them in making informed choices about the areas of training they may be considering.

CIT and CIT Solutions are currently contributing to the economic development in the ACT and region through activities such as the implementation of the CIT campus modernisation strategy over the next 20 years, including the new CIT Tuggeranong campus in the next two years, and offering training solutions globally through providing offshore training and the recruitment of international students. CIT's reach is across some 700 contracted agents' offices throughout the world, and CIT has international students coming to Canberra from more than 85 countries. In the future CIT is keen to see more pathways for international students from schools to CIT and into higher education. CIT also provides training in growing niche markets such as renewable energy.

Members may be interested to know that CIT was chosen to partner in the largest winning proponent in the ACT wind auction tender. It also provides training in surveying and spatial information, allied health, the NDIS, horticulture and creative industries.

In a regulated environment for training, quality of training and integrity of qualifications are fundamental if business and industry are to have confidence in the national training system. Technical and further education institutions provide the leadership and benchmarks for the standards. The value statements of registered training organisations such as the Canberra Institute of Technology are to deliver quality education and training.

As the ACT's largest RTO and a public provider of industry-focused training, CIT has a diverse range of valued stakeholders, including students, employers, industry, government and the community. The ACT government is committed to the public provision of vocational and education training and currently funds CIT approximately \$70 million per year to deliver agreed outcomes as detailed in the annual statement of intent.

This funding makes up approximately 65 per cent of CIT's overall budget, with the remaining funds generated through contestable sources and commercial contracts. This latter figure is likely to grow as the CIT growth strategy is reliant on securing funding sources that are in addition to ACT government funding. This includes winning competitive funding to deliver training places such as the skilled capital

funds, which are aligned to the ACT skills needs list prepared by ETD in consultation with CMTEDD and Australian Apprenticeships funding.

Technical and further education institutions are also important in helping overcome social and regional disadvantage. Through the provision of training and foundation skills to some of our most vulnerable Canberrans, CIT assists many people to access mainstream education opportunities or increase economic participation through re-skilling, upskilling and developing bridging skills, such as language, literacy and numeracy.

As I have said, CIT is the largest RTO and the only public provider of technical and further education in the ACT. An ongoing challenge for us all is raising the profile of vocational education and training and ensuring its benefits are understood right across our community. It is vital that we have a strong public provider as well as a vibrant private market competing to deliver government-funded training. We have over 160 registered training organisations with an ACT funding agreement, yet CIT delivers over 80 per cent of VET in the ACT, demonstrating the crucial role it plays in skill and human capital development in Canberra and the region.

Given the current challenges facing the ACT economy, the importance of CIT being able to respond to industry demand from age cohorts where unemployment may increase will be imperative to the Government's economic and social outcomes in the coming years. It has been said that lifelong learning is the key to remaining competitive and maintaining and enhancing community prosperity. Lifelong learning not only encompasses the development of skills that an individual can use to enhance productivity for business and improve life chances but also encompasses professional development and social learning in which the role of education is to promote economic growth on an equitable basis.

CIT is more than an industry-led organisation; it is for individuals too. The size and scope of CIT allow for comprehensive student support services that reflect the diversity of CIT students and respond to their needs. Student services include counselling, disability support, financial assistance, international student support, migrant support, peer tutoring, youth support, student equity and the CIT Yurauna Centre dedicated to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

CIT responds to demand through offering short courses as well as a range of accredited courses and fee-for-service programs, often strongly customised to meet the individual requirements of an enterprise or student cohort. Importantly, strong industry links have allowed for partnerships leading to customised training delivery in regional and remote areas. By cultivating and maintaining strong links with local and regional industries and government, CIT continues to be responsive to local and national workforce development needs.

It is for these reasons that I call on the government to continue to ensure that the ACT continues to benefit from the economic and social benefits of skills education and training, that ACT residents continue to have access to high quality public TAFE through CIT, and that CIT remains a high quality and responsive training provider that meets the needs of its students, employers and the broader ACT community. I commend this motion to members.

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (11.11): The Canberra Institute of Technology—the CIT—is essential to the Canberra economy providing our industries with the skills they need. For the Canberra community, it gives new and old students skills and training in quality, purpose-built facilities. CIT has over 30,000 student enrolments, and it is the heavy lifter in post-school education in the ACT. I am very familiar with the CIT facilities in my electorate of Bruce. It is one of CIT's largest campuses, centrally located in east Belconnen and part of the Bruce learning hub.

This a major centre of the knowledge capital, tying together a great, diverse hub of learning, training, health and high-tech institutions. At one end of this zone is the University of Canberra with the new sports commons and, at the other, the Australian Institute of Sport. In between are the high-tech CIT Bruce campus and the Calvary hospital. New work is going on to build the Calvary car park and the new University of Canberra public hospital, complementing the major investment in CIT Bruce over the years. The campus is in a very pretty semi-bush environment, cascading down a slope.

What I would like to show today are the diversity of the campus and the diversity of courses offered. We associate TAFE with the traditional trades, which are well covered by CIT. The Bruce campus in particular covers several building trades, such as bricklaying, plastering, landscaping, horticulture and others. I had the pleasure some years ago—under very close supervision—of operating CIT's KATO MR130 mobile slewing crane, then a new addition to the heavy lifting crane arsenal. The crane supports not only crane driver training but also elements of assessment for other areas, such as scaffolding, dogging and rigging.

It was part of the new purpose-built high risk construction training facility at CIT Bruce especially targeting work at heights, and it includes a training tower. The facility was constructed in response to the national assessment instruments for high risk licensing legislation, which the ACT was the first to implement and provide specialised training using the new facility at Bruce. As a result, interstate RTOs were keen to tour CIT's facility prior to the legislation coming into play in their own states.

As I noted, CIT Bruce provides for many of the more traditional fluoro collar trades and industries. However, it now goes way beyond that to areas we are probably less aware of. Bruce campus provides training in specialist program areas that involve innovative and high technology applications across several industry sectors; for example, building information modelling using the latest software that is used for architectural design, building construction and development and environmental site modelling.

The surveying and spatial information science programs deliver training in a range of qualifications that focus on the surveying and spatial information sciences applications from the basic spatial locational data capture to more complex integration of spatial data sets for mapping and analysing data to seeking solutions. Students in these programs gain experience in the use of global navigation satellite system technology, laser measuring devices, satellite imagery and spatial mapping software to compile digital maps, analyse problems and model scenarios. The spatial

information programs of study expose the students to a wide range of current industry standard geographic information systems software that is applied to applications such as government, emergency services, land development, environmental management and resource industries as well as many others.

In addition, the CIT Bruce campus showcases the latest in purpose-built facilities for hands-on skills training in emerging sustainable technologies for both residential and commercial construction sectors. The Bruce CIT campus meets or exceeds ACT government requirements for a sustainable commercial development. It is able to conserve energy and water with a minimal carbon footprint. The campus incorporates the latest sustainable technologies, including grid-connected solar and wind power generation. Students are able to commission solar panels and wind generators and receive hands-on scenario-based training in testing and monitoring smart metering and loggers for energy management and energy efficiency analysis

CIT Bruce has tri-generation micro turbines with absorption chillers to harness waste heat for cooling and heating of the building. Students are able to vary combustion rates and monitor energy efficiencies on solar hot water systems for the supply of hot water to ablution buildings and for hydronic heating and radiator panels. It has water recycling and sewer mining, meaning that water used is treated on site to give students hands-on skills with installation, operation and maintenance of grey and black water recycling systems.

Another non-traditional CIT Bruce course is the bachelor of forensic science (crime scene examination). Students gain the scientific knowledge and practical skills required to collect, analyse and interpret forensic evidence and present that evidence in court. The course was developed with the National Institute of Forensic Sciences, the Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society, the Australian Federal Police and the New South Wales Police Force. CIT is one of Australia's pioneers and current leaders in the field of forensic science education. CIT trains crime scene examiners from every Australian state and territory police force and international forces. It is made possible by the partnership with the Australian Federal Police and the University of Canberra.

Through CIT's partnership with the National Centre for Forensic Studies, undergraduate studies in the field sciences could lead to postgraduate studies in management, science or a specialist forensic area. Examples of educational pathways for graduates include honours, masters and PhD programs at the University of Canberra, honours programs at the Australian National University, and honours and PhD programs at the University of Technology Sydney.

Another course at CIT Bruce, the Advanced Diploma of Screen and Media, trains students in broadcast and electronic media production, including camera, audio operations, lighting, editing and studio production. Students work in studios and on location making short films, television and radio content. This includes scripting through to post production. They also cover the legal, occupational health and safety issues and financial issues of the industry. The advanced diploma allows students to develop and manage real media projects in work-based scenarios to turn out industry-ready graduates.

Another area of study at CIT Bruce is the Diploma of Environmental Monitoring and Technology and the Certificate IV in Environmental Monitoring and Technology. This teaches students the methods and technologies of environmental sampling, testing and monitoring used in industry. It assists environmental scientists, engineers and planners with site assessment, minimising environmental impacts and the remediation/rehabilitation of sites.

CIT's international services unit is also located at CIT's Bruce campus, offering support to the more than 1,200 international students from more than 80 countries studying at CIT. The international unit provides counsellors experienced in supporting international students, organises a special international students graduation ceremony early in December, and has a special support course on eLearn for students from other cultures called "studying in Australia". International student support officers will help with visa issues, referrals to other support services, and accommodation. CIT Bruce boasts stylish student accommodation, with 48 rooms available for \$175.00 per week, with communal kitchens. It is a three-minute walk from classrooms, the Bruce canteen, library, gym and the international services unit.

As I have noted, CIT still covers the traditional trades very well but goes way beyond them to cover a range of skills we need in our economy. As we have seen, CIT courses can lead to other higher education courses with credit transfer arrangements or pathways to a variety of Australia universities, including the University of Canberra and the ANU. Students can receive recognition or credit for studies completed at CIT and put this towards a degree at university. For example, courses with pathways to the University of Canberra include accounting, ACT year 12, alcohol other drugs and mental health, applied fashion design and technology, building design, business, business administration, children's services, community services work, event management, fitness, forensic science, games and virtual worlds, graphic design, hospitality management, human resources, interior design, international hotel and resort management, IT networking, IT software development, management, marketing, massage, media production, photography, sport development, tourism, visual art, and youth work.

CIT Bruce, and indeed the whole of CIT, is an essential part of our economy and a huge resource for our school leavers looking to study an enormous range of courses in their home town. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (11.21): I am pleased to have an opportunity to talk to this motion today. However, I have to say that I am not sure how appropriate it is that the chair of a standing committee that is currently undertaking an inquiry into the delivery of vocational education is moving a motion that is so unquestionably supportive of CIT, without any suggestion of critical examination. What impression that might leave on those who have made submissions to the inquiry is yet to be known. Perhaps this motion also highlights the lack of judgement of both the Chief Minister and the minister for education, that this important motion on the CIT has been allocated to Ms Porter in this instance.

It is somewhat ironic that the motion is being moved by a member of this ACT Labor government which, only a few short years ago, under the direction and urging of the current Chief Minister, was doing all it could to eliminate CIT from the ACT vocational education landscape and roll it into the University of Canberra. It was only those on this side of the chamber, along with staff, students and the Education Union, which questioned that very process, that highlighted the serious lack of scrutiny and the ultimate senselessness that such a move would create in providing choice in education here in the nation's capital.

By any measure, CIT was under siege from the government during 2010 and 2011. CIT was "review central". In May 2010 the then Minister for Education and Training, Minister Andrew Barr, formed the ACT tertiary task force, a large group of people who met for six months to produce one of Mr Barr's vision papers. "Learning capital: an integrated tertiary education system for the ACT" was intended to set a future direction for delivery of tertiary education in the ACT. It was a comprehensive work and had many laudable sentiments. It included 12 recommendations, one of which was that UC and CIT investigate new ways to collaborate.

But before there could be any work done on any of the recommendations, much less allowing time for the stakeholders across government, education providers, industry and professional groups and the community to start working out how or when they should or could be implemented, there was another review. This time it was the Hawke review. Dr Allan Hawke delivered his assessment of the future for tertiary education, with recommendations to transfer vocational education and training to the Economic Development Directorate and to amalgamate the CIT and the University of Canberra.

But just as the education community and the Canberra Liberals started to seek answers through the estimates hearings process as to what all this might mean for the future of vocational education in the ACT, we learnt, almost by accident, that Minister Barr had initiated yet another review. This was the Learning Capital Council that was to "provide the opportunity for further collaboration on the future of tertiary education". The council was to commission work that included exploring and reporting to government on the opportunities for formal collaboration between the University of Canberra and the CIT, including amalgamation.

Following this development the ACT government engaged Professor Denise Bradley, chair of the 2008 review of Australian higher education, to provide further but "independent" advice on the future collaborative relationship between CIT and UC. The Bradley review was neither extensive nor considered. Professor Bradley was given just six weeks to deliver her report. I was given a briefing by Professor Bradley and, by her own admission, she did not meet with the task force whose work she was reviewing. Indeed she noted it was a rather large group. She further indicated that had she known that there had been such a report she might not have taken on the commission.

Professor Bradley sat on her own; spoke, by her own admission, to very few people; did not consider and was not provided with any financial analysis; and in six weeks

came up with the answer that presumably the government wanted. Why else would you have a six-month-long inquiry involving 30 people and submissions from over 80 organisations, have no discussion on its recommendations, form a council to give every appearance of meeting at least one of their recommendations and then present the council with the *fait accompli*, a merger?

Professor Bradley's report advised that the status quo was not an option for CIT and UC as both would need to change and to develop to reflect reforms in tertiary education nationally and in the globally competitive market. Professor Bradley recommended that the ACT either amalgamate the two institutions into one dual-sector institution or alternatively establish the CIT as a body with greater autonomy to allow it to better compete in the emerging tertiary market. The government considered the options recommended by Professor Bradley and formed yet another steering group to advise government on the Bradley options. It was strongly believed among CIT, the University of Canberra and the tertiary sector, including the unions, that the government's clear preference was that CIT be taken over by—sorry, merged with—the University of Canberra. CIT was not in favour of it but obviously the University of Canberra was.

The government proposed initially to explore what they called the middle ground and announced a notionally collaborative venture between UC and CIT, referred to as UCIT. This proposed collaborative direction was designed to provide a pathway to full amalgamation. As they say, the rest is history. It is only four years later that CIT has moved to establish a board, albeit with some limitations as to independence and freedom from ministerial direction.

Of course, we now know that while all that attention on mergers and the future of CIT was proceeding, a growing tsunami of complaints about bullying, about inappropriate appointments and about unqualified teachers was starting to emerge. Perhaps the task force, the council and the Bradley review were all designed to deflect from the real issues that CIT was facing. It was not financial problems that beset CIT; it was HR problems.

That continues to today, having been consistently and repeatedly ignored and avoided by successive education ministers. Only one education minister, Dr Bourke, had the decency and the courage to have the matters examined. After damning reports from the WorkSafe Commissioner, Mark McCabe, he placed an improvement notice on CIT and forced the CIT management to look at matters that they and the government had deliberately ignored for years—possibly a decade.

They brought many of the issues to light and the Commissioner for Public Administration was called in to examine and make recommendations. He did not find any allegations proven, but a February 2015 Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearing did, and how many more aggrieved staff will take that appeal route is yet to be determined. There are still questions about inappropriate management training coming to light even this year. There are still questions about incomplete courses. There are still allegations of bullying. And to date there are still no answers from the current minister.

Ms Porter of course makes no reference to the real issues that are facing CIT, and it is a pity that in this motion she failed to take that opportunity to shine a light on what is holding CIT back from what it could and should be.

Ms Porter's motion talks about what CIT should be, and there is much in this motion that we would agree to. The first four parts of the motion are straight statements of fact. There is no question that access to high quality skills education is necessary to the ongoing prosperity of the community; that a well-funded public TAFE system ensures that all citizens can gain access to skills education and training opportunities; that the Canberra Institute of Technology is the ACT's sole public TAFE provider; and that CIT has played an important role in the economic and social life of the ACT.

However, on that first point, about access to high quality skills education, Ms Porter might like to check with those seeking Auslan interpreters and those wanting to undertake tertiary training in Auslan as to whether CIT is delivering access to high quality skills education. CIT, or perhaps the minister, does not see a need for Auslan unless there is a commercial outcome. So the reference to high quality skills education being necessary to the ongoing prosperity of the community might require that high quality skills education be linked to high commercial return.

Going further down the remaining points, there are others that are clearly open to debate and query. I know that the current minister for education will trot out her regular claim that all that the Canberra Liberals want to do is bring CIT down, and include me in that. She has mentioned this umpteen times. Every time there is some criticism—criticism that is calling for change—the minister trots out her now very familiar lines. The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth, Ms Burch. As a former member of the CIT Advisory Council, I have enormous respect and support for the history of the CIT, its contribution to ACT vocational education and the role that it should play.

I would contend that it is successive education ministers that are the true enemies of CIT because they have continued to accept mediocrity and there are issues they have refused to face that have been brought to them by students and teachers at CIT. They have continued to hide CIT's mistakes. They have pretended not to believe the internal ructions, the dysfunctional workforce, the inappropriately trained teachers and directors that have been the hallmark of CIT for too long. It took one brave Labor education minister, Dr Bourke, to blow the whistle on this activity.

Ms Porter's motion refers to CIT's consistent delivery of high quality courses and outcomes for their students. That, of course, is what one would hope, but we know that they do not always do that. The current inquiry will have an opportunity to further examine that issue, so again perhaps this motion from the chair of the education and training committee is not so well timed. In past years we have challenged the frequency of teachers being engaged with inappropriate or insufficient qualifications, and I cannot be certain that that particular trait does not continue to this day. That clearly brings into question the ability of consistent delivery of high quality courses, just as it would and does at times challenge the regard and confidence in CIT from employers and graduates.

Moving down the remainder of the points in Ms Porter's motion, one can only suggest they are little more than PR spin. The proposal that the ACT government has a strong commitment to CIT is clearly aspirational at best. The Labor government tried by several methods to get CIT abolished. It had one review after another, perhaps with the intention of creating such instability within CIT that it folded into the University of Canberra.

We know that CIT has and had financial problems. We know it had and has serious staff morale problems. A merger might have resolved many of those issues. If this government had taken up, in 2011, the suggestion of more autonomy rather than pursuing the abolition line, many of those ongoing problems CIT is facing now might have been addressed then.

The recent establishment of a board structure does signal a new opportunity for CIT to get the fundamentals right. There is no question about the unique and critical role CIT plays in delivering vocational training for thousands of young Canberrans. Growing our trades and delivering tradesmen to the workforce who have had the best vocational education is core to what CIT does. But we always have to ensure that our educational institutions are scanning their own environments regularly and honestly, that they are open and honest in addressing their shortcomings, to ensure that we have quality students coming out of a quality institution.

If this government is to genuinely deliver on the final clause in this motion—"to ensure that CIT remains a high quality and responsive training provider that meets the needs of its students, employers and the broader ACT community"—it has to be open and honest in addressing CIT's problems. To date it has not been, and by avoiding them it is not doing anyone any favours.

CIT can be a leader in vocational training but it can only get there if it commits to genuine engagement with its staff and students and creates a learning environment that is supportive of staff and students, and open and honest in acknowledging and addressing any shortcomings.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (11.35): I am pleased to rise in support of Ms Porter's motion today and her comments on the importance of access to vocational education and training—and, of course, the flow-on benefits that this delivers for a skilled workforce in our city.

This motion is a continuation of a conversation that we have been having in this place this year about how essential it is that the ACT maintains a thriving higher education sector. I say a "conversation", but perhaps that is not the best description because a conversation generally requires two engaged parties. Last week, and in fact this year, what we have seen is that those on one side of this conversation are prepared to lay down a long-term vision for education in this city—

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Dr Bourke): Order, Mr Doszpot!

MR BARR: and are prepared to back that vision with legislative action that is being opposed consistently by those opposite.

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order!

MR BARR: What we have seen throughout this debate, going back over years, is a litany of complaints from those opposite. There is never a solution, an alternative position or any serious engagement in the wide range of deep and longstanding issues that need to be resolved and worked through. The one thing I was pleased about in Mr Doszpot's contribution—a nasty contribution though it was, with personal attacks that were entirely unnecessary—was that it did highlight an extensive process of engagement and an exploration of a variety of different models and issues, and outlined how extensive consultation has been over a number of years on this important agenda for the city.

What has been consistent throughout this process is the negativity of those opposite. In particular, the shadow minister has never positively engaged in this debate. All that we get time after time is a repetition of the same complaints, with no substantive—

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order, members! Stop the clock. Sit down, Mr Barr, please. Mr Doszpot, you are persistently interrupting the speaker with interjections. That is disorderly. Mr Barr.

MR BARR: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. So what we have had is no substantive engagement in the big issues that matter for the future of higher education in this city.

There is a very clear contrast in the approach of this side seeking to test new ideas, to engage with stakeholders and to move the sector forward. Yes, there have been a variety of options that have been put forward and have come out of the various consultation processes that have been explored. Not all of them have been pursued, not all of them have been unanimously supported, but at least the ideas have been coming forward, which is in stark contrast to the complete absence of any original thought from what we have had opposite for years. It is not as if the shadow minister has not had time in that portfolio to think about some alternatives, to put forward a vision, an alternative vision. But no; it is much safer and easier just to criticise those who do try to put forward new ideas and a new way forward and ways to improve and enhance higher education in this city.

What we have had over the course of this year in the debate so far is ministers and government members speaking, articulating ideas and looking to advance an agenda for reform, to enhance education in this city, to attract new students, new researchers, new investment into our higher education sector.

Ms Porter has spoken passionately on a number of occasions on this issue, so it was quite unnecessary for the shadow minister to lead off his contribution with a personal attack on Ms Porter. It was quite unnecessary. Ms Porter has spoken at length about what a thriving and dynamic sector we have but she is also engaged deeply in the discussions about how we can best position this sector for a future wave of growth. That is exactly what we are seeking to do.

What we hear from the other side of politics, locally and nationally, when they do put forward ideas, is ideas that are largely to cut funding and to shift the burden of the costs of higher education onto students. That is the agenda from the Liberal Party. That is what we hear and that is what they pushed twice unsuccessfully at a federal level. And we hear nothing different from those opposite—depending on which day of the week it is and what the policy position is, whether it is a barnacle or not—as to whether those opposite are in fact supporting Christopher Pyne, federal education minister, and Tony Abbott or not. And it will depend, of course, on what day of the week it is, given the complete failure of the federal government to advance a policy agenda in this area.

So what we are here talking about today is the vital role that the TAFE system plays in our higher education framework. The CIT makes a large and significant contribution to the territory economy; around \$850 million on recent figures. We have close to 15,000 students from the territory and more than 4,000 interstate and international students studying at our TAFE. There is a personal spend from those interstate and international students of around \$700 million each year. The CIT has more than 700 full-time employees.

This shows not only the economic value but also the high level of engagement within a city of 400,000 that the higher education sector, including our TAFE, has and how important this sector is to our long-term, social and economic future. That is why it is important that we have these debates and that we tease out the various policy positions of the major stakeholders and, indeed, those who would seek to be the government of the territory.

I will always favour a process where ideas are aired and considered rather than one that is just about taking pot shots at ideas that are brought forward. We should always allow ideas to be debated. There is nothing wrong with that and there is nothing wrong with this debate continuing but it needs to be a two-sided conversation, and if there are ideas and actual agendas for reform that are coming forward we will welcome that debate. But what we need is a two-sided conversation. I know we are not going to get one. That is not going to deter the government and people who are interested in the future of higher education in this city and who are interested in the future of the TAFE system to continue to put forward ideas for reform.

I know that Minister Burch will be bringing forward a number of major reforms for the CIT that go to not only infrastructure questions but also governance and will be looking to build on the presence of the CIT and to strengthen the institution, just as we seek to strengthen the University of Canberra. In both instances I know we will be opposed by the Canberra Liberals. But you are defined in politics by the fights you need to have in order to achieve social progress and good outcomes for your community and this is one—

Mr Doszpot interjecting—

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Sit down, please, Chief Minister. Stop the clock. Mr Doszpot, you are warned.

Mr Doszpot: I apologise.

MR BARR: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. This is one debate we are very happy to have—Labor’s vision for higher education and for TAFE in this city against what is proposed or not proposed by those opposite. We will look forward to having this debate every day through the remainder of this term of the Assembly because it is important to our city’s future.

I thank Ms Porter for bringing forward this motion today. It should be supported by all of those who support the value of education in our community. Thank you, Ms Porter, for raising it today.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.46): I rise briefly to speak in support of Ms Porter’s motion today and to outline what I think are the substantial benefits of the CIT for the ACT. As I have said in support of similar motions and matters of public importance in recent times, the ACT Greens believe that high quality, free and equitable education is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy and is fundamental to our continued prosperity. We want to see a range of accessible education and training programs offering new opportunities to adults at all stages of their life, including those re-entering the workforce and adjusting to changed circumstances, and I believe that the CIT is vital to the delivery of that vision.

As I have also said as recently as yesterday, our higher and vocational education sectors are going through a period of some change and increasingly concerning uncertainty from the federal government. I think it is a credit to Minister Burch that the ACT government continues to work closely with CIT to respond to these challenges in a measured way and that we are not facing the horror shows that have plagued New South Wales and Victoria in the past few years. If we want to talk about the future of TAFE-style education I think we need to look to the situation we have seen play out in those two states for exactly where we do not want to be. I think that in recent times the ACT has measured up very well in comparison to those other jurisdictions that have done considerable damage to their TAFE sectors.

CIT offers both entry level and higher level qualifications and operates as both a business and a social entity in many ways. Between these two points it offers students well-respected, well-recognised education with high post-study employment rates and genuine workplace-related skills. As we know, there are growing concerns nationally about increasing unemployment. The ACT has been particularly hit in recent times in this respect and it is important that we consider CIT as a bastion of not just education but potentially of re-education as people seek to change direction in their life or find a new set of skills that will perhaps update or refresh their experience levels and provide them with a pathway to a new career opportunity.

CIT, with its broad range of courses and its expansion to new modes of delivery, is well placed to address the needs of adults seeking to diversify their skills, increase their existing qualifications or study to help them get a competitive edge in a competitive job market. CIT is also well placed in the ACT to support new and emerging skill market needs, such as in the renewable energy industry, and can offer an important first step towards higher qualifications in the ICT sector, which is important for the ACT. Again in that debate we often have in this place about the need for diversification of the economy I think that CIT is well placed to provide those skills.

Certainly I have been inspired by the fact that at Fyshwick we have an area that is training people to deal with electric cars, for example. And if that emerges in the way that we expect it should as a new form of transport in the future, having that training take place here in the ACT positions us very well both in terms of people coming from interstate—and I am aware that they have come—but also in having people trained in the ACT who are capable of stepping into those emerging job opportunities. We also need to ensure that we are offering the right kind of entry level courses for those who have recently left school or have social vulnerabilities. These courses need to be offering real-world training that supports a life education pathway and are linked where possible to identified skill shortages in the jobs market.

Wrapped around the excellent teaching and training available at CIT are the social support structures that come from being a student. For some newly arrived people, for example refugees particularly, or those who may have had a limited engagement with the education system, CIT offers a place of social inclusion and community. We need to ensure that the teaching and support staff at CIT are resourced in such a way as to enhance this aspect of study and continue to be seen as a friendly connection to overcoming many common barriers. Again, that really speaks to the nature of training that is available and the diversity.

Clearly university will not be suitable for everybody, and having the breadth of skills and the level of entry points available through CIT I think is very important as the ACT becomes an education jurisdiction, as we strive to develop that sector of our economy. Having the full spectrum with CIT available there as well I think is a very important offering in the education marketplace.

In closing, I am happy to support this motion, and I trust that the ACT government will continue to ensure that CIT remains a high quality and responsive training provider that meets the needs of its students, employers and the broader ACT community.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Roads and Parking, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (11.51): I thank Ms Porter for bringing this important matter to the attention of the Assembly this morning. As other members have pointed out, the public TAFE system in Canberra is a trusted, reliable and highly regarded provider of quality vocational education. As a former welding student of the Canberra Institute of Technology, I have come to realise the important role the TAFE system performs in the ACT. And it cannot be underestimated.

In Canberra the TAFE system provides much-needed vocational pathways into work and further study options and opportunities for participation in our community. Nationally, more people attend TAFE than go to university, and let us not forget that it is the TAFE sector that plays a very big part in providing the core trade skills that keep our construction industry going—the plumbers, the electricians and the tilers.

In 2013 the National Centre for Vocational Education Research undertook a study called *Student outcomes: Australian vocational education and training statistics*. The study identified some significant feedback from TAFE students. Nationally, 87.5 per cent of TAFE graduates surveyed indicated that they were employed or in further study after training; 60.2 per cent of all TAFE graduates indicated they had improved their employment circumstances after completing their course; 83 per cent of TAFE graduates surveyed nationally indicated they fully or partly achieved their main reason for doing the training; and 88.4 per cent of TAFE graduates surveyed nationally indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their completed training.

The satisfaction levels across students undertaking training with different objectives were very similar: satisfied with teaching, 90.4 per cent; satisfied with assessment, 89.9 per cent; and satisfied with the generic skills and learning experiences, 79.8 per cent. So by any standard, these are exceptional results.

As Minister for Children and Young People I recently launched “A step up for our kids”, the ACT government’s out of home care strategy for the next five years. One of the objectives of the new strategy will be to enhance the life chances of children and young people as a consequence of improved education and training outcomes.

Ms Porter’s motion highlights CIT’s consistent delivery of high quality courses and outcomes for its students. So I am confident that over the coming years CIT will continue to play a strategic role in assisting young people in our out of home care system to step up in their transition to adulthood and progress into further education and employment opportunities.

I reflect on Mr Rattenbury’s comments regarding electric vehicles and training in the CIT, as I had a bit to do with that in my last work endeavour. He is correct that we now have students coming from other states to train here at the CIT, but also on top of that the actual contract is for Nissan Australia. Nissan Australia, as a national body, is sending its students to Canberra to train up on electric vehicles. I think it is a fantastic result and a great opportunity for CIT to engage with those partners and to work collaboratively for the future in that particular field, which, as Mr Rattenbury said, is growing quite well.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank CIT and all its staff for the important contribution they have played in the economic and social life of our city, and I look forward to seeing CIT continuing to be a high quality provider of education and training.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural

Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality) (11.55): I rise to speak in support of Ms Porter's motion on the CIT as a provider of high quality and responsive training for its students, employers and the broader ACT community. I am happy to talk up the work of the CIT and, at least on this side of the chamber, continue to have a conversation about how we can make the CIT even better.

Today is also the National Union of Students national day of action, an ideal opportunity to talk about how important public education institutions like CIT are and how well CIT supports both our local economy and, importantly, our local community. I often hear Canberra referred to as a uni town, but for someone who did not spend a lot of time at uni, I am aware that it is not always a pathway for all careers and it is not always the right choice for people to be looking to build the skills they need to get a good job. With the increasing cost of university, it is not always a choice for some people, whether that is because of commitments to work or family or because of the cost of retraining to shift careers.

I believe all Canberrans should have a chance to learn throughout their lives, and I know that public education from early childhood through to our adult lives lets all Canberrans, regardless of how much they earn or what they do for work, find new careers and imagine new experiences. A well-funded public TAFE system, of which the CIT is the ACT's sole provider, allows more Canberrans to access skills, education and training opportunities.

Institutions like CIT play an important role in our community. They offer everyone, regardless of their academic skills, the opportunity to engage in learning. For me, they have offered the chance to imagine new options throughout my working life. When I left school without any idea of what I wanted to do, I took a course which was then known as secretarial studies. When I decided I wanted to do more than hospitality, I took computer training and management courses. When I moved to work with United Voice, I undertook vocational training to learn the skills I needed to help people organise and speak up for themselves. These courses provided me with vocational skills that have prepared me well for my current role here in the Assembly. Throughout my life I have also done what many Canberrans do—I took vocational courses for the fun of learning. Whilst I will never make out a career in photography or Spanish, the courses I took mean I can still enjoy having a very basic chat with Spanish speakers in our community.

Vocational training has played an important role in my life, and CIT will continue to play an important role in our community for years to come. It is the future of vocational education and training in the ACT, both as our public provider and as our largest registered training organisation. Countless careers are supported by CIT, including jobs in hospitality and tourism, youth work, and early childhood education, as well as traineeships and apprenticeships in a range of trades, such as carpentry, electrical, hairdressing, plumbing and many more.

To highlight the important and influential role that institutions like CIT play in our community, I will consider the example of early childhood educators. We all know early childhood educators play an important role in the development of our children.

These are the first people to whom parents entrust the care of their children. They are responsible for helping children to learn to play with others, to interact in new environments and to set them up on the path to learning that will last them for the rest of their lives. Much of the same impact can be attributed to youth workers, aged and personal carers and disability support workers, many of whom are educated by TAFE institutions like CIT.

It is clear to see the impact of institutions like CIT on our community, our families and individuals beyond the evident focus of jobs and the economy. Canberra's public education system is one of the best supported and best performing in the country. It consistently delivers high quality courses and outcomes for its students, and I join with my colleagues to support all aspects of our public education system, and especially with today's motion for CIT, its students and its staff. Supporting public education at all levels is how you grow a stronger, more inclusive community. When people learn together, they get to better understand each other's aspirations and the kind of life they would like to live.

We understand that the best way for people in our community to feel included is to have meaningful work, whether that is a new career, the training for a better paying or more interesting job, the chance to study a new language or build skills for when they return to the workforce from some time out for caring or recovering from health issues. This government has a proud record of proactive policies to support vocational education and that treat it for what it is—the equal partner with university education—and for valuing it for the role it plays in giving Canberrans better lives. We are a government that will always work to ensure Canberrans continue to have access to high quality, affordable education through public TAFE to deliver for the needs of students, employers and the broader ACT community alike.

Our government support CIT because we are focused on the long-term benefits education and training deliver to help grow our economy and create jobs—in particular, knowledge-based jobs. This is especially important when considering the efforts of the commonwealth government to deregulate the university system as well as their funding and public service job cuts, the impacts of which are felt much harder here in the ACT than anywhere else in Australia. I am proud to be part of a government who are committed to supporting public education. CIT plays an important role in our community, and we recommit our support to the CIT and public education in the ACT. I thank Ms Porter for bringing the motion to the chamber today.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (12.02): There is no question that vocational education and training adds significant value to the ACT economy, the ACT community, the public and private sector and individuals. There is no question that the Canberra Institute of Technology—CIT—has played and will continue to play a central role in its delivery. The CIT offers around 400 nationally recognised courses that offer practical experience that allow nearly 23,000 students who attend each year to graduate with invaluable industry skills and enterprise connections. CIT is spread across six locations in Canberra, including the CIT Gungahlin learning centre site co-located and sharing facilities with Gungahlin College and the public library.

Late last year the Labor government passed legislation that prescribed new governance arrangements for the CIT. The primary feature of this new framework is that CIT is now a statutory authority with a governing board, able to make its own decisions in the best interests of CIT and the students and community it serves. This governing board will provide greater flexibility and agility in decision-making, which is appropriate for CIT when competing with other training providers. It is important that the CIT be given the ability to adapt to the ever changing needs of our economy, including the encouragement the economic participation of women and the changing focus of energy markets to sustainable sources of energy.

When I was looking into the very broad range of courses on offer at CIT I was pleased to learn that women are increasingly pursuing careers in trade occupations that have long been viewed as the domain of men. Technology has changed the way as a community we work, with strength and physicality no longer defining capability in traditional industries. The major obstacle for women entering trade courses has been a lack of awareness about these careers. At the end of the school year last year the CIT took the opportunity to highlight the inspiring stories of young women in trades to continue to encourage other young women to take on apprenticeships. As at the end of 2014, 96 women were enrolled in traditional trade courses such as automotive, plumbing, electrotechnology, carpentry and commercial cookery.

CIT have also partnered with the National Association for Women in Construction—NAWIC—to offer the CIT-NAWIC women in construction scholarship. This scholarship is available to assist women to gain qualifications to provide an opportunity for the personal and professional development of female building and construction professionals, whether in technical, management or policy roles. Three scholarships are available in 2015, valued at up to \$1,000 each, and they are open for women 17 years or older.

I was also pleased to hear that as of 2016 CIT will offer new qualifications and bespoke training facilities in renewable wind technology, another aspect of helping to establish the ACT as the premier knowledge and education hub of this emerging field in Australia. Unfortunately, the federal government turned its back on a long-term commitment to retain the renewable energy target as it is. The uncertainty caused by this backflip has led to reduced investment in our renewable energy industry. The Climate Council's Tim Flannery said:

We've had a loss of 70 per cent of new investment in renewable energy in this country, and when you compare that with the US and China, which are powering ahead—China particularly at record levels—it's a pretty sorry state of affairs.

I agree. Regardless, renewable energy sources are a vital part of the energy mix and will only grow in significance as we move from the use of fossil fuel to more sustainable resources. The investment in training at the CIT's new centre of excellence is expected to attract students from Canberra, interstate and abroad. The training will appeal to new learners and people wishing to upskill to work in this exciting, expanding industry—another example of CIT understanding the market in which we are operating.

I thank Ms Porter for bringing this motion forward and reiterate, as Ms Berry said, that university is not for everyone. University education, as valuable as it is, does not provide all employees with the skills they need. Ms Berry is not alone in not knowing what to do after school; I share this with her and have had the experience of leaving school and studying at a vocational training institution. I studied tourism and hospitality studies. I got work experience then as a 17-year-old in a large local hotel as a hotel receptionist. This volunteering experience subsequently led to part-time work and ultimately a full-time job. After a few years I went on to university but continued to work part time as a hotel receptionist throughout my studies. These more practical skills that I learned through this vocational training opportunity have set me up for life. I know many people in our community experience the same benefits of all our higher education institutions, including our vocational education institutions.

I thank Ms Porter for bringing forward this motion and encouraging the government to maintain its ongoing interest and investment in vocational skills and training through CIT. The current and future needs of the ACT economy will be even better served by a CIT better placed to deliver the quality vocational education and training needed by the ACT to provide the highly skilled workforce that our economy and our community need.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for the Arts) (12.07): It is with great pleasure that I rise today to talk about the importance of TAFE. I want to thank Ms Porter for moving this motion today. I know that Ms Porter, as chair of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs, is a very strong supporter of education in this city and of the CIT, the Canberra Institute of Technology.

Before I turn to the substance of the motion, I have to reply in some way to Mr Doszpot. I was disappointed that he used most of his time making negative comments about CIT. He says that he is a great supporter of CIT; yet his words were—I wrote them down; I will paraphrase—that it is a dysfunctional workplace. He said that there were teachers with no qualifications. He referred to this motion as being no more than PR spin and he said that CIT will get better only if it is open and honest. They are not the words of someone who has a high regard for the institution. They are the words of somebody who continues to want to wallow in negativity and to downplay an organisation.

Mr Doszpot made reference to the reviews of workplace matters. I will read from the Commissioner for Public Administration's report *Colleagues, not cases—managing people and resolving workplace issues*. The executive summary on page 6—it is fairly easy for Mr Doszpot to get to—states:

The picture that has emerged from this review is not as bleak as some public commentary about CIT would suggest. CIT is not characterised by a culture of entrenched and systemic bullying. There have been a number of areas of concern in relation to a small number of individuals ... Those concerns, however, should not be allowed to taint the whole organisation. CIT staff members, almost without exception, are professional, behave properly, and are dedicated to the advancement of their students and to the success of the Institute.

The commissioner goes on to say:

The most important single systemic conclusion to be drawn from this investigation process is that there is no evidence to suggest a culture of entrenched and systematic workplace bullying ... It would be a significant and damaging overstatement to describe the overall culture of CIT as toxic.

That is the very clear finding of the Commissioner for Public Administration on CIT.

Madam Speaker, let us celebrate the Canberra Institute of Technology and the provision of public TAFE here in this city. CIT is committed to its mission of changing lives through quality education and skills development for individuals, providing industry-relevant programs, highly qualified staff, excellent support services, and strong opportunities for further advancements and studies.

CIT boasts a learner satisfaction rate of 91 per cent and an employer satisfaction rate of 89 per cent. They are indeed commendable numbers, as Mr Gentleman has outlined also. These numbers are representative of CIT's commitment to preparing students to thrive in their places of work by integrating training effectively to the employer's organisation and acting on feedback from employers.

CIT is also committed to continuously improving its responsiveness as a result of its strategy to prioritise communication and consultation with employers and to communicate best practice. CIT is continually looking for ways to enhance student outcomes. A recent example is the VET outbound mobility grants that have seen photography and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts students visiting Indonesia and animal technician students working with rescued elephants in Thailand.

These cultural exchanges add invaluable learning experiences and enhance student outcomes. CIT also improves the student experience through the development of innovative and creative learning options to promote accessibility and to cater for individual learning needs. CIT recognises the importance of continuous improvement in all of its activities and is committed to finding efficiencies and maintaining a high quality program for students and industries.

At the same time, its new governance model will allow it to respond more nimbly to the needs of a competitive market. The confidence of industry, employer groups, graduates and students has ensured that CIT continues to be the provider of choice for many in the ACT. Students consistently rate their training experience at CIT to be high. High levels of overall satisfaction result from quality teaching, strong industry connections and students attaining relevant practical skills. These are just some of the benefits from training at CIT.

The completion rates of courses continue to increase, reflecting CIT's commitment to improve the student experience and provide targeted support services. CIT graduates also benefit from employment rates far above the national average, and a large number of CIT graduates also continue to complete further education. CIT is happy to welcome university graduates who come for their vocational training.

Industry continues to express its confidence in CIT, with high overall employer satisfaction rates with training. Employer feedback highlights that training provided by CIT supports students to develop the industry and work-related skills and knowledge required across this community. Partnerships with industries are fostered and cultivated across areas through advisory meeting groups, networking events and partnership forums. I have spoken before in this place about the changes to the CIT governance model. They will allow CIT to build on these strengths and to use them as competitive assets in a changing training environment.

Mr Rattenbury touched on what is happening in other states under Liberal governments that are moving away from the public provision of TAFE. We need to ensure that our public provider—CIT is a public provider—is supported, but also that it is given the mechanisms to ensure that it can be a true competitor in the market.

We have given CIT the governance structures that will allow it to thrive in the face of these challenges and demonstrate its many strengths in the competitive environment. This will also ensure that the ACT government gets the best value for its public expenditure, which is the right thing to do. Using public resources to fund education provides the building blocks for a fairer society. This is why the provision of the highest quality public education at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels, including TAFE, is essential for our future.

CIT and other TAFE institutions support individuals to increase job and career opportunities. However, they go beyond just that as an objective. They support the community as a whole, enabling all individuals, whether working or not, to engage in lifelong learning and assist the more marginalised individuals in our communities to overcome disadvantage. The ACT's economy derives a benefit—a direct benefit, as the Chief Minister has outlined—from the activities of CIT.

To achieve optimal outcomes here in the ACT, the government put forward amendments to the CIT act last year. They included the establishment of a governing board to replace the existing advisory council; the appointment of an independent chair and deputy chair; the establishment of the role of chief executive officer, who is appointed by the governing board, to replace the existing director of the institute; and the governance board becoming responsible for fee setting in line with guidelines set by the minister.

These new arrangements will give CIT a better governance structure to allow it to thrive in the new competitive student-centred market. They will also allow CIT to respond effectively to the needs of the economy and provide the ACT's economy with the skills it needs to grow.

I look forward to working with the new board. I am confident that the board, along with the provisions in the Canberra Institute of Technology Amendment Act 2014, position CIT to maintain its absolutely leading position in our public TAFE and vocational education more broadly here in the ACT. I commend this motion and I thank Ms Porter for bringing it to the house.

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (12.17), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I must say, however, that I am very disappointed in the shadow's contribution, which was extremely negative. I do not think it added any value at all. To say that the chair of the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs, which is involved in an inquiry into skills training, cannot talk about VET and RTOs in her role as a member of the government is nonsense, especially as the shadow does not seem to adhere to his own advice, given the number of times he talks about CIT in this place, as he has today.

Dr Bourke gave us a very comprehensive overview of a wide range of the courses and opportunities that are available and delivered at Bruce CIT. I have visited the CIT many times. I am particularly impressed by their sustainable technology, which Dr Bourke spoke about. The forensic science education area is another very interesting part of the Bruce campus. I have been fortunate enough to be given access to it and to be given a briefing there.

I must say that I am glad no-one asked me to climb the tower or go up in the crane that Dr Bourke mentioned. I have no problem going up in the cherry picker to put the star on the top of the Christmas tree. Sadly, it does not appear that we are having a Christmas tree anymore. I used to enjoy going up in the cherry picker to put the star on the top of the Christmas tree, even though the men who drove the cherry picker, and they were men, liked to tell me that it was probably going to collapse or stick halfway. And I have got no trouble at all having a flight in a hot air balloon. However, I go weak in the knees if you ask me to climb a ladder.

I thank the Chief Minister for reaffirming the important role that technical and further education has in the ACT, the strength of the sector and its importance for our economy and our social health. The Chief Minister is correct: I am passionate about education of all forms, be it primary, secondary or higher education and, of course, adult education and lifelong learning. As a parent, grandparent and now great-grandparent, I suspect that I might be considered somewhat biased in that regard.

Mr Rattenbury has reminded us about other valuable ways that technical and further education can contribute and does contribute to the ACT region. I thank him for that. It is right, as Mr Gentleman reminds us, to remember that a significant number of people employed here in the ACT and our region who are preparing for their careers do so through trades training and not necessarily at university.

Many of us have those experiences. We also see our children go through these educational institutions, as Ms Berry has pointed out. In our family we have many examples. One that I would like to talk about in respect of young family members who may be finding it difficult to focus is that of one of our sons who is running his own project management building business in Melbourne. He left college with no plans, did part-time work at Woolies—I am sure many people in this town have done that—and helped out a mate's father by labouring on a building job at one time. Then he went on to labour on about every aspect of building that you can imagine, including landscaping.

He went on to win the commercial cadet of the year in the ACT for project management. He has built his own six-star home and office in an old factory in Melbourne and now manages his own multimillion dollar business in Melbourne. At least that is what I am led to believe; the dollars are rising every day. It gives him a big headache and sometimes he says that he is too stressed to have five minutes off. He actually worked over Christmas when most trades shut down but he is the result of this education system that we have in the ACT.

Those who would like to see his work need only go to Mount Stromlo to see the new scientific centre built after the fires of 2003, the one with the incredible wave wall. This is an example of what having this kind of education in the ACT offers young people. I thank the minister for her affirmation of CIT and of the VET sector more generally.

I hope that her remarks and those of other members on this side of the chamber will go a long way to assist to repair any damage to the morale of those who work or study in this area who may be somewhat upset after listening to Mr Doszpot's contribution. I commend their work and I commend those who work in the directorate to support them. I commend my motion to members.

Motion agreed to.

Government Procurement (Transparency in Spending) Amendment Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 24 September 2014, on motion by **Mr Coe**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

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

Sitting suspended from 12.23 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice Health—palliative care

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. I have been informed by palliative care providers that the ACT government is withdrawing a number of services from private aged-care facilities that are currently provided by ACT Health. Minister, have there been any changes in the number of government-funded palliative care nurses in the 2014-15 financial year?

MR CORBELL: Not that I am aware of.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: In the recent past, how many government-funded ACT palliative care nurses have provided services to patients in private aged-care facilities?

MR CORBELL: I will take the question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what advice concerning the future provision of palliative care has been given to private aged-care facilities in the ACT?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Doszpot for the question. Without knowing the context on which the member is basing his question, it is difficult for me to answer, so I will have to take some further advice from my directorate.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, in what settings is palliative care provided by ACT Health?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Doszpot for his supplementary. The government, through ACT Health, has a range of contracts in place for the provision of palliative care services. Notably, we support the palliative care body here in the ACT. We provide outreach palliative care—that is, day respite palliative care services—in a number of community settings. Obviously we also support the provision of palliative care through the hospice and a number of other settings within the Canberra Hospital itself. So there are a range of palliative care settings.

In relation to the specific concerns that members are raising, I would be grateful if they could provide some further context to them so that I can investigate them. In any event, I will seek further advice from my directorate and provide it to the Assembly.

Gaming—administration

MR COE: My question is to the Chief Minister. I refer to the first administrative arrangements released in 2015, dated 20 January, which state that you are responsible for racing and gaming regulation but that the Minister for Racing and Gaming is, however, still responsible for racing and gaming policy. Did you change the administrative orders as a result of the Minister for Racing and Gaming issuing the regulation regarding poker machines accepting \$50 notes?

MR BARR: No. All regulatory functions have been consolidated within Access Canberra. That is a whole-of-government reallocation to separate the policy function and setting of policy from the regulatory task. Across government—food safety inspectors, liquor licensing, gambling regulation—all regulatory functions have been brought together within the Access Canberra entity. That will allow for a one-stop shop for those who seek regulatory approval from the ACT government.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, do you believe there is clarity, given that it is a relatively small portfolio area of government but having extremely important consequences that people in the industry may not be able to comprehend who is responsible for what aspects of the portfolio?

MR BARR: The question is seeking an expression of opinion, but in my opinion the clarity is there in so much as we have a one-stop shop, Access Canberra, where all of our regulatory functions are combined. The advantage of this is that we can provide to our clients—businesses, community organisations, event organisers and the like—a single point of reference where they can get all of their regulatory approvals. There are advantages of this from a business’s perspective. For example, a business providing both food and liquor would require approvals in relation to food safety, liquor licensing and a range of other areas where they have a regulatory requirement. This is now the one-stop shop and it is working to assist businesses, the community sector and event organisers to get their approvals more quickly. Where there are issues with competing regulatory requirements causing difficulty, there is one agency with one person in charge to make a quick decision to assist business. That is exactly what is happening, and it is a good outcome.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how is the community meant to identify whether an issue falls under your control, as minister responsible for racing and gaming regulation, or Minister Burch’s control, as minister responsible for gaming and racing policy?

MR BARR: It is really quite straightforward. If the matter relates to policy, Minister Burch has responsibility for setting the policy. Access Canberra has responsibility for enforcing whatever the rules of the day are. The advantage of this is that we have a one-stop shop. So rather than having to go to seven different places to get regulatory approval to conduct an activity—if you were using public unleased land you might require food or liquor licensing; you might also need approval from the Emergency Services Agency or involvement from a number of other regulatory arms of government—you have a one-stop shop.

I have announced this. It has been in place for months. I have spoken about it a dozen times in this place. It seems odd that those opposite are yet to come to terms with it. But I am pleased that you have. The feedback from business and those who are dealing with ACT government is very positive, and I am very pleased to hear that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, will you now be signing all poker machine legislative instruments?

MR BARR: No. I have responsibility for regulation, not policy.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order!

MR BARR: Not policy. The setting of the regulatory environment is a policy function. So what we have separated is those who have the responsibility to—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members!

MR BARR: enforce the regulations—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, I have called you to order.

MR BARR: Those who have responsibility for enforcing the rules of the day are separate from those who set the rules of the day. But for those who are interested in less red tape, one could look at it in this way: rather than the regulators writing their own rules, there is now a separation. We have a clear, simple, one-stop shop, Access Canberra—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Coe!

MR BARR: to deal with all regulatory approvals and policy is set in the different portfolio areas, as it always has been. It is not that complex.

Housing—public

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Before I call Dr Bourke I would like to have a little bit of shush. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Chief Minister and Minister for Urban Renewal. Minister, why is public housing renewal important to Canberra's communities, businesses and economy?

MADAM SPEAKER: Dr Bourke, I am sorry, I was distracted and I did not hear the question. Could you repeat the question?

DR BOURKE: Of course, Madam Speaker. Minister, why is public housing renewal important to Canberra's communities, businesses and economy?

MR BARR: Our city has a proud tradition of providing public housing. It played a key role in our earliest days, and we remain a community that truly values the support that we provide to our most vulnerable members.

Our long history of public housing provision of course comes with a legacy. We have the oldest public housing portfolio in Australia. Much of that public housing was built very quickly—to the standards of a different time—and has reached the end of its useful life. The time for renewal of our public housing stock has come.

The government are investing in public housing that better meets the needs of our tenants now and into the future. This will drive urban renewal across our city and improve the range of housing choices available to ACT residents. Public housing is central to the government's strategy to alleviate poverty and social disadvantage in our community. We believe that we need to provide better housing, and that is what we are committed to doing.

Communities want better suburbs, and that is what my government are committed to delivering. Our economy needs support at this time through major investment in new public infrastructure, and that is exactly what we are seeking to deliver.

This is a challenging time for our economy and we are seeing the impacts of significant cuts from the federal government on our economy. Now is the time for the territory government to be in the business of providing new public infrastructure for this city. As part of a \$2½ billion stimulus to our local economy, we are doing our bit to build our city, to invest in public housing, to invest in better public transport and to invest in improved infrastructure for Canberrans.

It is an investment in housing, in the development and construction of replacement public housing, and this assists businesses locally—suppliers, manufacturers, subcontractors, consultants and builders. An investment in residential construction is an investment in local business that promotes spending in our local economy. Just as replacing old buildings stimulates the economy, so too does the redevelopment of our existing sites.

This will provide Canberrans with a wider range of housing choices. I think we are seeing a sea change in this city where people want more choices about where they live and the type of housing that they live in. The people who live in Canberra today will, of course, have different needs in the coming decades, and redeveloping our ageing public housing into new and more adaptive housing helps us to ensure that our city's housing stock can meet those future needs.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, why is public housing renewal important to Canberra's public housing residents?

MR BARR: As I have indicated, our housing stock is, on average, the oldest in Australia, particularly within the inner north and the inner south. That is the oldest amongst our overall portfolio. The age of these properties means that their operating and maintenance costs are high, and this places an undue burden upon tenants in those buildings. The age of these buildings means that those who are least able to afford it face much higher utility costs due to the poor design, poor orientation and construction, the low levels of insulation and the poor energy efficiency of these old buildings. We believe we can do better, and the simple fact is that we can upgrade our public housing stock through investment in new public housing.

We are not in a position to substantially reform our public housing system without a significant investment now. We cannot continue replacing stock at about half a per cent a year; it will take 200 years to renew our public housing. We need to lift our effort, and the government I lead is committed to doing so.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, why is public housing renewal important to urban renewal overall?

MR BARR: As part of significant reform of the gateway to our city, as part of a desire to ensure that public housing is more evenly distributed across the city and that we do not have large, concentrated pockets of socioeconomic disadvantage, it is important that we undertake this renewal task.

Canberra's communities deserve best practice places and spaces, and that is exactly what we are seeking to achieve through our urban renewal agenda, of which public housing renewal is a significant part. We need environmentally, socially and economically better outcomes from our public housing stock and from our urban renewal goals overall. Our older public housing estates are built to the opposite of what is considered best practice now. We need renewal, and that is exactly what the government will deliver.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Chief Minister, does the renewal of public housing along Northbourne Avenue mean that those public housing tenants who currently live along the proposed light rail route will be relocated along the light rail route if they so wish?

MR BARR: In large part, yes, it does. The experience from the first round of changes, the 20 tenants who are in the bedsits in the Dickson flats, is that they were given their choice across the city as to where they wished to relocate. The majority in fact chose elsewhere because they wanted to be closer to work, family or friends, but everyone who wanted to stay within that particular region did so. It is our expectation that over the next five years or so—subject, of course, to our success with territory plan variations to identify and achieve actual change in the territory plan to deliver alternative sites along the light rail corridor and within the inner north, and there are a number of sites identified that are part of the territory plan variation process—we should be able to meet the wide variety of preferences of existing housing tenants. This process will take a number of years; it is not all happening tomorrow. The program that we have outlined is over the rest of this decade, and it will presumably also continue into the 2020s.

Gaming—poker machines

MR WALL: My question is to the Chief Minister. I refer to email correspondence from the director of ClubsACT to one of his members in December of 2014 regarding a forthcoming regulation about poker machines accepting \$50 notes. The director of ClubsACT advised:

Andrew's elevation to Chief Minister won't impact on the outcome.

Chief Minister, did you or your staff provide advice to ClubsACT in 2014 that you supported poker machines accepting \$50 notes?

MR BARR: No. In fact, I was quite surprised to read that because it was quite clear that, in this instance, the executive director of ClubsACT got that spectacularly wrong.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, did you or any member of your staff tell anyone that you supported poker machines accepting \$50 notes?

MR BARR: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, why is it that the head of ClubsACT and member clubs knew about this proposal in December 2014, but you claim that you did not know about the regulation until 12 January 2015?

MR BARR: That is indeed an issue that concerned me. I took the action that I did at the beginning of the year in response to that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, did you support poker machines in the ACT being able to accept \$50 notes until your meeting with Mr Rattenbury on 13 January 2015?

MR BARR: No.

ACT Emergency Services Agency—management

MR SMYTH: My question is to the minister for emergency services. Minister, following the O2C report, do you have full confidence in the emergency services commissioner?

MS BURCH: I do. I know that the commissioner and the chief officers across the different agencies are fully committed to supporting this community and doing all they can to make sure that they deliver first-rate services. In regard to the ACT Ambulance Service, the chief officer there is 100 per cent committed to delivering on the blueprint for change.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, following the O2C report into the ACT Ambulance Service, do you have full confidence in the chief officer of the ACT Ambulance Service?

MS BURCH: They come with pre-set questions. In my first answer I expressed my confidence in the ESA commissioner and also my confidence in the chief officer of ACTAS, his commitment to change, his commitment to making sure that the blueprint for change is implemented and that the service pulls up the internals, so to speak—the culture of the service—to meet the high standard that its operational capacity currently meets.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, following the O2C report, do you have full confidence in the senior management of the ACT Ambulance Service?

MS BURCH: I will be short: they can refer to my earlier answers.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, have you read all of the report, and what action are you taking as a result?

MS BURCH: Yes, I have read the report. My action, as I made public last week, was the blueprint for change that will see serious reform occur within ACTAS, a timetable for action and an oversight committee. That is what we will deliver for ACTAS. That is what I have confidence that the senior executive, the leadership across ESA and ACTAS, will deliver.

Childcare—centres

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Planning. We have received a large amount of correspondence about the childcare centre development at 113 Harrington Circuit, Kambah, development application No 201426617. Residents have raised their concerns with us about this childcare centre development. Minister, has this development application been approved and, if so, when was it approved?

MR GENTLEMAN: The directorate has not given me any advice on approval at this stage. My understanding is that it is still under assessment.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how many objections to the childcare centre development at 113 Harrington Circuit, Kambah, have been received?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lawder for her question. There have been a number of comments through the consultation period. I do not have the total number of those comments in front of me, but I am happy to provide them for you. Some of those comments have come through the Tuggeranong Community Council and some directly to me well. I have had consultations and conversations with the community on the development.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, how have residents' feedback and concerns about the childcare centre development at 113 Harrington Circuit, Kambah, been incorporated into the assessment of this development application?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Smyth for his supplementary question. It is a routine process for the consultation and comments coming from the community on development applications to be looked at through the application and assessment process, and that is what the directorate and the authority are working through at the moment.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, what parking and traffic arrangements will be put in place at the childcare centre at 113 Harrington Circuit, Kambah?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Smyth for the supplementary question. The proposal in the development application called for a number of changes to parking operations for the block. As I recall, there were some 10 parking spaces towards the rear of the property, with access from the front left-hand side of the property and egress from the back right-hand side of the property into the adjoining street. That is about the level of detail that I have to mind. If there is any more detail needed, I can happily provide that.

Education—skills development

MS PORTER: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Minister, last year you launched the ACT government's new skills training package known as skilled capital. Can you outline for the Assembly what skilled capital is and how it will support training and jobs in the ACT?

MS BURCH: I do thank Ms Porter for her interest in this, following her motion this morning on the public provision of technical training in TAFE and CIT. The ACT government are committed to the economic and job growth of the territory. Part of this is the continuing development of a training sector that is responsive to the needs of students, industry and employers. We are building on a system that addresses not just the skills we need now but the skills that we will need in the future.

The skilled capital initiative targets government funding to support training in areas of high skills need. It demonstrates the government's commitment to developing a productive and highly skilled workforce that will help build the economic future and social capital of the ACT.

Skilled capital will provide \$21 million over three years to skill Canberrans in the sectors that are the key drivers of our economy. Community services, information and communication technology, professional services, motor trades, hospitality, and retail and construction all rely on a steady supply of skilled workers. The government recognises and acknowledges the importance of these sectors to our continued prosperity. Because of the demand from the sectors, training in these areas will maximise the potential for improved employment outcomes.

We have developed a comprehensive evidence base to underpin skilled capital, ensuring that it is appropriately targeted to support high quality training in areas of the highest need. Skilled capital is informed by extensive research that studied the experiences of other jurisdictions, as well as the extensive range of literature that supports best practice principles. This approach has ensured that the skilled capital initiative will increase access to training across areas of skills need, provide students with the support they need to successfully complete their qualification and reduce red tape for training providers.

The introduction of skilled capital also represents a milestone for the ACT under the national partnership agreement on skills reform. It is a flexible, responsive and sustainable funding model for training. Skilled capital will complement the existing government-supported training pathways such as the Australian apprenticeships program and the extensive range of qualifications already available at CIT.

A skilled workforce is worth much more than the sum of its parts. It will benefit every part of our society. A strong skills and training sector will greatly benefit individuals and families through increased earning capacity, career enhancement and self-esteem. The community at large will see greater prosperity, engagement, and social and human capital. Businesses will see their skills needs met both now and into the future and will benefit from a more productive workforce.

Finally, our local economy will be more productive and creative and will support the emergence of new industries. We have some of the best employment outcomes for graduates of VET programs in the country. Skilled capital will further improve our VET system and help make the ACT an even better place to live and work.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, what training courses have been funded in the most recent round of skilled capital grants, and what has been the interest from students?

MS BURCH: Skilled capital provides funding for 23 of the highest need qualifications at cert III or higher level, as well as 19 pathway qualifications. Qualifications selected for skilled capital were drawn from the ACT skills needs list, which identifies the qualifications that our economy needs and informs the government's future allocation of funding to training.

As I have already noted, key skill areas included community services, information and communication technology, professional services, motor trades, hospitality, retail and construction. We have created a tool to identify areas of skill shortage in the ACT, as well as VET qualifications that our local businesses and industries need.

The skills needs list identifies 89 courses at cert III to diploma levels in a number of industries that underpin the continued growth of the ACT. Other qualifications on the skills needs list are available for government funding through the Australian apprenticeships program at CIT.

As of 18 March—less than a month after its launch—a total of 1,214 enrolments had occurred in the skilled capital qualification. Many of these enrolments have been at CIT. I take the opportunity to acknowledge CIT's important role in supporting skilled capital and in providing high quality vocational education in the ACT and I acknowledge the benefit that that training will bring to individuals and the community as a whole for many years to come.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, how have employers and industry groups been involved in the development of skilled capital?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Fitzharris for her interest in this. Skilled capital represents a comprehensive answer to challenges faced by students, training providers, industry and employers. After developing the skills needs list, the Education and Training Directorate consulted extensively with employers and representatives of ACT key industry groups about the availability of skills and what their sectors needed most. We engaged with stakeholders, both through the industry forums and through a skills need survey, to seek broad community input. Consultations also allowed us to hear industry and employer concerns about some themes that are present throughout all programs. This includes the importance of quality training, consultation and communication, and foundation skills.

With the addition of skilled capital to an already vibrant VET sector here, we are seeking to raise the profile of VET. To do so, we are increasing stakeholder engagement and awareness of the sector's importance. I would like all students to see VET as a viable option leading to progressive career paths. Skilled capital will help ensure that the benefits of the VET sector are better understood. While improved stakeholder engagement by the ACT government will go some way to addressing this challenge, we also have to rely on both our public and private providers to support this agenda through the continued provision of quality training here in the ACT.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, how does skilled capital ensure that all Canberrans participate in training opportunities?

MS BURCH: Dr Bourke, thank you for that question. Reducing barriers and increasing completions are built into skilled capital's design. In order to support the capacity of the ACT to achieve the training targets agreed in the ACT's skills reform implementation plan, skilled capital was designed to include additional supports for disadvantaged and under-represented groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the long-term unemployed and people with a disability.

Since its launch in February this year, 23 per cent of skilled capital's students have had concession fees applied. These concessions and the additional funding provided as part of skilled capital support disadvantaged students and will ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community have access to affordable government-subsidised training.

To make sure that students who start courses finish them successfully, skilled capital also funds a range of wrap-around services to give them the support they need over the full course of their studies. Perhaps most importantly, targeting training support to qualifications in areas of high skills needs offers the greatest benefit to trainees and the public. By training in areas of greatest skills need, students maximise their opportunity for improved employment outcomes.

Skilled capital funding is contestable, thereby allowing any provider that meets the territory's eligibility requirements to deliver subsidised ACT government-funded training through the initiative. This model will increase the training options available to students and allow students to choose the training options that are right for them.

The addition of skilled capital to other government-subsidised training programs, including the Australian apprenticeships program, offers all Canberrans access to their entitlement to government-supported training.

Schools—public holiday

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, it has been determined that Monday, 27 April will be a public holiday for ACT public servants and ACT public schools but not for the remainder of either the non-government school sector or the general workforce. Minister, will ACT public schools be conducting any holiday programs on that day for the significant number of students whose parents work full time or is it intended that parents will be required to take a day of annual leave to look after the children?

MS BURCH: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. As I understand it, some schools are considering an additional day of holiday care or before or after school care. Those negotiations and discussions are happening on a school by school basis.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what consultations were conducted by the Education and Training Directorate, and with whom, to come to the decision that public schools would close?

MS BURCH: As has been said today, it is an ACT public service extra day. So teachers, being members of the ACT public service, get that day off.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, will ACT public school teachers have an additional public holiday added to their leave entitlements, and is this covered under the current EBA?

MS BURCH: I am not sure of the detail of that, but ACT public schools will not be open on Monday, 27 April.

MR BARR: Madam Speaker, I can provide some additional information. The public service EBA has this as a day in lieu, essentially due to the fact that the public holiday falls on the Saturday. All ACT public servants have a holiday entitlement on Monday, 27 April. There is no decision to open schools or not; staff have a holiday entitlement under their EBA. It is as straightforward as that. There are no additional entitlements; this is a present and existing entitlement within the ACT public service EBA for all ACT public service staff.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: To either minister: was the impact of the additional public holiday discussed during the enterprise bargaining negotiations?

MR BARR: It is not an additional public holiday; it is a service holiday for ACT public servants. So it is not a public holiday; it is an additional day for ACT public servants. And, yes, in the context of the EBA, a substitute day for when Anzac Day falls on a weekend is commonplace. It is certainly the case across the country that, when Anzac Day falls on a Sunday, there is a replacement public holiday for everyone on the following Monday. When Anzac Day falls on a Saturday, the practice for states and territories has not been to declare a public holiday. We did in 2009, when this last occurred. So no state or territory has a public holiday on the 27th, but we have an ACT service holiday for our public servants. That is in their EBA.

Mr Coe: Why is it now a shock?

MR BARR: It is not a shock. The EBA requires—

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: It has been signalled for months.

Dr Bourke: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: A point of order. Can we stop the clock. Dr Bourke.

Dr Bourke: Madam Speaker, the opposition are continually interrupting—

MADAM SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. You are interrupting Mr Barr's answer to the question.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: I will not take a point of order. Dr Bourke stood up after he heard me call the opposition to order. There is not a point of order.

Mr Corbell: At the very least, Madam Speaker, you should give him the benefit of the doubt. He was rising to his feet. Whether or not you were calling people to order at that time was another matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: Sit down, Mr Corbell. Mr Barr, on the question.

MR BARR: Madam Speaker, on the question, the service holiday has been known for some time. In relation to the bus timetable provision, under the ACTION EBA there is a requirement for a certain notice period to be given in relation to drivers indicating their availability to volunteer on the day.

Mr Hanson: When did parents find out?

MR BARR: For ACT public schools, when the term dates were published last year.

Planning—consultation

MS FITZHARRIS: My question is to the Minister for Planning. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the statement of planning intent currently under development and the workshops and other consultation which have been undertaken to prepare this document?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Fitzharris for her question. The Planning and Development Act 2007 provides an opportunity for the Minister for Planning to issue a statement that sets out the main principles that are employed to govern planning and land development in the ACT. The previous statement was issued by Minister Barr when he was Minister for Planning, in 2010. As the statement was last updated in 2010 by Mr Barr, it is timely to update the document again to reflect current views and opinions which exist in our community.

What is more, engagement with the community is something that is very important to me as Minister for Planning, and developing a new statement of planning intent presents the opportunity to do this. In preparing a new statement of planning intent, I would like to better understand the needs and ideas of the wider community and stakeholder groups and the priorities that they have. There is an opportunity to underscore what has been achieved to date and to highlight planning priorities to maintain momentum and shared commitment to the desired future of our city.

As Canberra grows and transitions into a major city it faces challenges common to most Australian and international cities. Governments and communities everywhere are looking to balance issues such as managing urban growth, reducing traffic congestion, accommodating a changing population, improving economic productivity and social inclusion and addressing the implications of climate change and limited natural resources. The ACT will tackle these issues in a way that respects and responds to the unique characteristics of the local community and business attitudes.

In preparing a new statement we need to bear in mind the four key themes that underpin the ACT government's vision for our city. These themes are: making Canberra healthy and smart, growing the economy, enhancing livability and opportunity and investing in urban renewal.

Prior to the workshops for the development of the statement of planning intent, participants were provided with a discussion paper which outlined various factors to be considered in their discussions. These included the fact that by June 2031 the ACT is expected to have a population of over 490,000 and how the types of dwellings being built are expected to change in that time. Other related issues such as climate change and the effects it will have, managing traffic in a growing city, sustainability and how big we want our urban footprint to become were also covered in the discussion paper or the conversation starter.

Once consultation on the new statement of planning intent closes on 8 April this year, all comments and suggestions made by stakeholders and the community will be analysed and summarised in a public engagement outcomes report. The public engagement outcomes report will be released publicly later this year to ensure the process is transparent and accountable.

Under the Planning and Development Act 2007, when the Minister for Planning decides to produce a statement of planning intent and presents it to the Planning and Land Authority as a guide to set the main principles that are to govern planning and land development in the territory, the statement must then be distributed to members of this Assembly not more than 10 days afterwards. This is what I intend to do once consultation is finished and the statement is finalised.

I have so far attended all of the consultation workshops for the new statement of planning intent and thoroughly enjoyed the two days I spent with such a diverse range of people in the community, to listen and hear their views. I will also be attending the last one on 8 April, which will be attended by young people from our community.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call Ms Fitzharris, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of finance and administrative officers from the national government of the People's Republic of China, as well as provincial and regional governments. Welcome to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Members: Hear, hear!

Questions without notice Planning—consultation

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, what feedback can you give the Assembly about some of the ideas raised so far in the workshops?

MR GENTLEMAN: Planning issues are close to the hearts of many Canberrans, as we know. As I indicated earlier, I want to provide an opportunity for them to guide the planning outcomes for our city in the coming years. On 4 and 5 March I met with over 60 stakeholders from peak industry and community groups, research organisations and government agencies to hear from each sector about their suggested planning priorities for a new statement of planning intent.

A consistent message received from all of the groups was the need for a performance and outcome-based planning system that fosters and rewards design excellence and innovation. Most attendees also agreed that collaboration between government industry, research organisations and the community would help to achieve better planning and design outcomes for our city. The ACT government is always trying to do its best to improve community communication and consultation. These workshops have proven to be an excellent way to increase the level of community consultation, which already influences government policy and decisions.

On 13 March I met with older people recently to find out their age-specific perspectives on planning priorities. Thirteen people attended this meeting, and a key theme was the importance of planning for an age-friendly city and, of course, ageing in place. A prominent message which came out of the workshop was the need for a city which facilitates the social inclusion of older people. This included discussion regarding the need for age-friendly accommodation in relatively close proximity to facilities such as shops, libraries and other community spaces such as seniors centres. The proximity of this type of senior-friendly accommodation to public transport was also discussed. Enthusiasm was shown for the city to Gungahlin light rail project and the way it will positively impact on the lives of seniors. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you tell us more about how the workshops were structured?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Bourke for his question. The workshops involved a roundtable setting of between nine and 10 participants. The participants were asked questions or given prompting to give insight to me and other attendees about the things that they saw being positives or negatives in the ACT planning process. Participants in the workshops, and indeed in the wider community, have been asked to consider the following questions. How do we achieve a more compact city that is inclusive, vibrant, connected, prosperous and environmentally responsible while maintaining the attributes of making Canberra a great place to live, work and play? How can we encourage innovation and flexibility in the planning system and within industry and maintain certainty related to planning and design outcomes on the ground? And we asked, "What do you think should be the top focus for planning in the ACT and surrounding region in the next three to five years?" I found that this fluid and conversational style of consultation allows for innovative and creative ideas to come to the fore more easily, which is certainly what we saw through these workshops.

Grouping various demographic groups together, such as seniors and young people, for example, provides more specific insight into the needs and aspirations of various sections of the community. The group of older people who attended the seniors workshop expressed desires that were concerned with issues specifically affecting people within their demographic, such as accessibility and service proximity, amongst others which affect everyone, like urban amenity and sustainability. I hope to achieve the same results with the group of young people who will be attending the session on

8 April. Their views are important, as not only is it true that young people often have a wonderful capacity for thinking outside the square, but in the very long term we are planning Canberra for them and their children.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, how will the outcome of the workshops shape the planning framework for the ACT over the next three to five years?

MR GENTLEMAN: The statement of planning intent, while a relatively short document, will be an important document for Canberra. It will build on current ACT government policies and strategies and recognise the main contemporary challenges for our city. The statement must be taken into account by the Environment and Planning Directorate in performing its planning duties.

Planning cities and urban areas properly is one of the biggest challenges which face any government. When it is done well, the planning process provides for positive urban amenity, social inclusion, better access to facilities and public transport and more housing options. The new statement of planning intent will establish key planning priorities for the government over the next three to five years. As the statement will have taken into account the views expressed by many members of the community, from many demographics, the outcome will shape the direction of the planning system with their perspectives on the needs and wants of the general community.

I hope that this will lead to better outcomes for the ACT and priorities which further align with the aspirations of the Canberra community.

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

Papers

Ms Burch presented the following paper:

Petition—out of order

Dickson—Shopping precinct development—Mr Wall—(1517 signatures).

MR WALL (Brindabella), by leave: I rise to have this petition noted by the Assembly today on behalf of the traders at Dickson shopping centre. This petition has been signed by over 1,500 shoppers who utilise this precinct and support the traders who are calling on the government to provide an independent impact assessment of the planned development in the shopping centre's main car park. This petition is proof yet again of the government's failure to effectively consult with the community and to take a considered approach to planning. We only need to look at this government's track record of community consultation and the uproar within sectors of the community that the various developments have created to see that methods are often ineffectual.

The community needs to be brought on board, and the government needs to promote and sell these developments. If this were done correctly, this development would and should be supportive of both the community at large and the small businesses within the precinct. Many of the petitioners are small business owners, and their livelihoods are being impacted by decisions of government. They simply request that proper consideration be given to the impact that this development at the Dickson group centre will have, both during and after construction.

I ask the government and the planning minister to take note of the traders' concerns, in the hope they are given proper consideration in both current and future proposals that may impact them at the Dickson centre.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—security breaches

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3.20): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that a number of well-publicised, serious breaches of security relating to the use of mobile phones have occurred at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) in recent months;
- (b) current systems and policies in place at the AMC to deter and detect contraband such as mobile phones within the jail are ineffective; and
- (c) the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government have been successful in extending a trial of phone jamming technology at Lithgow Correctional Centre; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to develop a new strategy to deter and detect contraband entering and exiting the AMC and provide a briefing on this strategy to Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly upon request.

I move this motion today in the wake of a number of highly publicised instances of contraband entering and exiting Canberra's jail in recent times. This issue, of course, is not limited to what has occurred in past months. The AMC has had a history of security breaches that have been well publicised through the media since the opening of the jail in 2011. However, for the motion today the focus will be on recent occurrences.

Firstly, I should start by defining what contraband in the jail is. The first item that immediately springs to mind when talking about contraband is illicit drugs. However, contraband also includes a number of items that could be considered quite innocent to someone who is not incarcerated. Contraband can include makeshift weapons, items that can be used to fashion a weapon and items as innocent as a piece of rope or wood. Tattoo guns, mobile phones, cigarette lighters, alcohol and even excess food can be included in this list. We must consider that these items are used in jail as currency and

as a way to assert authority—that is, to stand over other prisoners. Measures in place to stop these kinds of items entering and exiting the prison are ineffective, and this is a fact.

Last August I asked a question on notice about the number of contraband seizures over the previous three years. The answer showed quite clearly what can be done if the problem is treated seriously and there is a proactive push to stem this issue. Part of the answer states:

The second half of 2013 shows a notable jump in seizures within the AMC. The predominant reason for this increase is that the AMC conducted a number of extra searches in a targeted effort to both increase general detection as well responding to intelligence regarding the presence of contraband.

The notable jump referred to in this answer is significant. It equates to a doubling of the number of seizures once a concerted effort is made. This should be a regular practice, not just a one-off. For example, in the January to March quarter of 2013, 59 contraband seizures occurred. After the concerted effort referred to by Corrective Services in the answer I quoted above, that number jumped significantly, to 155 seizures in the July to September quarter for the same year. This proves that where there is a will there is a way.

The minister may well get on his feet shortly and say there is no need for a review because we know there is a problem. That is indicative of the attitude to corrections displayed by the minister since he started in the job—that is, simply throw your hands up in the air and say, “We can’t do anything about that. Let’s not bother.” And worse, “Let’s just accept what’s happening and turn a blind eye.” The ACT Labor-Green government is creating a cultural legacy that will take a mammoth effort to turn around.

The most recent public example of contraband in the jail shows just how entrenched the blind-eye culture is. The *Canberra Times* reported that a prisoner in the AMC on charges of violence was actively using his Facebook account, updating his profile consistently, sometimes on multiple occasions in a day, over a 23-day period. This is a clear breach of policy at the jail, yet it was allowed to continue for almost a month. In August last year a fight between inmates at the jail made its way onto YouTube via a recording from what was suspected to be a mobile phone. Clearly, this recording was made by an inmate in the unit in which the fight was occurring. The most alarming thing about this particular incident was the minister’s response. Mr Rattenbury is quoted in the *Canberra Times* as saying:

Mr Rattenbury said the proliferation of camera-equipped mobile phones and social media potentially undermined such restrictions.

He said he had recently attended a corrections ministers’ meeting in Brisbane, where the problem of technology was a focus. “Mobile phones is clearly one of the key issues that corrections systems around the country are facing,” he said.

That was in August last year and we are still no further along in terms of combating these occurrences. Technology is a focus in jails in other jurisdictions but, contrary to

how the ACT operates, other states are putting their money where their mouths are and are willing to take action on these issues. The Liberal-National government in New South Wales are leading the way for prisons to be phone-free zones as they continue with a trial of mobile phone jamming technology. The tactics used by New South Wales are cutting through, as are increased searches in jails. The new technology offers a greater focus on stopping contraband on its way into the jail, and this is paying off.

In another serious breach of security publicised in November last year, a highly sophisticated alleged drug syndicate of up to six individuals allegedly involved two prisoners at the ACT jail. I emphasise that convicted criminals already serving time for their crimes are continuing their behaviour behind bars. This is no one-off accidental case; this is a highly organised group allegedly boasting about smuggling up to \$20,000 worth of contraband into the jail in one visit. I suspect this is the tip of the iceberg and that the problem runs much deeper and further than can be outlined today.

The practice of smuggling contraband items of all kinds in and out of the ACT jail is prolific and it continues on a daily basis. This practice undermines the overall security of the jail and creates a culture in the facility that will continue if we do not do something about it. At the very least, the minister should be able to measure which policies are working and which are not. Clearly there is much to be done, and my motion calls on the government to take the issue seriously and be proactive in a consistent way.

It is not my intention to interfere with or compromise the security of any operations at the AMC. However, members should have the ability to request information on any new strategies on an individual basis. Hence I am calling on the government to provide details of new policies on request. A new strategy to detect and deter incoming contraband is needed immediately, and I urge members to act accordingly and support this motion today. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Justice, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Transport Reform) (3.27): I thank the member for Brindabella for his interest in the operation of the Alexander Maconochie Centre and his attention to the range of issues that are relevant to the management of Corrective Services in the ACT.

Let me first say, however, that it is not my intention to support the motion—and I have circulated an amendment which I will speak to shortly—because I think the current format of Mr Wall's motion is simply not supportable. That is not because I find Mr Wall's motion offensive, over the top or even too political; mostly it is because it is unnecessary, out of date and overly simplistic.

The fact that contraband is an issue in the AMC, as it is an issue in all other prisons in Australia, is neither news nor a surprise. In the relatively short time that I have held this portfolio, I have been as open as I can be with the Assembly and the broader community about the challenges we face in the difficult environment of the AMC.

The fact that mobile phones have emerged as a contraband issue over the last decade is also neither news nor a surprise. The fact that corrections agencies around the country are having to investigate new ways to manage this technological change to contraband management should also be no surprise.

As my amendment notes, if Mr Wall, and in fact any member of the Assembly, would like information on the operation of the AMC and the issues facing ACT Corrective Services, all they need to do is ask.

Mr Wall's motion makes specific reference to providing members of the Assembly with briefings upon request. However, as he is well aware, I have always supported the directorate providing him with briefings, including by ACT Corrective Services managers and the executive director, and this has occurred on a number of occasions. However, now that we are debating this motion in the Assembly, there are a number of points that I will need to raise in this place to address the comments made by Mr Wall.

The first point is that ACT Corrective Services undertakes a range of activities to prevent the entry of contraband to the AMC. Corrective Services works closely with ACT Policing in support of drug and contraband interdiction measures, including providing assistance with the execution of search warrants at the AMC and the ongoing exchange of information and intelligence. The AMC also has various physical and static security measures to contain detainees and prevent entry of prohibited items.

The AMC's perimeter is approximately 1.3 kilometres in length and uses various security measures, including closed-circuit television surveillance, as well as providing a physical barrier in the form of two 4.2-metre-high fences. The AMC uses more than 300 CCTV cameras to monitor the perimeter and the movement and behaviour of detainees in the prison. There are also internal fences separating various campuses and buildings within the prison to assist in restricting access to contraband.

ACT Corrective Services searches visitors, corrections staff, ACT Health staff and contractors and their belongings entering the AMC. This is done using metal detectors, an X-ray baggage scanner to scan property, an itemiser to detect traces of drugs and explosives, and physical searches of all vehicles prior to entering and exiting the AMC, including use of mirrors to search under the vehicles and random canine searches. I should note, of course, that there are examples where this is not the case. That might be, for example, an ambulance in the case of an emergency.

There are many such measures in place. In some circumstances it is necessary to stripsearch detainees. AMC custodial staff are required to check the grounds each morning before detainees are released from their cells. The AMC perimeter is also patrolled on a regular basis. All of these security measures are complemented by the use of corrections intelligence staff, officers and the K-9 passive alert sniffer dog unit working together to prevent or intercept contraband before its entry into the AMC.

Detainees caught with any contraband, including mobile phones, are subject to discipline measures, including withdrawal of privileges, loss of access to contact visits or restricted visits. Matters like this are also referred to ACT Policing.

Notwithstanding all of these efforts, it remains the unfortunate case that contraband still enters the AMC on occasions. I am not happy about this, any more than Mr Wall is, but I am confident we are working hard to reduce breaches of this nature. We are very much aware that there is not, to the best of my knowledge, a single jail in Australia that is not also battling the same issues.

Other jurisdictions also employ a range of security measures, yet, as with the AMC, contraband continues to be a problem in prisons. Perhaps Mr Wall would like to have another look at the issues arising in other jurisdictions. I know he spoke particularly about New South Wales today, but I believe he will find many examples that illustrate my point.

I will not name the states in each of the following cases, but I can refer members to media reports of a detainee making a staggering 19,523 calls in six weeks in one jurisdiction; and there was the correctional service that seized 622 mobile phones, chargers and SIM cards between 1 January 2009 and 30 June 2013. Neither of those occurred in the ACT. Then there were perhaps the more ambitious attempts of a man who was charged after allegedly trying to fly drugs into a maximum security prison using a remote drone. This simply indicates how desperate and creative some of our detainees can be.

The motion before us specifically mentions the mobile phone jamming trial that has occurred in the Lithgow prison in New South Wales. I note Mr Wall has lauded the efforts of his political colleagues in the Nationals and Liberals in the New South Wales government. It is worth noting that the project to identify suitable jamming technology commenced more than 10 years ago in New South Wales, at a time when the coalition was out of office, and would be for some years.

To ensure that the Assembly is under no illusion as to the credentials of all political parties in supporting increased security and phone jamming in New South Wales prisons, I note that it was under Bob Carr and Labor that the first work began on this trial, and subsequently another three Labor premiers—Morris Iemma, Nathan Rees and Kristina Keneally—carried the work forward from 2002 to 2011. Barry O’Farrell, of course, then became the Liberal Premier for a number of years, and now the Liberal Premier Mike Baird has held the job for just under a year.

It is hardly fair to single out any one party or another when you look at those numbers. That undermines the very credibility of Mr Wall’s motion—the fact that he failed to acknowledge the actual history of that trial, or it reflects the fact that he does not know as much about it as he possibly should. Hopefully today we will fill in some of those blanks.

I could, of course, also talk about the shifting changes in federal politics that the Lithgow trial has quietly seen come and go over the years, given that a number of federal authorities play a role in the regulation of communications technology. But I think that would be somewhat of a digression.

The much-vaunted and highly complex Lithgow trial has had significant cross-jurisdictional support from state and territory governments of different political colour over those more than 10 years, because the issue of mobile phone use in prisons is of concern to all corrections ministers. The various corrections services around the country are working together to address the issue.

I can also provide the Assembly with information about the Lithgow trial. The trial at Lithgow may yield some learning for other jurisdictions, including the ACT, insofar as how corrective services nationally tackle the issue of mobile phones in prisons. I understand the trial concluded on 30 September 2014 but that the reporting and evaluation process is ongoing.

It is important to note that the use of jamming devices is illegal in Australia, and consequently the trial in Lithgow required an exemption under the Radiocommunications Act 1992 by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, otherwise known as ACMA. This would be required again for any additional trials held anywhere in the country.

As may be gathered from the more than 10-year process, the trial at Lithgow only occurred after a long and complicated process of submissions to ACMA, testing of equipment in controlled environments and consultation with stakeholders, particularly telecommunications carriers and the public in surrounding areas.

Telecommunications carriers have a number of regulatory obligations to provide services, particularly emergency call services. With respect to the decision by ACMA to permit a trial of a jamming device at Lithgow, they had to be cognisant of whether there would be any adverse impact on mobile phone signals external to the Lithgow Correctional Centre. Any risk to public safety through a lack of mobile phone service, particularly in the event of an emergency, would be unacceptable. With the AMC, these sorts of issues are particularly prevalent when we think about the fact that both the emergency services headquarters and the Snowy SouthCare helicopter headquarters are in close proximity. So issues of spillage from a jamming device are obviously very significant in that context.

I understand the technical aspects of a trial such as the one we have seen in Lithgow are quite complicated and that a radiocommunications private company was engaged by Corrective Services NSW to provide the technical advice and support to undertake the trial.

I anticipate that all of these issues will be explored in Corrective Services NSW's report to ACMA. Corrective services ministers nationally will await the final outcome of this trial prior to considering trialling technology in their respective jurisdictions. I am further advised that ACMA is in receipt of the final report of the trial and is currently considering the findings.

I acknowledge there are some technologies available in Australian prisons which can be used to identify mobile phones, but I am advised that not all are reliable or suitable for prison use. I am assured that ACT Corrective Services are identifying possible

equipment for use at the AMC if appropriate and when proven effective. It is important to remember, however, that there is no silver bullet for dealing with mobile phone contraband in prisons.

In light of the motion today, I am of course happy to arrange a further briefing for Mr Wall or any other member of the Assembly in regard to the steps taken to manage contraband and also about the mobile phone jamming trial, to the extent that it can be discussed. All that members need to do is simply ask me. As Mr Wall well knows from his previous experience, on any occasion when he has asked for a briefing, it has been provided; in fact quite a few have been provided without his asking, simply because issues have come up.

Turning to the amendment that I have circulated, as I have mentioned in my speech today, it touches on a number of the security measures that are in place at the AMC. It notes there are policies in place to deter and detect contraband such as mobile phones within the jail. It speaks about the trial that is taking place and notes that briefings are available to members upon request.

I conclude by saying I am certainly not of the view that Mr Wall tried to imply. My attitude is not that nothing can be done; quite to the contrary. I regularly speak with Corrective Services about issues relating to contraband. We talk about what measures might be put in place, what measures are in place and how effective they are proving to be. But these things are challenging. If we take the case that Mr Wall cited, about a fellow updating his Facebook account whilst in the AMC, what nobody knows at this point in time—and if we think about that case as a case study—is whether he was updating his own Facebook account or whether he might have been emailing updates to somebody else who accessed his Facebook account and placed them up there. I do not know. But by discussing that example and posing that set of questions, one can see that these things are not black and white; they are complicated matters and ones that all corrective services departments around the country are striving to deal with. I assure members that staff at the AMC remain dedicated to seeking to enforce the rules that apply at the AMC.

I move the following amendment that has been circulated in my name:

Omit all words after “notes”, substitute:

“(a) that the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) has a range of static and dynamic security measures in place, including but not limited to:

- (i) metal detectors;
- (ii) x-ray baggage scanner to scan property (every pedestrian entry and exit);
- (iii) itemiser to detect traces of drugs and explosive (random basis only);
and
- (iv) physical searches of all vehicles prior to entering and exiting the AMC including use of mirrors to search under the vehicles and random canine searches;

- (b) current systems and policies are in place at the AMC to deter and detect contraband such as mobile phones within the jail;
- (c) a trial of phone jamming technology at Lithgow Correctional Centre has been in development since 2002 and has yet to be finalised;
- (d) every jail in Australia faces challenges regarding the use of telecommunications and emerging technologies; and
- (e) briefings on these issues are available to Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly upon request.”.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (3.41): Labor members will be supporting Mr Rattenbury’s amendment this afternoon. I am acutely aware of the challenges often faced by our Corrective Services authorities in preventing the entry of prohibited and unauthorised items into the Alexander Maconochie Centre. ACT Corrective Services, as in other jurisdictions, employs various security measures designed to prevent the entry of prohibited items into the AMC.

It is always worth highlighting this, because the measures are quite comprehensive. There are physical searches by both Corrective Services officers and passive alert detector dogs which are trained to detect illicit substances. There are metal detectors and X-ray scans of both people and goods that are transported into the AMC. And there is a strong intelligence-sharing basis with the police. A number of these measures were part of the original design of the AMC in anticipation of contraband issues and in recognition of the challenges that are faced by other jurisdictions when it comes to contraband.

Preventing the entry of contraband into prisons remains a challenge for all jurisdictions. This is not unique to the ACT. And it is worth highlighting that even in the most so-called secure facilities, like the super max facility at Goulburn jail, contraband enters from time to time. Unfortunately the entry of contraband into a prison is often driven by drug-taking behaviour, and the same is the case at the AMC.

ACT Corrective Services acknowledge that many detainees come to custody with an alcohol or drug addiction. A significant number of offences relate directly to that addiction. For this reason the AMC runs a broad number of therapeutic and rehabilitative programs to assist detainees to become drug free and provide strategies to help detainees remain drug free. These include the self-management and recovery training, or SMART, program. This program assists people to recover from their addiction regardless of the type of addiction. Corrective Services staff deliver this program using a co-facilitation model with Directions ACT staff.

The first steps relapse prevention program aims to support participants as they go through the challenges faced when ceasing or reducing substance use. And then there is, of course, the Solaris Therapeutic Community’s alcohol and other drugs program which is operated in partnership with Karralika. Solaris Therapeutic Community is a four-month, live-in treatment facility within the AMC in which the community of

detainees itself, through self-help and mutual support, is the principal means for promoting personal change through abstinence. Regrettably, a minority of detainees persist in drug-seeking behaviour, and this often sees pressure placed on family and friends to provide them with illicit substances during visits as well as other contraband.

Preventing contraband entry cannot be undertaken in isolation by any one agency. Corrective Services therefore works closely with ACT Policing in support of drug and contraband interdiction measures, including providing assistance with the execution of search warrants at the AMC and with the ongoing exchange of information and intelligence.

The Assembly may recall there were media reports late last year regarding a number of search warrants executed in the AMC in May last year. That operation was the result of ongoing collaboration and intelligence sharing between ACT Corrective Services and the police. That operation demonstrates the significant efforts that ACT Corrective Services make, in partnership with the police, to ensure that contraband entry to the AMC is prevented and, if it does occur, that offenders are detected and prosecuted.

As Mr Rattenbury has highlighted in his comments, the government is aware of the mobile phone jamming trial being undertaken at the Lithgow Correctional Centre in New South Wales. Having been a minister for corrective services, I was party to a number of these discussions at the corrective services ministers council in relation to this issue in previous years.

As Minister Rattenbury has indicated, the commencement of the trial took in excess of 10 years to progress after many complicated technical consultation and approval requirements. These would be similarly required for any additional trial in the context of the ACT. I understand that the reporting and evaluation of the Lithgow trial continues and that, until such time as the Australian Communications and Media Authority has reviewed the findings of the trial, there can be no conclusions drawn from it; nor is it likely that there will be further trials permitted.

There is a need to weigh the actual and potential dangers posed by mobile phone use in prison against the potential danger to mobile telephone services and emergency call services in the community posed by the use of jammers before we reach further conclusions about it. The government take the issue seriously, and we continue to support ACT Corrective Services and ACT Policing in their endeavours to address contraband, including the issue of contraband mobile phones. Government members will be supporting Mr Rattenbury's amendment.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3.47): I will speak to the amendment and close the debate. The purpose of the motion that I brought here today was not to simply hold a review or have an inquiry into whether or not the problem exists. I think all members of this Assembly acknowledge that problems do exist in running the ACT's jail. But more importantly, it was the intent to have a look at what we are doing, what is working and where the gaps might exist and then to look at other jurisdictions, both across the country and internationally, to see what some of the best practices are in combating the issue of contraband entering our jails.

We have heard speeches from both Mr Rattenbury and Mr Corbell about some of the problems that exist at the jail, starting with, I guess, a systematic flow of how it works. I think the statistics show that upward of 80 per cent of people who come through AMC—prisoners, once they are on remand or sentenced—have an addiction or a substance dependence of some form or another. The question then needs to be asked by us as a community: what do we see the purpose of the AMC, Canberra's sole jail, to be? Is it merely a facility where people are taken out of mainstream society or is it a facility where rehabilitation is a core focus, where the opportunity to change the behaviours of the past, to rehabilitate and hopefully become a law-abiding member of society should be a focus? Simply saying that what we are doing is sufficient undersells what we as a community expect of a jail and of what opportunities the people that enter into our corrections system should be given.

I think there are a number of simple steps that can be taken within the jail that would help reduce the instances of contraband coming in and reduce the likelihood of prisoners partaking in these kinds of behaviours. Shortfalls that exist include that random drug testing that occurs at the jail is done anonymously. A prisoner can be selected for a drug test, return a positive reading but authorities are not allowed to have any personal identification on that sample. All it does is provide statistical data of what proportion of the prison population is using drugs but no recourse, disciplinary action, loss of privileges or, which might be more appropriate, additional services, counselling or opportunities to enter rehabilitation programs.

It is rich to be taking it from those on the opposite side who say that they are doing all that they can to prohibit drugs from entering the prison when one of the core commitments of the parliamentary agreement entered into by the ACT Labor Party and the ACT Greens was to introduce a needle and syringe program in the jail. To members of the opposition and to the broad community, introducing needles into the jail is ultimately holding up a white flag, surrendering and saying, "Drugs are in the jail. This is a fact of life. We're going to facilitate it rather than try and combat it." That is the view that the vast number of people in the community share. That is the reason why it is high time a discussion was had as to what is the purpose of the ACT's jail. Is the Alexander Maconochie Centre simply there to take people out of the mainstream community or is it there as an opportunity to rehabilitate?

The amendment Mr Rattenbury has moved clearly indicates that the focus is business as usual. It states a number of the security measures that are in place. It does not speak about any policies or strategies that have been developed in recent times to combat this legacy we have had over the past years, since the jail first commenced operation, of contraband entering in ways ranging from something as simple as it being thrown over the fence to coming in on contact visits, being brought in by visitors or contractors to the facility, or coming in with grocery or food purchases. Where are the weaknesses, what are we doing to combat these weaknesses, and what is working best in other jurisdictions?

The opposition will not be supporting Mr Rattenbury's amendment. We think it is high time this matter was taken seriously and was made a core focus of the operation of the jail.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8

Noes 7

Mr Barr	Mr Corbell	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	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Arts—community events

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (3.55): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) Canberra Day events this year were a continuing success with record attendance;
- (b) that Canberra paid tribute to the Centenary of Anzac with a special, one-off concert featuring a traditional “Beating Retreat” ceremony by the Australian Defence Force and a performance from the Canberra Symphony Orchestra;
- (c) the growing cultural strengths of the capital;
- (d) as part of a packed events program Enlighten, the Night Noodle Market, the Balloon Spectacular, and Art not Apart helped draw tourists from across the region and boost the local economy; and
- (e) these events are part of what makes Canberra the most liveable city in the world; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) deliver high quality events for the community;
- (b) work with the local business and community sector to promote a wide range of events in Canberra; and
- (c) support the work of Access Canberra to make it easier for the private sector to start and operate events in the ACT.

I rise today to recognise the work of the ACT Labor government in transforming Canberra into a vibrant cultural centre for the country. We only have to look at the huge turnout over the Canberra Day weekend to see how, in just a few years, Canberra has become the place to be. Enlighten, the Balloon Spectacular and Art, Not Apart have drawn tourists from across the region and the country. This not only boosts our local economy; it boosts our culture and is integral to breaking down perceptions that Canberra is boring. It is a way for us to spruik, and be proud of, our thriving cultural scene and arts community.

The Canberra Day events this year were a continuing success. The 2015 Canberra Day celebrations were held over the Canberra Day long weekend and provided a perfect showcase for the city's continuing evolution and growing reputation as a great place to live, work, visit, learn and invest.

The Enlighten festival, now in its fifth year, returned between 27 February and 7 March. It brought colour and culture to Canberra after dark. Enlighten included 22 ticketed events and over 30 free events and partnered with 12 cultural institutions to provide these events. Canberrans were treated to events ranging from films to tours, live music, the excellent night noodle markets and even a late-night rave at the National Library, that most serene of public institutions by day. The beautiful projections that lit up six of Canberra's most iconic buildings in the parliamentary triangle were spectacular.

Canberra was also fortunate to host premier international installations and performances, including *Voyage* from the United Kingdom, which saw 300 illuminated paper boats launched on Lake Burley Griffin after sunset, providing a beautiful view of the lake and of these incandescent origami ships. *Voala Station* from Spain, described by the *Canberra Times* as an "aerial extravaganza", were also one of the main performances at Enlighten, drawing huge numbers of people to their colourful and acrobatic show. These were some of the key cultural highlights of Enlighten, and it is no surprise that thousands of Canberrans and people from interstate came to see these performances and light installations.

Enlighten is increasingly providing direct economic benefits to the ACT through visitor expenditure. Every tourist travelling to the ACT stays at a Canberra hotel, eats at a Canberra restaurant and goes shopping in Canberra businesses. Every attendee builds towards positive social outcomes for our city. Of the thousands of people that came along, each person is adding to a booming culture in Canberra and is helping to make these events successful and put Canberra on the cultural map.

The 11th annual Lights! Canberra! Action! film festival formed part of the Enlighten program on Friday, 6 March, bringing a little piece of Hollywood to Canberra. This unique festival provided budding film-makers with just 10 days to write, shoot, edit and produce a seven-minute Canberra-centric film around this year's theme, "Swings and roundabouts". Held in the Senate rose gardens at Old Parliament House, Lights! Canberra! Action! attracted 32 film entries and generated attendance of around 2,000 people.

We saw an effective advertising campaign by the ACT government around Enlighten. During the preceding Asian Cup and Cricket World Cup matches, with many played at Bruce stadium and Manuka Oval, people travelled to and looked at what Canberra had to offer. The Enlighten night noodle markets and the full Enlighten program were released between December and February. This timing for a dedicated local and national media campaign is a key part of the reason the event was so successful and why so many people travelled to Canberra.

To add to the huge success of Enlighten, the 2015 Canberra Balloon Spectacular is another example of a burgeoning culture in Canberra. As a free event, the Balloon Spectacular remains a fantastic community celebration of colour, sound and movement that offers plenty of excitement on the ground and in the air. Canberra's vast array of national attractions and Lake Burley Griffin were on show, forming a stunning backdrop for the event. Social media engagements associated with the Canberra Balloon Spectacular continue to flourish. Beautiful photographs, social media success and online news coverage ensured widespread local, national and international exposure across the nine-day event.

There was also a great partnership built with traditional media. The Balloon Spectacular partnered with the *Today* show in 2014 and again this year, with the Balloon Spectacular broadcast to a national television audience on the opening Saturday. Two very popular, special-shaped balloons need to be acknowledged: Yoda from *Star Wars* and the Angry Birds balloon. Kids young and old are *Star Wars* fans. Girls and boys, men and women were able to enjoy Yoda's presence in our skies. An enjoyable experience it was. These special shapes were among more than 30 giant hot air balloons that took part in the 2015 show and lit up the Canberra sky with colour.

The Balloon Spectacular was also an opportunity to spruik some of Canberra's other cultural goods. The Forage food market, founded and run by the creative and energetic Belinda Neame, catered for the event and featured an array of local traders. The Canberra Raiders, the Canberra Cavalry, the Canberra Capitals and Canberra United also had a presence on the day, providing activities and autograph signing. The Canberra Balloon Spectacular wrapped up on Sunday, 15 March, with over 40,000 people attending from around Canberra and interstate. This is an increase of over 10,000 people since last year alone.

The Canberra Day festivities also showcased Canberra's new look and some of its newer locations.

I would also like to briefly acknowledge the work done to accommodate local Canberra content for the festival. The headline act, Safia, originating from Canberra, were a highlight of the day and, notably, gave our Chief Minister a brief opportunity to be part of a boy band. Approximately 20,000 people attended the Canberra Day events—a huge success.

All these events have been carried out on the back of a record-breaking Floriade and the hugely successful summer of sport, already discussed in this place, which included seven Asian Cup and three Cricket World Cup matches. And with Westside Acton Park opening, Canberra as a cultural centre is beginning to flourish.

The Canberra Day weekend also gave an opportunity for Canberra to pay tribute to the centenary of Anzac. This came in the form of a special one-off concert featuring a traditional beating retreat ceremony by the Australian Defence Force and a performance from the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. The Symphony Orchestra presented a program of music culminating with Tchaikovsky's rousing *1812 Overture* performed alongside the combined bands of the Australian Defence Force and with guns fired over Lake Burley Griffin. Nearly 13,000 people were in attendance. The ACT government was very pleased to welcome ActewAGL as the major sponsor for Canberra's Anzac centenary tribute. Without their valuable contribution, the event would not have been possible.

The spectacular events and the huge turnout show the growing cultural strengths of our capital. In 2015 alone Canberra has hosted matches for the Asian Cup and the Cricket World Cup; the Enlighten festival; the Lights! Canberra! Action! Festival; the fringe festival; a hugely successful Multicultural Festival; the Art, Not Apart celebration of culture; the Canberra Show; and many other events that are making Canberra such a terrific destination.

I would like to commend the work of the Chief Minister and the ACT Labor government, along with all the ACT government officials and groups involved in organising these cultural events. I would like to see the government continue to deliver these high quality cultural events for the Canberra community and to work with local businesses and the community sector to promote a wide range of events in Canberra.

We also need to support the work of Access Canberra in order to make it easier for the private sector to start and operate future events in the ACT. So far, its work has made a real difference to national events and events as different as the Forage and Hustle and Scout markets and last weekend's fundraising walk for Tara Costigan.

Although the opposition do not quite seem to understand the difference between policy and regulation, when they do not seem to be able to understand what red tape reduction really looks like in practice, this government will continue to work actively to support events across our city. I believe that, if we do this, Canberra will continue to cultivate and maintain its reputation as a growing cultural centre in Australia. I commend the motion to the chamber.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.04): I always love these motions that have internal inconsistencies. Calling on the government to support the work of Access Canberra, which is a government initiative that is just three months old, would indicate that Ms Fitzharris has internal knowledge that the government is about to ameliorate the good work of Access Canberra, water it down or get rid of it. It is curious that, in such a short lifespan of one of the key initiatives of the new Chief Minister, we already have to have motions from the Labor backbench calling on the government to support the work of Access Canberra and make it easier for the private sector to start and operate events in the ACT. The private sector does need assistance to start and operate events in the ACT, because the major impediment to the private sector in the ACT is the ACT government.

Again, we would like to thank Ms Fitzharris for bringing this motion on and for bringing to the attention of people that it has been hard for the private sector under this government. Given that the Treasurer, Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development has been responsible during a large portion of that time, the condemnation of his activity is duly noted. It is quite courageous of the member to stand up to her Labor colleagues and say, “Things are wrong here and they need to be fixed.” Ms Fitzharris, for your efforts today in outing the Chief Minister in this way, thank you very much.

You only have to go to the history of some of the events to know that this is a government that does not respect the intellectual property of private enterprise. In particular, I refer to the balloon fiesta and Science Week. We used to have a private organisation that ran the balloon fiesta. We used to have a private organisation that ran Science Week. Over time, the government collected their intellectual property and learnt what they did. In some tenders now, you actually have to give over to the government your intellectual property on how you will run your event; otherwise the government will not help, will not allow it or will not provide assistance. What you have to do is surrender your hard work. Then, lo and behold, what does the government do?

Mr Coe: Politburo.

MR SMYTH: Just like the Politburo, the government pulls it back into the system and runs these events itself. I notice that at the recent balloon fiesta, which we all love, there were textings going out that there were 45 balloons in the air. One person rang me and said they counted 28. They could not see the other balloons purported to be there. The problem here is that you have got a government that had these events—

Mr Barr: You spend your time counting balloons, do you?

MR SMYTH: No; the balloonists spend their time counting balloons, Chief Minister. They like keeping people like you in control. Most of them were there looking for *Skywhale*. *Skywhale* here? *Skywhale* there? *Skywhale* nowhere! The only legacy of the centennial year is the *Skywhale*, and Andrew Barr has packed it away. If Mr Rattenbury had his way, we would be protecting sky whales on Lake Burley Griffin. If not the *Sea Shepherd*, we would have the “Sea Shortage” or the “Sea Canoe” on Lake Burley Griffin. There will be Mr Rattenbury in his waders and his sou’-wester hat with a harpoon or a crook. There he will be, warning Andrew Barr off from the *Skywhale*. But no, *Skywhale* knew better; *Skywhale* got scared. *Skywhale*—

Mr Hanson: *Skywhale*’s for sale.

MR SMYTH: No. *Skywhale*, unfortunately, is now the subject of a domestic dispute. Who owns *Skywhale*? The ACT government, in their wisdom, spent almost \$350,000 on an artwork that was to epitomise the centenary. Now it is an abandoned child. It is an orphan child. It has been discarded by this government and it is now the subject of divorce proceedings, I think in the Family Court in Victoria, where one of the potential owners—

Mr Coe: We've still got the owl.

MR SMYTH: But the owl was not a centenary gift. We will get to the owl in a minute. We now find that our poor *Skywhale* is in a tug-of-war—or perhaps a teat-of-war—between the two owners, one of whom valued it at \$1.5 million. That is economic growth of \$1.5 million, apparently. This is a good deal. The ACT government pay, on behalf of the taxpayers, \$350,000 for a piece of art that is to epitomise the centenary. They then give it away without a guarantee that it would at least come back once every year, perhaps on Canberra Day or during the balloon fiesta. The Chief Minister says, “*Skywhale* is dead; it has reached the end of its active life.” He had to quickly recant, because, as on many things, he did not know the truth. Of course, *Skywhale* has probably still got eight to 10 years of life, and one of the potential owners of *Skywhale*—

Mr Wall: She lives.

MR SMYTH: She lives. That is right; she lives. This is the Moby Dick of the ACT. There is Andrew Barr, the Captain Ahab of the ACT: “Bring the whale down. That damn whale.” Mr Rattenbury is there—

Members interjecting—

MR SMYTH: This is the government's commitment to high quality events: the ACT taxpayer pays for a balloon. They give it away because they do not want to or are incapable of running it. They make no guarantee that it comes back. ACT community groups who have already paid for it through their taxes have to pay to bring it back to the ACT to hire it. In the end we cut the umbilical cord—the *Skywhale* has floated off into the distance and it is now tethered to the Family Court in Victoria. Ms Fitzharris, thank you very much for bringing this motion on today. This is an outstanding motion!

Mr Coe: You can trust them with the light rail contract!

MR SMYTH: These are the people who now want you to trust them with a billion dollars to build a light rail. We cannot run a dirigible but we can run a light rail. What's the bet they bring back the *Hindenburg*. You never know your luck.

It is an important motion. Having successfully outed the government on their failure to support or rumours that they will not be supporting Access Canberra, having outed the government on their inability to support the *Skywhale*, the member goes on to say that Canberra Day events this year were a continuing success with record attendance—I think we all enjoy Canberra Day—and that Canberra paid tribute to the centenary of Anzac with a special one-off concert featuring a traditional beating of the retreat ceremony by the Australian Defence Force and a performance from the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. A fantastic night; Mr Hanson was there, Ms Lawder was there, the Speaker came, I was there, Ms Porter, I think, was there from the government. I did not see the Chief Minister. I am not sure if he was there, but it was a great night.

On a technical note, I suggest if you are going to hold a beating of the retreat and you want the public to see it, the retreat should start before darkness. The beating of the retreat is the call to the troops to come back so we can shut the gate. But we shut the gate, the darkness came down and the troops were there performing brilliantly in the dark. I appreciate the need for darkness to get the full effect from the cannon fire, but most of the retreat was done in the dark. If you happen to like the skills that our troops display in their drilling—they are excellent and some people like that sort of thing still—you would not have seen much of it that night. That might have just been first-time blues. I think beating the retreat is a great ceremony, having been to a couple. Mr Hanson has probably been to many.

Mr Hanson: The dark would have been good for me; no-one would have seen me out of step.

MR SMYTH: There you go—the dark would have been good for Mr Hanson because he would not been caught out of step and given extra drills. It was great. There were lots of people down there. That part of the National Library is a beautiful venue. As always, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra was wonderful, and with the dulcet tones of Colonel Ian McLean explaining all the intricacies of drill and the music it was just fantastic. The CSO let Ian conduct for one of the songs, which I think he got particular enjoyment out of, and anybody who was there got a great buzz. But, again, the beating of the retreat has been going for decades. It is a good thing that it has continued.

The motion refers to the growing cultural strengths of the capital. We need to work on them. There are a lot of questions about what are our cultural strengths and what are the things we should be specialising in. Of course, one of the great initiatives of the former Liberal government was the Glassworks. I was the arts minister when we got the funding for that. It took seven years for it to open and the initial setup costs doubled because the then arts minister, Mr Stanhope, did not get it. But I think it is widely acknowledged around the country that Canberra leads in terms of contemporary glass manufacture, and the Glassworks is a great part of that. The existence of places like the Glassworks where we can train, where we can teach, where we can exchange ideas is good. Canberra is the cultural capital; we have that meeting place concept, we come and exchange ideas. That is good. The displays at the Glassworks are always worth seeing, so we need to look at what we do in that regard.

The other thing that is a great cultural strength of the ACT is dance—modern dance, contemporary dance. We have produced some of the greatest dancers and choreographers Australia has ever had, and I am sure we will produce more in the future. One only needs to look at Quantum Leap, which I think on 29 May is doing another run of *Reckless Valour*. They performed *Reckless Valour* in the Hall of Remembrance at the War Memorial. A lot of us were a bit nervous about a group of young dancers going into the hall, but what they did was spectacular and they are now going to replay that at the Canberra Theatre. If you want to support the growing cultural strengths of the capital then getting to the Playhouse and the Canberra Theatre to support young performers in particular is incredibly important. Ms Fitzharris, I certainly agree with you that we need to work with the growing cultural strengths of the capital.

As I said yesterday, Tommy Balogh is one of Canberra's great visual artists, and he has just had his own solo display at M16, so that is a good thing. Paragraph (d) of the motion says that, as part of a packed events program, Enlighten, the Night Noodle Markets, the Balloon Spectacular and Art, Not Apart helped draw tourists from across the region. It will be interesting to see those numbers and the analysis when they are available of what the visitation was across the region and what was the boost to the local economy. But there are still holes in our events calendar. If you go back and read previous estimates reports, they say the government should develop an accommodation and events and attraction strategy to assist the tourist market of the ACT. It really has not done that, but it is still worth doing.

There are two dead spots. Spring and autumn are pretty good—spring, of course, with Floriade and all its attendant activity, and autumn, with Canberra Day and Enlighten and the Multicultural Festival, so that part of the year is quite full. But we still have late June, July and August which are still reasonably quiet. I note a couple of great Canberra stalwarts, Stephen Day and Simon Troeth, are looking to set up a major writers festival in that period, of which I would be very supportive. We have a dead spot in winter, and certainly December and January are very quiet in the capital.

You can keep packing more into the bits that have already got a lot of activity, but when will we get a full calendar for the year to assist to smooth visitation rates and make sure we get the full benefit of tourism's contribution to our economy? Integrating with the local region is very important as well. The motion says these events are part of what makes Canberra the most livable city in the world. That is true, but there needs to be a fuller calendar. People acknowledge there are a few flat spots there, so let us work on that.

Paragraph (2) calls on the government to deliver high quality events for the community. Let us do that, but let us not rip off the community by stealing their events and putting them in house. Let us be quite clear on this: that is not the role of government and it should not happen. If the private sector can give us something, they should be delivering it.

The motion continues: work with local businesses in the community sector to provide a wide range of events in Canberra. It will be interesting if the Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism and Events can tell us how many events the government has turned down. It might be something he takes on notice. I would like a list of what sorts of proposals have been made over the past couple of years, how many were successful and how many were not. It would be interesting to see how the government has worked with local business and the community sector to provide a wide range of events in Canberra.

The motion then refers to supporting the work of Access Canberra. Paragraph (2)(c) is quite funny. Access Canberra was only announced by the Chief Minister on 16 December, but obviously Ms Fitzharris has concerns about its future. She has heard the rumours and so she has to put this in. So, Chief Minister, I am sure you will jump up and tell us you are going to support the work of Access Canberra to make it easier for the private sector to start and operate events in the ACT. One would hope

that is the objective of the government—to make it easier for the private sector to do these things. They should not be an impediment to the private sector getting on with what it does so well. Where the government have a specific objective they would like to achieve they should address that in the most appropriate way.

I thank Ms Fitzharris for bringing this on. There are some illogical errors in the way it has been done. The issue of *Skywhale* needs to be addressed, particularly the way the government just gave away an asset. The centenary was in 2013; here we are two years later and I do not believe we have had a report on the success of the centenary and the outcomes. In December 2012 the then tourism minister jumped up at a tourism event—I think it was at the National Gallery—and said, “Yes, we’re going to set up a task force to monitor and work out the benefits.” It would be interesting if those reports were made available in their entirety. It would be interesting to see if we were able to capitalise on the centenary, because I suspect the answer is we did not.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (4.19): I thank Ms Fitzharris for bringing this motion forward today. Our city has a fantastic calendar of events, and 2015 has certainly cemented our city’s place on the national festival and event stage. To recap, since the beginning of the year the city has hosted Summernats; Australia Day; National Australia Day celebrations; Asian football cup matches; Cricket World Cup matches; the Big Bash final; one of the biggest exhibitions in the art world, *James Turrell: A Retrospective*; the National Multicultural Festival; the Enlighten festival; the Balloon Spectacular; the range of Canberra Day celebrations; the Art, Not Apart festival; and the very successful Comedy Festival that concluded on the weekend. It is a significant program.

We have sought to address some of the issues that have been identified in the past in relation to procuring events for the city in January and seeking to extend summer exhibitions at the National Gallery, as is the case with *James Turrell: A Retrospective*, through the winter months. Not only do we seek to encourage the development of smaller and new events but we also seek through our annual blockbuster fund to provide new and exciting events for the city at different points in the events calendar.

Events, whether sporting or cultural, bring significant economic benefits, bring people to our city, provide attractions for residents and ensure we maintain a high profile in national and international media. Events build on our strong sense of community pride and help formulate our city’s identity.

A recent survey of the community identified that 87 per cent of Canberrans support ACT government involvement in attracting and securing major events, and 92 per cent believe it is important for our city to host major events in any given year. The latest edition to our events calendar as part of the Enlighten festival, the Night Noodle Markets, generated a huge boost in crowd numbers for this event. It will be an all-time record attendance for the Enlighten festival. As the shadow minister wanders back, I note that he was a very harsh critic of the Enlighten festival. With more than 250,000 people attending this year—

Mr Coe: All-time record? It’s four years old!

MR BARR: At 250,000 people, its growth trajectory is faster than Floriade.

Mr Coe: How many years old?

MR BARR: It is about five years old, and it has now achieved a level of attendance and community engagement at a point where it will rival Floriade. I note that throughout this process it has been opposed by the shadow treasurer and tourism minister. That is disappointing, but there you go.

The opening weekend of Enlighten saw crowds in excess of 90,000 attending the events. The total attendance of 83,000 in 2014 was exceeded on the opening weekend. In isolation, the Night Noodle Markets attracted an attendance of over 156,000 during their 10 days of operations.

On the weekend before last the government partnered with another new addition to Canberra's events scene—the Westside Acton Park—to deliver one of the city's most significant art festivals, Art, Not Apart. It is also in its fifth year and it delivered the largest and most successful festival to date. Around 18,000 people are estimated to have attended the single-day event, viewing 200 artists across 24 sites during the six-hour period of the festival. The success of this festival and the collaboration between the government and local businesses signal a very promising future for that Acton Park precinct as part of the city to the lake development.

The significance of the city to the lake precinct in actively engaging and leveraging our city's emerging reputation as a centre for creativity and innovation, a diverse and successful arts and cultural scene, our multicultural heritage and our national significance give us the opportunity to showcase west basin as a new focal point for contemporary cultural activities and community gatherings.

I am pleased Ms Fitzharris has raised the issue of Access Canberra, and it has obviously excited the shadow treasurer so much he must have missed the last three months of very positive feedback. The government, through this initiative, is ensuring that organisers who want to hold events are given the appropriate level of government support to secure all the necessary approvals. Access Canberra provides a single point of contact for event organisers, ensuring a whole-of-government approach.

As a city, we are consistently proving our readiness to leverage event opportunities and showcase our world-class hosting capacity. The ACT government are committed to deliver, fund and assist quality events in Canberra because we recognise the substantial contribution that these events make to our economy and to our community.

It is certainly appropriate to reflect upon a very successful start to the 2015 events calendar. A number of the events that have taken the leap to the next level were, in fact, started in the centenary year. The You Are Here festival is an example I would like to highlight. Together with the Comedy Festival and a number of other smaller events, they have in the last two or three years grown significantly and been very well embraced by the Canberra community. There are many successful legacies from the centenary year, including on the infrastructure side. I highlight the lights at Manuka

Oval which were delivered in the centenary year and which provided for this city the capability to host international cricket, day-night fixtures, and, of course, a greater level of AFL.

Mr Coe: Have they paid the bills yet?

MR BARR: I note the churlish interjection from across the chamber, but that was something that a lot of people said would never be able to be delivered for Canberra. We delivered those lights at Manuka Oval in record time. That has allowed significant growth of cricket and AFL in Canberra. That is something to celebrate.

Mr Coe: It would be nice if the subbies got paid, though.

MR BARR: Despite the interjections from Mr Coe, I note he and his colleagues see no problems with turning up and accepting the hospitality at Manuka Oval and attending all of the events there. If he was so concerned about those issues, and if there was any substance to them—which there is not—then perhaps the Deputy Leader of the Opposition might have some credibility in his interjections.

In the context of our events agenda, it is strong and growing. We are seeing significant events that started in the centenary year continuing to go from strength to strength. That is very encouraging to see, and we look forward to that continuing. We will, of course, be focusing our efforts in relation to our blockbuster fund on securing those major national and international level events that deliver a significant return to the city's economy.

The evidence so far from that program is that, for around \$2.5 million of public investment, it has generated more than \$200 million for the territory economy. As a return on investment, in addition to providing some unique experiences for Canberrans, it has also delivered in spades for the territory economy, and the feedback from the community is overwhelmingly positive. Regardless of what the shadow treasurer says in this place, I know and my colleagues know that the events program for Canberra is growing and going from strength to strength and is well received by the Canberra community.

Again I point to the simple fact that 92 per cent of locals believe it is important for Canberra to host major events, and 87 per cent support ACT government involvement in securing them. That gives the government a great deal of confidence that we are on the right track with our events program. I thank Ms Fitzharris for raising this matter today. You will note I have resisted in 10 minutes talking about Mr Smyth's fetish with hot air balloons.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.29): I will be supporting this motion today. I think that, as members have touched on and as Ms Fitzharris notes in her motion, the Canberra Day events and the Enlighten festival were a great success this year. It always, of course, helps to get some good weather, and we did get some great weather this year. Certainly the night that I attended Enlighten there were huge crowds, and people seemed to be having a great time, as they do.

Certainly, as a minister and as a representative of the community of Molonglo, I got a lot of positive feedback about the great events that were on during that week. I know a lot of people went to the balloon festival, and I think we continue to be very lucky with our autumn festivals. They are immensely popular. At this time of year Canberra is so busy that, in some regards, it is actually hard to keep up with all of the things that are on but I think that we do have a series of great events. Our community loves them. The crowds show that, and the growing crowds for some events I think particularly reflect that.

I am quite pleased to see Enlighten coming on. I do recall, as Minister Barr just touched on, when Enlighten was first launched a couple of years ago there were some fairly scathing comments in this place about Enlighten. I think the doubters have been proven wrong and it has become enormously successful. I am pleased not just because of the politics of it but because I think it is great to see such an event that the community enjoys so much.

Certainly, though, in my ministerial portfolios I am well aware of some of the red tape issues that are involved in putting on all events, but I note that many of the community organisers find some of these things very challenging and frustrating at times. I do get feedback on that as well.

In my dual capacities as Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Territory and Municipal Services I hosted a roundtable last November on event coordination red tape reduction, and this brought together representatives from sports, community, arts and music groups. These people were all involved in putting on festivals, events and races. Again in my own personal capacity in participating in some of the races that are held around town, I have had event organisers make the case to me of some of the challenges that they face in putting on these events just within TAMS and some of the requirements that they have found quite challenging.

Having had that feedback I organised this roundtable. And there were a range of issues raised in that roundtable, including multiple application forms, getting the balance right on risk management, issues of noise restriction and of course insurance issues. These were the sorts of things that were consistent across some of the groups, and I appreciated the fact that members of the roundtable were both forthright in telling us what their problems were and also very constructive in identifying some of the solutions.

They highlighted that, depending on the nature of the event, the organisers may have to interface with the NCA as well as a number of parts of ACT government including Health, EPA, Roads ACT, parks and conservation, liquor licensing and even the police. A key recommendation was that they needed a one-stop shop and an event advocate within government. So I was particularly pleased that since the roundtable the Chief Minister has taken the leadership in establishing Access Canberra, which Ms Fitzharris has referred to in her motion and her comments.

Access Canberra does bring together the shopfronts and regulatory arms into a single service which aims to streamline engagement with ACT government directorates.

Based on the feedback I have had from event organisers, I think this is a very positive thing. Certainly Access Canberra has already been credited for assisting with the coordination of the recent major events, including Art, Not Apart spilling over from New Acton to the edges of the lake and Westside at Acton Park.

I think this is a positive development, particularly for people who are doing smaller events. The reality is that it is often one or two people that are really organising the event. And having better access and easier access to government and a streamlined process is a very positive thing. There are no doubt some teething issues in pulling Access Canberra together and sorting out the different parts of government in the way that they talk to each other. But I think that the intent is a very positive one and I think that Access Canberra will continue to improve things when it comes to organising events in Canberra.

Speaking of organising events, I was listening, of course, to the jovial conversation on *Skywhale*. Mr Smyth noted that *Skywhale* was the only legacy of the centenary of Canberra. I do not want to start an argument, but I do note that he forgot the Centenary Trail. I am particularly reminded of this because the Centenary Trail has been enormously popular since it opened. That and parties at the shops are the two best legacies of the centenary, in my personal view.

I did note that this past weekend was the inaugural holding of the CBR 100 challenge, which was an event using the Centenary Trail. It offered 100-kilometre, 50-kilometre and 25-kilometre run and walk events. There were nearly 1,000 entrants. Just for the benefit of members, there are legacies of the centenary, and some of them are already proving to be enormously popular. That was a great event. I would like to congratulate the organisers but I would more particularly like to take this opportunity to congratulate those who participated, particularly those who took on the 100-kilometre event. I know for some people it was their first time. They were looking pretty nervous before the start.

I had the honour of firing the starting gun, although it was one of those air hooters. I know there were a few nervous faces. I know a few people did not make it. They found the challenge too much for them, but I am sure they will be back next year having another go. I congratulate particularly those who made it through the whole event and tried something they perhaps had not tried before.

In terms of events in Canberra, the other issue I want to focus on today is an issue I spoke about and moved a motion on earlier in the year, which is the issue of noise, particularly issues around live music. Members will recall the discussion we had, and I was very pleased that that motion passed the Assembly. It carried on, of course, from a longstanding issue that my Greens colleagues have raised in this place when they instigated the Assembly inquiry into live music events. We, of course, had the 2010 report. As I mentioned last time, Mr Coe was involved in that as well as Ms Porter. The recommendations of that report were far reaching. There were 32 of them across nine broad areas.

I do not intend to re-litigate that discussion but simply note that some progress has been made on some of the recommendations from that committee report, including

good progress being made on developing the Ainslie Arts Centre as a music hub. I think that is a credit to the minister and the directorate there in moving that issue forward. We have, of course, had practical measures like bollards being provided in key locations around the city and shopping centres for promotion of events via bill posters, and the EPA is undertaking a noise study to look at issues in group and town centres.

However, there are many other issues where we have not made sufficient progress. I note, of course, that this is a complex issue across multiple directorates, but that is why I moved the motion in February, because some of these key events that people are seeking to put on are butting up against some of these noise issues.

We know that live music and some of these events contribute to making a more livable and prosperous city but there are ongoing challenges, particularly this growing conflict between live music and encroaching residential development. We saw it with the extension of Art, Not Apart, where the rather inappropriately named group, the IRA, the Irate Residents of Acton, came out and brought up concerns. They have voiced a range of concerns. I note that counter groups were formed—the Happy Residents of Acton, who were appreciating the events—but I think this underlines the fact that this is an issue where there is growing conflict as we see a greater residential development in some key central parts of the city.

I support that residential growth in those areas, as I think all members of the Assembly do. But what it is highlighting is the potential for an increasing conflict in this space. We need to protect our lively precincts. For years Canberra has lacked them. We are now seeing them finally emerging, and this is a great development for our city and one that further promotes Canberra as a great place to live. But there is a very real threat out there as some residents who are moving in are not taking to the liveliness of the areas they have just moved into. It raises some interesting questions about why they moved there.

But if you look at an area like Braddon, it has become tremendously popular because of its lively nature. But as more apartments are built in areas like Lonsdale and Mort streets, these conflicts will unfortunately be exacerbated. We need to make sure we have got the right measures in place to ensure these very positive traits these areas have developed are not undermined as they become perhaps so popular. We need to identify compatible land uses but also ensure we have measures in place to allow for these lively zones to continue. We have a bit of work to do in this area.

I look forward to the report back to the Assembly in June that arises from the motion that I moved recently in the Assembly. I look forward to further discussions with Assembly colleagues as to how we tackle some of these issues. As I said at the time of moving my motion, it is a difficult issue; it brings real conflicts to the fore and it challenges some of the sorts of things that Ms Fitzharris has raised in her motion today.

Having touched a little on that issue again, I would like to simply indicate my support for the motion and look forward to the continued development of events in our city which clearly are so popular in the community.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality) (4.40): I would like to speak in favour of the motion today. Thank goodness Ms Fitzharris raised it in the Assembly today because it finally gave the Canberra Liberals something to speak passionately about. With their pining for *Skywhale* to appear during the balloon festival, or appear at all, I feel that there is an absolute crush from the Canberra Liberals for *Skywhale*. Sometimes if you say it out loud it helps. I was sitting here listening to it and I thought, “Fair dinkum. I can see it for what it is. It’s a crush, and that’s okay. We love her too.”

But it also gives me another opportunity to talk again about the fantastic success of the Multicultural Festival and what it brings to the ACT and our community. When we think about major events, we cannot go past it. This year’s festival was my first major community event since becoming Minister for Multicultural Affairs. This year’s festival was another great success. In fact, it was our best festival on record in its 19-year history, bringing 270,000 local, national and international visitors to the ACT. I think for Enlighten to have reached close to that mark in five years is quite remarkable and it shows the popularity of an event that is quite young in its history in providing entertainment to the ACT community.

The Multicultural Festival evolved from a small celebration of a few hundred individuals and had its genesis during Canberra Week celebrations in 1977. Last week when I was able to thank the volunteers who worked so hard to make the Multicultural Festival the success that it was, I was able to meet Nina, who was one of the first people to start the Multicultural Festival in the ACT. She provided her personal history of the event in her photo albums, which have been made into a banner which shows the history from 1977, from an ethnic festival to now one of the biggest events in the country—certainly in the ACT—our own Multicultural Festival. It was a great honour to meet her and to present a certificate and thank her for the start of something that has been massive and is one of the most popular events in the ACT.

From the more than 100 volunteers that came from as far afield as Sydney, to the performers, sponsors, diplomatic community, community organisations and stall holders—the wide range of support for our festival shows just how significant it is to our community and shows its appeal nationally and internationally. Growing numbers come from out of town and even from overseas to have fun and learn more about other cultures and even make new friends. There were more than 400 multicultural community groups and more than 4,000 community volunteers who worked on stalls providing food, information and craftwork over the three days.

Our festival also draws together and showcases a range of local, interstate and international artists, craftspeople and performers through displays of dance and music, which is well illustrated in the food and dance spectacular. Organisations such as the ACT Community Language Schools Association and the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance support the next generation of festival-goers. And the Canberra Interfaith Forum brings together people from a range of spiritual and cultural backgrounds to discuss social and cultural harmony in our community.

It is quite a journey from its humble beginnings in 1977. We are so proud of the festival and the fact that it is so widely supported and successful. It is our biggest, loudest and most fun celebration of Canberra's amazingly diverse communities, and there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to deliver such a successful event. I want to acknowledge the work and take a moment to pay special tribute to all of the staff from the many directorates that support our festival, including ACT Health, ACTION buses, the emergency services, TAMS and, of course, the Community Services Directorate. They all work so hard to ensure it is safe and enjoyable for all Canberrans and visitors to our city.

Last but by no means least, I would like to acknowledge our festival sponsors who partner with the government to make this event possible. This year we are delighted to welcome on board IKEA, joining other generous sponsors such as CBD Ltd, Actew Water, ACTTAB, AFP, LeaseMasters and SalaryMasters, media partners Prime TV and 666 ABC, as well as charity partners Menslink and the UN Australian women's committee.

The ACT government's and our sponsors' ongoing commitment to the Multicultural Festival recognise the substantial and welcome contribution it makes to our economy and our community. In an age of combative international politics and the ongoing conflicts around the world, our festival is essentially a great grassroots celebration of our diverse, harmonious city and it showcases the strength of our Canberra community.

Our National Multicultural Festival is a great example of an event that promotes inclusiveness while at the same time generates significant economic benefits to our city and local businesses. I am happy that I could rise today to promote our festival and its positive impact on our city.

I also want to thank Mr Rattenbury for mentioning at least two other things that came out of the centenary celebrations—the Centenary Trail, but, most importantly, the parties at the shops. This Friday, Scullin shops will be holding their party at the shops. I encourage people to get along to that or get along to the parties at the shops in their local areas. It does not need to be a huge international or national or even local extravaganza for people to enjoy the culture in their city. They can do it just as easily by going to their parties at the shops or their local fetes. I thank again Ms Fitzharris for bringing this motion to the Assembly.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (4.46), in reply: I would like to thank members for their contributions today to the debate about major events in the ACT and events, indeed, across the ACT in recent months. I would like to thank the Canberra Liberals in particular for their contribution. Mr Smyth acknowledged other events in our calendar, other community festivals and music festivals. I think his most significant contribution to this debate, though, was a history lesson about when he was minister and things that happened years ago. I am finding, as a new member in this place, a theme about the Canberra Liberals reflecting on history but not planning much or having much to say about the future and what their vision is for the future.

Thank you to the Chief Minister for outlining the range of events and the significant economic benefits they bring to our city in jobs across the city. We know we need them, especially at this dire time.

I enjoyed Mr Smyth's comments about my support for Access Canberra. Access Canberra is a terrific initiative. It is making a difference. I have spoken to businesses and community organisations who have found dealing with Access Canberra a breath of fresh air, and I am pleased that it is underway. It can only get better. I certainly look forward to the opening of Access Canberra's first shopfront in Gungahlin in coming months.

Thank you to Mr Rattenbury for raising, of course, two other fantastic legacies of the centenary year—the Centenary Trail and parties at the shops—and also to Ms Berry for acknowledging our nation-leading Multicultural Festival, which is such an incredible celebration of our multicultural community and the contribution they make to our city.

I want to see Canberra continue to build its cultural scene, and I want our city to become a cultural hub with events that include everyone, events that reflect our own unique and inclusive culture. Canberra's momentum is extraordinary. Our community's shared ambition for our city is palpable. Everywhere you go people are singing the city's praises. Far from the momentum of our centenary year fading, it has sustained and been energised with an amazing schedule of events this year alone.

One of the aspects of the events that have struck me the most has been the high participation rates. Locals and visitors, people from all over our city, from all walks of life, come to our centre in particular and make the most of our spectacular lake which, for too long, was without life and activity. It has only been under this Labor government that we have seized the potential and opportunity that our central lake has to offer, which has made it a place of pride in our city.

To summarise, the Canberra Day events this year were a continuing success. Record attendances, hugely popular shows and exhibits and hundreds of events and people from around our city and around our country show why Canberra is the world's most livable city. I commend the government for its achievements in building the city as a cultural capital, and I commend the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Asbestos—public housing

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.50):

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that a number of Housing ACT dwellings are likely to contain asbestos, including Mr Fluffy; and
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to provide detailed information, by the last sitting day in March, on the following:

- (a) its management strategy for Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos, including Mr Fluffy;
- (b) the number of Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos;
- (c) whether the Housing ACT dwellings being sold as part of the ACT Government's asset recycling program contain asbestos;
- (d) whether tenants of Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos have been notified that they are living in a dwelling containing asbestos; and
- (e) the health risks to tenants of Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos.

It is well known to us now that living in a property containing asbestos poses a risk to a person's health when the asbestos fibres are breathed in. The Commonwealth Department of Health published a guide about asbestos for householders and the general public in February 2013. According to this guide, when asbestos material is damaged, crumbling or is disturbed by breaking, cutting, drilling or sanding, asbestos fibres are released into the air. When asbestos fibres are breathed in, they may remain deep within the lungs. This can lead to a person suffering from one or more of the four major asbestos-related diseases: pleural plaques, asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

It is not only residents of homes and workers in buildings containing asbestos whose health is put at risk by exposure to asbestos; the health of tradespeople and visitors to properties containing asbestos is also at risk. The Bernie Banton Foundation, for example, provides awareness about asbestos. Bernie Banton worked at the James Hardie Bradford Insulation factory, which manufactured asbestos lagging for power stations. He worked there from 1968 to 1974 and was diagnosed with asbestosis in early 1999. His story has highlighted for many of us the awful consequences of exposure to asbestos.

The year in which a property was built can often be used as a guide to whether it is likely to contain asbestos. There are many Housing ACT dwellings that were built before 1990 and, indeed, before the 1980s. The Department of Health's guide about asbestos states that, as a general rule, if a property was built, firstly, before the mid-1980s, it is highly likely to contain asbestos products; secondly, between the 80s and 1990 it is likely to contain asbestos products; and, thirdly, after 1990 it is unlikely to contain asbestos products.

Using this general rule, a number of Housing ACT dwellings, in particular those dwellings built before 1990, are either highly likely or likely to contain asbestos products.

In response to a recent question on notice, the Minister for Housing provided me with information containing money spent by Spotless to remove asbestos. Between 2009 and 2014 inclusive, Housing ACT's contracted total facilities manager, Spotless, spent \$800,567 on asbestos removal. This is a significant amount of money. It led me to ask the question: what is the ACT government's management strategy for Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos, including but absolutely not limited to Mr Fluffy?

The questions I posed are included in the motion: how many Housing ACT dwellings contain asbestos? Do any of the Housing ACT dwellings being sold as part of the government's asset recycling program contain asbestos? Have tenants of the dwellings containing asbestos been notified? What are the health risks to tenants of Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos?

This motion simply calls on the ACT government to provide information and transparency about Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos, including, but absolutely not limited to, Mr Fluffy.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality) (4.54): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this motion today. I have an amendment, and I will speak to Ms Lawder's motion as well. I move the following amendment that has been circulated in my name:

Omit all words after "That this Assembly", substitute:

"(1) notes that:

- (a) only 5 Housing ACT properties have been identified to contain Mr Fluffy asbestos;
- (b) most public and private properties built in Australia before the late 1980s are likely to have some form of asbestos present in the dwelling or external buildings;
- (c) the majority of properties owned by Housing ACT were constructed prior to the late 1980s, meaning that these properties are also likely to include materials that contain asbestos; and
- (d) bonded asbestos does not pose a risk to health if it is maintained in good condition and not disturbed; and

(2) further notes:

- (a) the ACT Government's strong commitment to renewing ageing public housing stock;
- (b) that all Housing ACT properties with Mr Fluffy asbestos will be demolished, with tenants being relocated to other homes, and these tenants have been advised of this;
- (c) that since 2005 Housing ACT has provided detailed information in writing to its tenants about asbestos that may be present in their homes;
- (d) that Housing ACT tenants are provided advice on not undertaking repairs or renovations to areas of their property that may contain asbestos and also on what they should do in the event that they are concerned about the condition of the asbestos in their properties; and

- (e) that any Housing ACT properties demolished under the Asset Recycling Initiative, which contain asbestos, will be managed appropriately through relevant planning, environment and work, health and safety controls.”.

I want to begin by talking about bonded asbestos that may be present in Housing ACT properties. As Ms Lawder has informed us today, and I can confirm, most Canberra homes that were built prior to 1989, both public and privately owned, are likely to contain asbestos products, such as bonded asbestos sheeting used in wet areas or under eaves, as well as in external buildings such as garden sheds and garages.

Bonded asbestos does not present a risk to human health if it is not disturbed and remains in good condition. However, it is important that we as a community remain vigilant in keeping asbestos products in good condition and in seeking professional assistance when its condition deteriorates or renovations are required.

Housing ACT retains records of all public housing properties that may potentially contain asbestos materials based on a construction date of pre 1989. The public housing portfolio has approximately 5,300 houses and 200 small to large complexes that were built prior to 1989. Like other Canberra homes built before 1989, most of these dwellings are likely to contain some form of asbestos product.

Since 2005 Housing ACT has provided detailed information in writing to its tenants about asbestos that may be present in their homes. Housing ACT property files are marked as having the potential presence of asbestos materials, and any action taken in regard to those materials is also noted on file. Housing ACT continues to ensure that all its new and current tenants are provided with information on managing asbestos and an asbestos advisory form as part of signing or renewing their tenancy agreement. The fact sheet includes advice on what to do in the event that materials possibly containing asbestos are damaged.

In addition the ACT government has a website that provides comprehensive advice for all members of the Canberra community. Public housing tenants can also call the 24-hour seven-day-a-week maintenance line if they have any questions or concerns. That number is 6207 1500.

Tradespeople who work on public housing properties are trained to deal with products that contain asbestos. The aim is to minimise disturbance and therefore the release of asbestos fibres. Where a tenant or contractor suspects that a public housing property may contain asbestos and the area is damaged or is about to be disturbed due to building activity, a sample is taken from the site and tested to determine the presence or absence of asbestos. This information is passed on to the tenant and contractors undertake the work accordingly.

Assessments were made at all five properties that were identified as having Mr Fluffy asbestos. Housing ACT provided a copy of the second report to tenants. No additional evidence of asbestos was identified in the second report. Housing ACT has been working with affected tenants to transfer them to alternative homes. Each of the five tenants has met with Housing ACT and had their individual circumstances considered.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that to date Housing ACT has relocated three tenants to new homes that meet their needs and their family circumstances. Housing ACT is working with the remaining two tenants, and a new home has been accepted by one. Work is in progress to modify the property to meet the needs of this tenant. The remaining tenant has special needs requiring specific property modifications, and Housing ACT is continuing to work with this tenant to identify suitable properties.

Once vacated, the five Housing ACT properties that contain Mr Fluffy asbestos will be demolished and the land returned to Housing ACT. On return of the land, Housing ACT will make a decision on its future use. The demolition of the buildings will be managed by the asbestos task force and the demolition process overseen by WorkSafe officials.

While the vacant properties are awaiting demolition, Housing ACT has secured and fenced off the properties with temporary fencing. Spotless has changed the locks and screwed shut all the doors and windows, and any items of value—for example, stoves, sinks, copper et cetera—inside the property have been marked with an industrial strength paint.

Finally, I would like to touch on the government's housing renewal program. The government recently announced an extensive renewal program for public housing in the ACT. This program will replace a lot of our ageing public housing dwellings, starting with 1,288 flats built in the early days of Canberra as temporary accommodation for newly arrived public servants. These dwellings simply do not meet the needs of today's public housing tenants. Given the age of the properties on the list for demolition and replacement—they were all built before 1989—I expect that these properties may contain some form of asbestos.

The sites will be transferred to the LDA for sale, including demolition as needed. The LDA will undertake testing and implement management procedures to ensure that any asbestos was appropriately managed during the demolition process. I can assure members of the Assembly that all planning, environment and work health and safety controls will be followed in the management of any asbestos contained in these properties.

Asbestos management is an important issue, and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to outline how Housing ACT manages this matter. I look forward to continuing to update members of the Assembly on social housing matters as the government's renewal program rolls out over coming years. I commend my amendment to Ms Lawder's motion to the Assembly.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.01): I will speak only briefly on this matter today in support of Ms Berry's comprehensive amendment. I must be honest: when I read this motion on the notice paper I thought it was in the wrong section of the notice paper and that it should have been in the questions on notice section, because that is essentially what it is.

With respect to the substance of the motion and the amendment, however, can I say that the ACT government and Housing ACT have spent considerable time working through the issues Ms Lawder raises and that these considerations began long before today.

Housing ACT maintains well over 10,000 properties, with approximately 22,000 tenants. I certainly know that, when it comes to Mr Fluffy properties, Housing ACT responded quickly once the full scale of the Mr Fluffy problem became known. As Ms Berry's amendment notes, it was established early on that only five properties contained the loose-fill asbestos that we call Mr Fluffy, and actions were taken immediately to work with the affected tenants. The government continues to work closely with affected tenants, home owners and support agencies, and will continue to do so. That is something that obviously will be discussed further in this place. Housing ACT tenants have certainly been spoken to in great detail about this and have been made fully aware of the situation.

Minister Berry, of course, is better placed, as the current Minister for Housing, to talk through these issues in more depth, and she has done that today in her remarks, as well as in the amendment that she has put forward. I will be supporting Ms Berry's amendment, as I think it goes to the very questions that Ms Lawder has raised. If there are further questions, they should probably be put as questions on notice. That is probably the way to resolve some of these questions. It is not that we should not talk about this in the Assembly, but I was intrigued by the format in which this came forward.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (5.03): I too will speak very briefly in relation to the question on notice that has been put on as private members' business today. I would refer Ms Lawder to the 25-minute ministerial statement I gave earlier in the week, which will give her information on most of the questions that she is seeking answers to.

It is worth noting that the task force is working closely with Housing ACT to support the five tenants that are directly affected by Mr Fluffy. There are, as Ms Berry's amendment outlines, five Housing ACT properties impacted by Mr Fluffy. These properties are spread broadly across Canberra. In fact it would be hard to spread them more broadly. There is one each in Tuggeranong, Weston, Belconnen, the inner north and the inner south.

That said, Mr Fluffy is a problem that spans the entire city, and there are 1,021 properties that are known to be affected. So five of the 1,021 are public housing properties. They are in five different suburbs, but of course there are 58 suburbs that have houses that have Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos in them.

Having made those points, I acknowledge the amendment from Ms Berry that I think covers off on all of the issues that Ms Lawder has raised. I thank Mr Rattenbury for his contribution and ask that the Assembly support Ms Berry's amendment.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.05): I move:

Add new paragraph (3)

“(3) calls on the ACT Government to advise the Assembly, by the first sitting day in May, the number of Housing ACT dwellings containing asbestos.”.

I have moved a simple amendment. I do not disagree with many of the points that have been made so far in this debate and the amendment that Ms Berry circulated. I think it is quite clear if you read my motion or listen to what I said earlier that there was no criticism. There was no slack in what I said. I am simply asking some questions and asking for some information to be made available in an open and transparent way.

On that basis I have circulated this amendment in my name. I am asking for a bit of transparency. We already know—it is on the public record—that there are five public housing properties with Mr Fluffy in them. That was given in public evidence at the PAC inquiry late last year. So I am well aware of that and I think it was probably clear from my motion and from my speech accompanying the motion that Mr Fluffy is only one very small part of the information that I am seeking.

Therefore, I reiterate my point: I would like the ACT government to make public the number of public housing properties that contain asbestos, not just Mr Fluffy properties. I commend this amendment to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events) (5.07): I do not want to delay the Assembly too much. I think I understand the information Ms Lawder is seeking to obtain. My initial reaction would be that, without being able to necessarily specify different asbestos types, this could involve a requirement for the government to have someone go and check all 12,000 properties inch by inch across the board to get an accurate answer to the question about properties containing asbestos.

What does that mean? Does that mean that if one single sheet in the eaves of a property has bonded asbestos that would count? I think it is just crazy to be seeking information like this by way of an amendment on the floor of the Assembly. Ms Lawder would be better served in my view by placing a question on notice and being more specific about the information she is seeking.

Is this a question of bonded asbestos? Ms Berry made the point, and it is correct, that every property in Canberra built before 1989 is likely to contain asbestos somewhere, but it is unlikely that there will be a detailed asset management register down to the last panel or what might be around kitchen sinks or pipes in houses built well before self-government.

I do not think we can agree to this today without knowing the cost implications of getting the information that Ms Lawder is seeking, and certainly not in the time frame

that she is seeking. That would require an individual assessment of every single Housing ACT property. That is simply not going to be possible. I would argue that that would be a complete waste of resources.

I think the bottom line in this is that every property, public or private, built in Canberra prior to 1989 contains asbestos. The issue that we are dealing with in relation to Mr Fluffy is the most dangerous, that being loose-fill asbestos. So I cannot support, and the government cannot support, the amendment that Ms Lawder has moved.

I suggest that, rather than going back and forth with amendments to amendments, Ms Lawder simply allow this to be voted down and put a question on notice that actually outlines the information that she is seeking. The government would be happy to investigate whether that can be provided in a cost-effective manner. But there is no way that we would be authorising potentially tens of thousands of dollars of expenditure to find an answer to a question like this that is dropped in this way at this time in a debate like this.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality) (5.10): I repeat what the Chief Minister has said about this amendment: no, we cannot support this amendment as it is written now. I wrote an amendment that turned a question on notice into an actual motion so that I could respond to the questions that Ms Lawder had presented to the Assembly today.

However, as information becomes available on some of the concerns that Ms Lawder raised about our public housing homes in the ACT, I am happy to bring that information to the Assembly. As I said in my speech earlier, the public housing portfolio has approximately 5,300 homes and 200 small to large complexes that were built prior to 1989. Like many other Canberra homes built before 1989, most of these dwellings are likely to contain some form of asbestos product.

We have identified the five that had loose-fill asbestos. However, as we have discussed today at length, advice on what to do with asbestos and its management has been provided to tenants who are signing up to their agreements or signing up to new leases. In addition, the government has a website that provides comprehensive advice for everyone in Canberra. Tradespeople are provided with training to work with products that contain asbestos. The aim for working with asbestos is to minimise any contamination. However, expert and trained people should be doing that.

Bonded asbestos does not present a risk to human health if it is not disturbed and remains in good condition. However, it is important that we remain vigilant on that. The government will not be supporting the amendment to my amendment to Ms Lawder's motion. However, I am happy to bring information to the Assembly when that is available.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (5.12): I will briefly indicate my position. I will not be supporting Ms Lawder's proposed amendment either.

I think the observation Ms Berry has just made, the information she already provided today and her undertaking to come back to the Assembly with information she can provide in a timely manner, address the point Ms Lawder is seeking to make. Also I accept the observations made by the Chief Minister around the potential complexity and cost of actually knowing this, to what end I am not entirely sure.

Question put:

That **Ms Lawder's** amendment to **Ms Berry's** proposed amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 8

Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	Mr Barr	Ms Fitzharris
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth	Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	Dr Bourke	Ms Porter
Mr Hanson		Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury

Question so resolved in the negative.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Dr Bourke): The question now is that Ms Berry's amendment be agreed to.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.18): I want to reiterate that the number of Mr Fluffy homes in the public housing sphere was already on the public record. This motion was not about Mr Fluffy homes alone. It is intended to be seeking openness and transparency about the number of public housing properties that contain asbestos.

Ms Berry's amendment says that since 2005 Housing ACT has provided detailed information in writing to its tenants about asbestos that may be present in their homes. However, Mr Barr says that they have no clue whatsoever about the properties that might have asbestos and that it would take a big audit or some such exercise to find out which properties had asbestos.

I said in my introductory speech that houses built before the 1990s are highly likely or likely to contain asbestos. It is understood. I think most Canberra home owners know that. Bonded asbestos may be present in homes that are built before a certain time. It is something that I feel could be on the public record. It leads me to two questions. First: does the government not know how many homes may have some form of asbestos in them? The second question is: if they do know, why will they not tell us?

They speak often in this place about openness and transparency. This is a straight-bat motion just seeking information. It was an opportunity for the government to demonstrate their commitment to transparency. I am disappointed that they have not supported the motion today.

Ms Berry indicated that she had turned the statement, if you like, into a motion. All it actually does is note a whole lot of things. It does not call on the government to do something. It could have been a ministerial statement just as easily, because it is not a motion; it is just noting a whole lot of points. It is unfortunate, I think, for public housing tenants and people who visit those public housing properties, including tradespeople, that the government is not prepared to make this information available at this time.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Adjournment

Motion (by **Ms Burch**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

HeartKids Hillclimb

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Roads and Parking, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (5.21): On Sunday, 22 March, I, along with 40 other competitors, took part in the annual HeartKids Hillclimb, run by the Southern District Motorsports Association.

The annual event—and Mr Coe was there as well—is now in its sixth year. It is organised by local competitor, Daniel Cummins, who lost his brother Will to heart disease at the age of just 12. Will was born premature with a complex chromosome syndrome. As part of his health problem, he had a congenital heart defect, and doctors were not sure how he would survive for some days, never mind years. He was flown from Canberra to Sydney, to the children's hospital, where specialists discovered he had problems with how his lungs connected to his heart.

To honour his brother's memory, Daniel started HeartKids Hillclimb, an event unique to the ACT. It is held every year to raise awareness and funds and provide support for those with childhood heart disease. The drugs and technology used for the type of illness Will suffered have come a long way, but ongoing research and funding support is needed. HeartKids in the ACT and New South Wales join forces to raise the funds. Will's and Daniel's last conversation was about Will's dream to own and race a "cool black car", which is why Daniel now competes in his black Magna, which is definitely a cool black car.

The event was a large success, with all competitors and spectators enjoying the day while raising over \$11,000, bringing the total up to \$55,000 raised by the six HeartKids Hillclimbs.

I took the opportunity of the day to take out one of the Reliance rotary team's Mazda RX-7s. Having competed in the cars since the 1980s, including using one to take a win in class during the Rally of Canberra in 1993, these rotary-based engines have always been a favourite of mine due to their technological advantage. It continues to be the car of choice for many motorsport enthusiasts.

The hill climb track, which has been recently resurfaced to a level similar to the famous Mount Panorama track, was an absolute joy. Though improving my runs throughout the day, I found that I will never be as fast as I was in my youth—but I will still be faster than Ellie Yates in my office.

This track was funded from an ACT government grant and has allowed the club to continue to host state-level events. I would like to congratulate the competitors from this event—Rick Austin, John Samin, Luke Williams, Toby Findlay, Colin Chandler, Mark Homer, Stephen Delaney, Daniel Hughes, Steven French, Ross Samuelson, Matthew Joyce, Ryan Thompson, John Engisch, Brenton Desmond, Michael Primrose, Jon Primrose, Iain Chandler, David Leaney, Mark Wyatt, Todd Wilson, Ben Ward, Matt Howard, Lane Brian, Brendan Coote, Tony Smart, Robert Black, Mathew Tulloh, William Goodwin, Gareth Wiggan, Aleksandar Zlatar, Henry Mataczyna, Dean Chapman, Daniel Cummins, Jim Sharples, Mick Rankin, Stephen Wilde, Tabitha Wilde, Mal Dunning, Keith Shinerock, Ben Lieske and David Pattie—on their times and contributions to HeartKids, as well as congratulating the event's corporate sponsors, Tongue & Groove, Ox Eatery, Gus' Cafe, the Hospitality Store, Duxton, and DriveGHT, who have all contributed to the continuing success of the event.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for the hill climb—Chris Hardy, Teppo Nupponen, David Peisley, Barbara Bennett, Rohan Thatcher, Dave King, Daniel Cummins, Henry Hilhorst, Todd Wilson, Terry Bennett, Col Merz, John Stewart, David Yates, Paul Wyatt, Mark Wyatt, Sue-Ellen Bulleah, Geoff Bassingthwaite, Anthony Hyde and Bob Wootton—and the sponsors—MG Earthworks, Reliance Automotive Services and Revell Steering—all of whom continue to maintain and grow the southern district motorsport club, one of the largest motorsport clubs in the ACT, which continues to bring speed off the streets and to the club.

I conclude by encouraging all those with an interest in this club to go out to Sutton Road and watch the variety of cars compete. It is a great way to spend a Sunday. I recognise Mr Coe's attendance there as well.

Canberra Area Theatre awards 2014

MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.25): I rise tonight to congratulate and acknowledge all those involved in the 2014 Canberra Area Theatre awards announced on 22 February. As in previous years, I would like to acknowledge the many winners: best set designer for a play, Gowrie Varma and Ellie Greenwood; best set designer for a musical, Mark Bell; best costume designer for a play, Helen Drum; best costume designer for a musical or variety show, Sam Lloyd; best costume designer for a school or youth production, Lydia McNamara; best lighting designer, Blake Thomas and Peter Telford; technical achievement, Russell Brown and Maria Stewart; magic moment of the theatre, "the shrinking witch", *The Wizard Of Oz*, Brindabella Christian College;

best original work, Kirsty Budding; best original work for a school or youth production, Romko Hordynsky; best ensemble in a play, the cast of *Cosi*; best ensemble in a musical, the cast and pianist of *Rude, Crude and Musical*; AMB best orchestra for a school or youth production, The Power; the Sarah Byrne best orchestra, *Legally Blonde*; Patricia Kelson encouragement award, Jim Kretschmer and Nick Anyos; best youth actor in a featured role in a play, Christopher Brookhouse; best youth actor in a featured role in a musical, Pippin Carroll; best youth actress in a featured role in a play, Melissa Nuttall; best youth actress in a featured role in a musical, Courtney White and Janae Rosa; best youth actor in a leading role in a play, Jack Mahon; best youth actress in a leading role in a play, Belle Nicol; best youth actor in a leading role in a musical, William Rawson; best youth actress in a leading role in a musical, Annalivia Keaveny; best variety performance by an individual or ensemble, Karabar High School; best dance performance by an individual or ensemble, senior and advanced senior hip-hop team; best actor in a featured role in a play, Michael Turczynski; best actor in a featured role in a musical, Matthew Sykes; best actress in a featured role in a play, Andrea Close; best actress in a featured role in a musical, Eliza Shephard and Jenna Roberts; best actor in a leading role in a play, David Preston; best actor in a leading role in a musical, Ben O'Reilly and Matt Burgess; best actress in a leading role in a play, Karen Vickery; best actress in a leading role in a musical, Bronwyn Sullivan; Richards Consulting best choreographer for a musical or variety show, Michelle Heine; best musical director for a school or youth production, Ruth Ellevsen; best director of a school or youth play, Emily Tutin; best director of a school or youth musical, Lucy Smith; best musical director, Nicholas Griffin; Stage Whispers and DSP Productions best director of a play, Cate Clelland; best director of a musical or variety show, Candy Burgess and Derek Walker; best dance production, *Movies Musicals and Legends*, "Legs" Dance; best production of a school or youth musical, *The Pirates of Penzance*, Wollongong High School; best production of a school or youth play, *Moon over Buffalo*, Lake Tuggeranong College; best production of a variety show, *Rude, Crude and Musical*, Newstar Theatrical; best production of a play, *August Osage County*, Free-Rain Theatre Company; best production of a musical, *Annie*, Bay Theatre Players; best contribution on or off stage by a senior, Liz Bradley and Jim and Joyce Brindle; in the spirit of the community award, the Illawarra Youth Arts Project; Mary Porter professional development scholarship, Olivia Fisher and James Court; and the gold CAT award, Matt Burgess, for outstanding achievement in set design, lighting and performance for the Bay Theatre Players.

Thank you also to the judges, who do a tremendous job travelling all over our region to see the wonderful productions. They are Sophie Benassi, Edwin Briggs, Peter Cox, Peter Dark, Paul Dion, Dave Evans, Jordon Kelly, Ian McLean AM CSC, Chris Neal, Terry O'Connor, Charles Oliver, Stephen Pike, Oliver Raymond OAM, Norma Roberston, Andrew Snell, Anna Somes, Don Whitbread OAM, Coralie Wood OAM, and Peter Young.

Congratulations also to George Lemon, who was presented with an award in honour of his outstanding contribution and loyalty to theatre in the Canberra area. Coralie Wood also deserves to be widely congratulated. She was the founder of the awards and she continues to work extremely hard and really is the CAT awards. Her effort is rewarded, though, as the CATs go from strength to strength. I look forward to the CAT awards next year.

Centenary of Anzac

MS PORTER (Ginninderra) (5.30): Before I go on to the substantive matter that I want to talk about, I echo what Mr Coe said. You can always rely on Mr Coe to go through the whole list, to acknowledge everyone in the CAT awards and importantly, of course, to acknowledge Coralie. Thank you for those words, because it deserves reiterating every year what a fine organisation that is and what fine work these people do.

In relation to the motion debated this morning—Mr Hanson’s first motion of the day—I acknowledge my family members who were in the British armed forces and who were overseas away from their families for many years. My two uncles and my father were in Burma, Africa and Italy. One uncle was one of those uncles you have when you are not having an uncle. He was not actually related but was considered to be a member of the family. They all came safely home; so we are very fortunate in that regard. My own mother was in the armed forces too, but she did not leave the shores of England.

My father left Britain for his first overseas posting when I was only two months old. He did not return until I was three. He never spoke about the trauma of warfare. He only ever recounted an event which was an amusing incident amongst all the pain. He would not read my mother’s diaries that she wrote religiously every day dad was away because she wanted to record all the little incidents about my growing up and her daily activities. He said it would remind him too much of what he had missed. Even when she died he still declined to read those diaries.

I always acknowledge my eldest son’s involvement as a peacekeeper in the Solomons in the first tranche of peacekeepers that went to the Solomons. He went with the AFP as a protective services officer. As Mr Rattenbury said, it is very important for us to acknowledge the valuable and vital contribution that peacekeepers make throughout the world and continue to make on a daily basis.

I acknowledge all of those who have fought for this country and fought in all of the different theatres across the world in all the different countries. Both my sons are married to young women of German descent. They are born in Australia from German parents. I know they also have many stories about family members who were caught up in those terrible world wars. I feel for them. I know they all have very strong memories of that time through the families.

I acknowledge everyone who has been caught up in these terrible events over the years and acknowledge in particular, as we come up to this important day on 25 April, the Australian and New Zealand people who were involved in that particular incident that we celebrate, if that is the right word, on Anzac Day.

Charny Carny

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (5.33): On Saturday I had the great pleasure, amongst other things, of attending along with, I understand, Ms Porter and Mr Coe—although our paths did not cross—the Charny Carny. The Charny Carny, as some members

may not know, is now longstanding. It is 11 years in operation. It has been a great coming together of the communities in Charnwood and Dunlop in particular. The communities a while ago decided that, instead of having a number of competing school fetes and fundraising events, they would combine their efforts and have one annual large fundraising event.

I understand that Ms Porter was the official for the mascot race between Apple Sauce—the Charny Carny pink pig who hammed it up all afternoon—Sharky from the Belconnen United Sharks rugby club, Sarge, Kenny Koala and the Hooker Bear. Apple Sauce won the race for mascots and donated his proceeds to Soldier On, as too did Sharky, who came second. I gather that Apple Sauce wanted to donate his winnings to the bacon elimination association, but apparently it did not meet the criteria for the organisation at large. Sarge donated his winnings to Lifeline.

I understand that my colleague Mr Coe was the judge of the fashion parade later in the afternoon. Towards the end of the afternoon, after many other community events, I was able to attend. I had the great pleasure, I think, of being barrel girl. That is not quite the right term, but I was the able assistant to Apple Sauce as Apple Sauce drew the raffle.

This was unlike any other raffle draw I have ever been involved in. Apple Sauce was put into a mesh two-man tent with all the raffle tickets and after many mis-starts, a leaf blower was also put into the mesh tent so that the blindfolded Apple Sauce could impartially draw the raffle by picking up one of the raffle tickets that was blowing around in the air. It was novel, but I had a crackling good time.

I pay tribute to the organisers of Charny Carny. Some of them are very longstanding members. Leni Cleaves and Niki Bruno are joint coordinators of the Charny Carny. Jacqui Dillon is their able logistics officer. Nikole Hammond, Tanya Diamond, Carolyn, Wendy, Michelle, Sian, Julian, Helen and the ever-important treasurer, David, make up the committee for the Charny Carny, which is going from strength to strength.

It is a testament to the great community spirit of west Belconnen in general and to the Charnwood-Dunlop area. It was so good to see all the schools represented there on the day, along with many scouting groups and other groups that participate in the community. It is a great testament to all those people and people like Leni Cleaves, who have been involved in the Charny Carny from the outset. I congratulate you on the work that you do for your community and look forward to many more Charny Carnys and many more successes for Apple Sauce.

Hon Kate Lundy

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Women and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Social Inclusion and Equality) (5.38): I want to put on the record today my personal thanks to the former senator for Canberra, Kate Lundy, for her friendship and her great work as senator for Canberra. I have known Kate Lundy for quite some time. Kate went to Latham Primary School in west Belconnen and then to my own high school,

Ginninderra, in the year above me. Her family and my family have been pretty good friends over the years through school, with her sister and my sister having a fiery relationship, as you do as a teenage girl.

Later, when Kate left school, we grew apart as she started work in the building sector. Both women and men were asked to apply for jobs in the building sector, which was unusual at the time but which came about with the introduction of the—I am not even sure what the act was called—discrimination act which provided equal rights for women in work. It provided her with an opportunity to work in a sector that was otherwise a male-dominated sector. From there she moved on and worked with the union and became the first female president of UnionsACT, where I again formed continuing relationships with her in her work in that role.

I tell you what, Kate Lundy is certainly a woman of substance. My memories are of her at Labor Party meetings in her early 20s, breastfeeding her young child and debating the motion that was brought to the meeting at the time. I was sitting behind her and I was thinking, “Wow, what a remarkable woman to be doing all of these things, being UnionsACT secretary, having a young child, standing up and debating motions at Labor Party meetings.” I knew that was not going to be where she stayed for very long, and it was not long after that, when she was 28, that she was elected as the new senator for Canberra, the youngest senator at the time.

I want to thank her for the 19 years and 22 days that she has been an amazing advocate for all Canberrans. Her natural passion and her work in IT, in sport, in multicultural affairs and for women shone a light on all of those areas which I have not seen done by any other federal politician to date. I was particularly proud and privileged to be able to work with her in her support for early childhood educators in their continuing campaign for recognition for the quality work that they do and being paid for the qualifications rather than the label of a child carer. She was a magnificent champion at the federal Parliament House, bringing together other members of parliament, both within the Labor Party and across the board, to support early childhood educators and the work they do in our community.

She was also an amazing advocate for low-paid workers in the cleaning sector. She has always been a great supporter of cleaners in the ACT but also of those working at Parliament House under some of the most challenging conditions. These are people who do not have control of their work career which changes regularly, every one, two, three, five years. Their pay rates do not often increase as much as anyone else’s. It has been great to have somebody like Kate Lundy as a real champion for low-paid workers in the ACT and for Canberrans more generally.

As I said earlier, she has been a great friend and I congratulate her and acknowledge and thank her for her work as senator for Canberra. I note on her web page the change to “Kate Lundy entrepreneur”. I look forward to seeing where she goes next and what she will do as an entrepreneur in the ACT.

**Hackett Community Day
Narrabundah Festival
IWiN**

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (4.42): I would like to touch on a few activities I attended on Saturday. First off, in the morning I had the pleasure of attending the Hackett Community Day at the Hackett shops. It is always an interesting place to visit. We met the Hackett Community Council, including one of the most famous characters of Hackett, James, better known as the mayor of Hackett, and obviously a lot of people whom we get to know in the community from our various visits. It was a very interesting morning and I enjoyed meeting up with the Hackett community.

The afternoon I spent at the Narrabundah Festival. That was also an interesting activity where we met with a lot of the community members. The Narrabundah Festival has been happening for quite a while now. I pay tribute to the old Narrabundah Community Association and Austin Lynch, in particular, who does a lot of work organising and promoting the event.

In the afternoon I had the pleasure to be an invitee at a very interesting community initiative. In fact, the organisation is called IWiN, Initiatives for Women in Need. I would like to thank Mrs Madhumita Iyengar, the chair of IWiN, and her committee for organising a very unique event. It was a combined fundraiser for a couple of schools in India. One is Ek Prayas School in Kolkata, India. It is a unique day school providing education on English medium, food, uniform, learning materials and vocational training free of cost to the slum children and has done so for over 10 years. It focuses on empowering the kids from slums to become socially responsible and independent adults—kids who otherwise are forced to become child labourers due to poverty.

The other school that the fundraiser was for is the Pazhassi Raja Tribal School in Wayanad, Kerala, India. It is also a unique residential school established by Dr Nambiar and it provides education, food, accommodation, vocational training and medical facilities completely free of cost to the tribal children. It has been operating for the last 15 years. It focuses on uplifting the tribal children who otherwise are victims of child labour and child trafficking as parents are often left with no choice.

The event itself as a fundraiser alone would have been a very memorable occasion, but it turned into something far more than that as well in terms of the panel discussion that followed. Again, I want to sincerely thank Mrs Madhumita Iyengar for this innovative and quite interesting debate and panel discussion that followed with some very interesting speakers. The topic was domestic violence and issues relating to that, and the speakers were extremely capable academics.

I will start by mentioning Professor Patricia Easteal, who is a professor of law at the University of Canberra. She is an author, activist and advocate best known for her research, publications and teaching in the area of women and the law. Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt is a senior fellow at the College of Asia and Pacific Studies at the Australian National University. She is a convenor of gender specialisation and has a master's in applied anthropology and participatory development program at the ANU. The third

speaker, Swati Parashar, is a lecturer in politics and international relations at Monash University in Melbourne whose research publications and teaching focus on terror and security studies, feminist international relations and women, gender and political violence in south Asia.

The speakers provided a tremendous forum and gave their views on these very important topics that I guess are very much at the forefront of our thinking after what happened in the local situation with Tara Costigan and other related serious domestic violence issues. The panel discussed gender issues, with a focus on domestic violence, and it was followed by a question and answer session which enabled a fairly large section of the community that IWiN look after to actually get some answers and also to seek some answers to questions that they raised.

Once again, my congratulations to Madhumita Iyengar and her committee for a wonderful event of immeasurable value to the community.

Hon Kate Lundy

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo) (5.47): I also rise to pay tribute to our colleague former senator Kate Lundy. As you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, Kate formally called time on her role in federal politics yesterday, resigning as an ACT senator after nearly two decades in public office.

Kate entered politics in 1996 at the age of 28, replacing Bob McMullan when he moved to the lower house. She was Labor's youngest female representative in the federal parliament at the time. Back in 1996 she turned up for work at the hill with her own PC and software. It was a time when politicians were not expected to use a computer, social media was non-existent and the ubiquity of the internet was still a few years off. I think this small example highlights what a trailblazer Kate was in many areas, and her enthusiasm for new technology stayed with her over her 19 years in politics.

Kate's story is not that of the average politician. She left school at 16 to start a career in the trades, manoeuvring her way through the somewhat blokey world of building and construction. She was attracted to the union movement soon after, pursuing the ideals of equality and a fair go for all that still hold true today. Soon Kate was working her way up to become a trade union organiser, helping to improve the lives of people like her who worked hard in blue-collar jobs.

Kate says her decision to move into politics was driven by her experience of working on building sites and a desire to contribute to the greater good. In her first speech, Kate cited the ability of Labor to put in place policies that go to the very heart of a just society that distinguishes us from other parties. I believe this ability still holds true today, and Kate has played nothing short of a vital role in establishing such important policies over many years.

During her time in the Senate Kate made a significant contribution to her community, our community, the Labor Party and the country. Her passion for information technology, multiculturalism, sport and women drove a lot of her work and saw her

move quickly into the shadow ministry, and later, under Julia Gillard, the ministry. In 2010 Kate was appointed the Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship, as well as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. In 2011 she was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

In 2012 she was appointed to her own ministry portfolio, becoming the Minister for Sport, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and the Minister Assisting for Industry and Innovation. It was a perfect fit. In the last months of the Labor government, under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Kate retained the multicultural affairs portfolio, adding the digital economy, for which I know she was highly qualified.

As a fierce advocate for Labor's national broadband network, Kate worked extremely hard to bring high-speed broadband to Canberra, and Gungahlin in particular. As Kate said in her valedictory speech in the Senate last night, she believes in technology; she believes in the people that create it and celebrates the disruption it causes.

In my first job in Canberra at the now defunct National Office for the Information Economy, Kate was the feared opposition senator, keeping us bureaucrats on our toes, and certainly taking it up to the minister, Richard Alston, who it is fair to say did not quite seem to have the same passion as Kate did for the potential of this new technology to transform our society and our economy. She also taught me about the effectiveness of parliamentarians who deeply understand their portfolio and can advocate a vision for change.

Kate was an early advocate for the NBN here in Canberra and attended many Gungahlin Community Council meetings with NBN Co to outline the plans for the rollout. She understood the bandwidth struggles of Gungahlin residents and the opportunities the NBN would bring to our growing community, and she understood the strong community desire for the NBN, passing on community feedback to NBN Co to ensure that any questions Gungahlin residents and businesses had were answered.

On multiculturalism, Kate was a great campaigner. She saw it as an important element of the Canberra community. As both a federal representative and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Kate worked hard to celebrate and promote the contribution of all nationalities to our community. She knew that multiculturalism was something that should be embraced and acknowledged as one of the things that makes our cities so great.

Finally, I could not pay tribute to Kate without mentioning her love of sport—her early mornings on the lake. I know she worked hard to highlight the ability of sport to bring people together. I wish Kate all the very best in her new role on the NRMA board. (*Time expired.*)

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.52 pm.