



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

8 MARCH 2016

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Tuesday, 8 March 2016

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Tuesday, 8 March 2016

The Assembly met at 10 am.

(Quorum formed.)

MADAM SPEAKER (Mrs Dunne) took the chair, made a formal recognition that the Assembly was meeting on the lands of the traditional owners, and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Resignation of member Statement by Speaker

MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 27 March 1992, which authorises me to receive written notice of resignation of a member, I wish to inform the Assembly that I received a written notice from Ms Porter, dated 19 February 2016. Pursuant to subsection 13(3) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988, I present the following papers:

Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988 (Cwlth), pursuant to subsection 13(3)—Resignation of office as Member—Porter, Ms M.—Copy of letter of resignation, dated 19 February 2016.

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory—Casual Vacancy—Copy of letter to the Electoral Commissioner, ACT Electoral Commission, from the Speaker, dated 19 February 2016.

Announcement of member to fill casual vacancy

MADAM SPEAKER: The Clerk has been notified by the Electoral Commissioner that, pursuant to sections 189 and 194 of the Electoral Act 1992, Mr Jayson Hinder has been declared elected to the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Ms Porter. I present the following paper:

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory—Casual Vacancy—Declaration of the poll—Letter from the Electoral Commissioner, ACT Electoral Commission, to the Clerk, ACT Legislative Assembly, dated 7 March 2016.

Oath or affirmation of allegiance

MADAM SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of the Oaths and Affirmations Act 1984, which requires the oath or affirmation of a new member to be made before the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory or a judge of that court authorised by the Chief Justice, the Hon Justice Helen Murrell, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, will attend the chamber.

The Chief Justice attended accordingly—

Affirmation of allegiance by member

Mr Jayson Hinder was introduced and made and subscribed the affirmation of allegiance required by law.

The Chief Justice having retired—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hinder, on behalf of all members, I bid you a warm welcome to the Assembly. Mr Hinder.

Inaugural speech

MR HINDER (Ginninderra): I seek leave of the Assembly to make my inaugural speech.

Leave granted.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call Mr Hinder, I wish to remind members that this is his inaugural speech, and it is tradition that it is heard in silence.

MR HINDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to share with the Assembly and the people of Canberra my background, my vision for our city, and the experience and dedication that I will bring to this place. Before I start, Madam Speaker, I would just like to mention that on Saturday during a charity rugby match at Jindabyne, Bill Stefaniak broke my nose, so delivering this speech will be a little difficult.

Bill and I also play in the parliamentary rugby team, and have been good friends for over 10 years. I did at the time, however, pause to consider what foreboding cosmic message was being sent, that in the week I am to take my seat in the Assembly, a former leader of the Canberra Liberals should break my nose. It probably says more about my suitability for this place that I thought little of the fact that at the time Bill and I were on the same team.

Madam Speaker, just as I have come from humble beginnings as the apprentice mechanic I was to the barrister and bank chairman I have become, in a parallel journey Canberra, the city we all love, has also come a long way. Our city has a rich heritage grounded in a long history of Aboriginal settlement in the area. Today I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people who are the traditional owners of this land on which we meet and the electorate I represent. I pay my respects to their elders past and present. We should never forget that Aboriginal people are the custodians of some of the oldest continuing cultures in human history and that they have much to be proud of in their heritage.

The history of our city as a capital is one of progress and diversity. Founded as a capital in 1913, our city has grown from a small town to a metropolitan city with a high standard of living and equality of opportunity. Canberra has historically been a place of compromise. It was originally founded as a compromise between Sydney and Melbourne and, throughout the 20th century, was a place of work that people from

Sydney and Melbourne went to in order to advance their careers with no intention of staying. A funny thing happened to many of those people. In spite of their conviction to return north or south, they began to like this country bush city town.

Among those won over by the 'Berra in 1962 were Mr and Mrs Richard and Colleen Hinder, formerly of Sydney and Picton respectively. They lived in rented accommodation in Queanbeyan and Ainslie before building in Jensen Street in Hughes. They were the second house in the Woden Valley, the first being Doug Anthony's, who was later to become Country Party leader and Deputy Prime Minister.

All of their friends asked why they were moving all the way out to Hughes. It was at that home in Hughes and in this town that I was born. For all of my life and very nearly half of Canberra's it has been my home. Canberra today is much changed, no longer a paddock with grand buildings plonked in it, no longer a place people cannot wait to leave. I rarely hear that there is nothing to do in Canberra because that is plainly no longer true. The streetscapes have changed, with cosmopolitan cafe culture replacing or augmenting conventional retail services and repair, arts precincts and residential developments all integrated to create something different. In my view these changes are in large part thanks to the efforts of successive Labor governments.

We have enabled considerable change. We have consistently invested in world-class arts and sporting facilities and worked with the business community to diversify Canberra's economy, and we continue to encourage, support and foster the growth of the university sector and tourism. We will continue to invest in public transport infrastructure to meet the demands of our growing city for decades to come. Under Labor, Canberra has become a city capital to be proud of. That is why I am proud to stand in this chamber on this side as a Labor member and have the opportunity to contribute to the city's further growth while ensuring we preserve the history and social fabric of our city.

The electorate of Ginninderra is well known to me, having lived in the area for decades. I first moved to Latham and then to Florey in 1985. Ginninderra incorporates all of Belconnen, as you know, and the southern part of Gungahlin. It stretches from Molonglo River in the south to Hall in the north and from Macgregor in the west to Kaleen in the east.

At the October poll this year the new seat of Yerrabi will incorporate nine of the suburbs currently comprising Ginninderra, including my own suburb of Giralang. The people I have met in the 30 years since I first moved to Latham are some of the proudest and hardest working people in the country. Ginninderra is a relatively young electorate with a lower median age than the national average. It is also a growing electorate, with significant population growth since 2011.

The area houses some of the capital's most important institutions, including the Australian Institute of Sport, the University of Canberra, Canberra Institute of Technology and Canberra Stadium and, thanks to this territory government, it will have by 2018 the territory's newest hospital. These dynamics make it a candidate for both private and public investment in education, innovation and jobs—causes which I will actively advocate for during my time in this place.

The challenge for me, which I will accept and will fulfil, is to ensure that Belconnen and Gungahlin remain some of the most inclusive and diverse areas of the territory. It is also to encourage investment so that they continue to become areas of economic growth that provide employment and investment opportunity for my constituents and their families.

I entered the Legislative Assembly following the retirement of Mary Porter. While I am excited and humbled that I have been given the opportunity to represent the people of Ginninderra, I understand that the resignation of Ms Porter is a significant loss to the territory. Mary has a well-deserved reputation as a highly principled politician who lived and served her constituents as a diligent, vocal and connected advocate for their concerns. I pay tribute to her passion and hard work fighting for her community. It was said in this place following her valedictory speech that she has given politicians a better name. Mary leaves a gap in Ginninderra in terms of community engagement. From today on as I go about my business in the chamber I will ensure that I am the one who closes this gap and upholds the same level of integrity that she did.

It seems appropriate that on International Women's Day I acknowledge a second strong and impressive woman. My determination to fight for my community comes from my mother. She was widowed at 37 with four children aged five to 15 and was forced to sell our home in Hughes to pay death duties. Death duties was an unfair and arbitrary tax related to the transfer of assets to a spouse or beneficiary. It was easily met by the landed gentry but was much more difficult for a schoolteacher with a mortgage structured around an assumption of 30 years and two incomes.

Back then there were no safety nets, no death benefits, no mandatory superannuation to rely on. As an aside, Madam Speaker, after the death of my father I remember waiting as a young child for eons in a bank manager's office until the frustrated bank manager stormed in and asked my mother why my very rude father was so late. In those days women did not borrow money and predictably no loan was offered. We have come a long way since then, but there is still much progress to be made.

Our family situation became difficult. Two older children were farmed out to friends and I went to boarding school at seven. My mother accepted a position as boarding house mistress at the Girls Grammar School where she was an art teacher. This removal from my family at a very young age, which I did not properly understand, began for me the formation of a strong commitment to social justice, although of course I did not have a name for it at that time.

My eventual realisation many years later that ill-conceived laws had caused my family to be torn apart caused me to question to this day the impact and intent of laws and regulation. The temporary scattering of the family was for me permanent. I completed my schooling at boarding school. Some might think such vicissitudes of life would be enough to make a mere mortal give up but thankfully my mother is neither mere nor, I would suggest, mortal. As evidence of her immortality, I offer the fact that although she could not be here today she is still teaching full-time high school in Leeton in the Riverina. In Leeton today it is 40 degrees. My mother is going to be 79 years old this year. She is a tough woman. My mother understands the value

of good education. She cherishes the importance of personal opportunity and embraces our moral obligation we have to each other to help each other. I suspect she would identify strongly with the Samaritan on the road to Jericho.

Not only did she survive my father's death and many years of economic hardship that followed, she went on to become the secretary of the teachers union here in Canberra where she fought for increased equality, particularly for women. She championed fair pay and conditions and, above all, better laws that seek to make the playing field more level rather than protect privilege and entitlement. She strove for laws that delivered fairer outcomes and better opportunities for young people, regardless of background, race, religion or socioeconomic status. That is, after all, the Australian way, Madam Speaker—the avenue of the fair go. That is the Labor way and the path I will always follow.

Most members present will be aware that I have been for many years by profession a practising solicitor and barrister. I am also Chairman of Bendigo Community Bank here in Canberra. Less well known is that I am passionate about rugby and, like my colleague Mr Gentleman, I collect and restore old cars and own and enthusiastically operate a variety of motorcycles. In fact, I started out as an apprentice mechanic at the age of 19.

I worked hard over the years and eventually started my own small business in automotive repair and the importation of European car parts. My annoyance at the clunky, inefficient workings of various governments, import and quarantine, regulations and red tape, saw me on the board of the MTA, the peak body for automotive industry in the territory, at the age of 24. A few years later I was enrolled at ANU in law and politics.

This was not an easy journey by any means. At the time we had three children under three and I had bought into a second business comprising a couple of pizza shops. At this point in my life I was working as a mechanic and business owner during the day, running pizza shops until after midnight three nights a week, raising three children and on top of this trying to complete not one but two undergraduate degrees.

My wife and I went to school together and neither of us was from wealthy families. But we had a strong work ethic, mine Protestant, hers Chinese merchant class. We also had the lifelong benefit of good schooling and a supportive close family. We understand the importance of job security, opportunities that come from employment and developing a valuable skill set.

After 34 years together, we are proud of our three young people we have produced, now all in their 20s. All of our three children have inherited that strong work ethic. Madeline has two degrees and a masters in dietetics; Nigel is a graduate of the ANU School of Art and a successful burgeoning commercial artist; and Oliver is living in Sydney and engaged in small business and the hospitality industry. They are typical of the well-adjusted young people Canberra is capable of producing—young people who have enjoyed the benefit of successive, forward thinking progressive Labor governments here in the territory. My hope is that this experience is the same for all of us.

I also bring my experiences over the past eight years producing bank profits with the community bank into the Assembly. Bendigo is not your ordinary bank. It is a unique model where the bank belongs to its community and the profits stay in that community. Many years ago I, with 400 other Canberrans, chose to do something about rampant bank closures. Instead of complaining about it and accepting it, we instead decided to put our money where our mouths were and invest in securing control of banking services within our community.

Since then we have done it several more times and now we are the largest community bank group in New South Wales and the ACT and amongst the largest in the country. It is this different way of finding solutions and a dogged refusal to accept the unacceptable that I trust will serve me well in ensuring better outcomes in this place for the people of Belconnen, Gungahlin and the territory.

The bank profits that result from Bendigo's banking operations have allowed me the privilege of engaging with over 200 local charities and community groups. I have overseen the contribution of over \$1 million of profits to them resulting in enhanced outcomes and services for thousands of Canberrans. That is \$1 million that the territory treasury has not had to find or \$1 million worth of social capital that would not exist were it not for the bank model and the tireless work of my board of directors.

But I want to put that in a context: there is a human face to that \$1 million. Be it keeping SnowyHydro's chopper in the air for the past five years or the \$100,000 we contributed to the national health co-op in Ms Burch's electorate at Chisholm, which has resulted in a \$400,000 bulk-billing clinic for local residents. There is, too, the eight years of watching the thrill on the faces of successive groups of athletes travelling overseas to the Special Olympics to represent Canberra and their country; or the knowledge that when life for residents is at its bleakest, the contribution we have made to Clare Holland House over the past nine years through ACT Veterans Rugby will make that time for them at least that little bit easier.

The sense of achievement to create over \$1 million in profit and then to be able to pour that back into worthwhile local organisations and charities is, for me, Madam Speaker, a privilege and a reward in itself. The experience and understanding of so many community groups over many years has equipped me with a knowledge about what services and outcomes are vital to ensure continuing positive improvements and outcomes. Further, it has fostered an understanding and appreciation in me of the invaluable and often thankless work performed day and night by thousands of volunteers right across the territory.

During my time in this place I will be particularly interested in pursuing the opportunities an integrated transport system offers to motorcyclists and commuters. Specifically, I hope to sponsor trialling free motorcycle sidewalk parking, similar to successful trials in Melbourne and Brisbane, together with a review of fees and charges for small capacity motorcycles and, if appropriate, a reduction in registration fees to encourage their use. By doing so, it is my view that inner city congestion can be avoided or reduced, with similar reductions in demands on other forms of transport.

I am further pleased that today, as part of Labor's holistic plan for a truly integrated transport system, the Chief Minister will illuminate us with advances in driverless vehicle technology. The benefit to other road users will I believe be obvious, particularly when combined with other sensible and innovative motorcycle policies, such as the current lane filtering trial in operation in the territory. It is through this kind of detailed review of all aspects of transport that our vision for an integrated transport system begins to take shape. Such integration requires a government able to look at all aspects of the system and how they relate to each other. This government has a commitment to future-proofing Canberra's transport system.

I am also interested in further streamlining compliance costs and workload for the territory's small businesses and continuing to build on the good outcomes from the Barr government's previous efforts to its red tape reduction campaign, which has resulted in a proliferation of outdoor hospitality venues, banishing for good that old image of a sterile, lifeless Canberra. It is bad enough that businesses are forced to spend hundreds of hours a year as tax collectors for the federal government; I am determined to work with businesses to constantly improve the territory's processes and enhance services available to small business, our biggest employer.

I am hopeful that members will detect a constant theme from me in this place around jobs and employment opportunities. Those opposite may not realise that the Australian Labor Party has always been about jobs. Generally, we are not pinkos, commies, reds or Trots—with deference, if necessary, to the views of some of my colleagues in the left. Quite simply, we have always been about jobs and a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Even the economic Darwinists will accept that higher levels of employment lead to higher profits and better economic outcomes for all.

Still on employment, I am concerned at the looming trade skill shortage across Australia and hope to work with employer, training and industry groups to deliver innovative ways of getting more young people into apprenticeships and, just as importantly, keeping them there, allowing them to obtain lifelong qualifications and the ability to earn and in time become employers themselves.

I return to my earlier remarks about compromise and how arguably our great city owes its existence to the concept. Politics in my view is often also about compromise. This knowledge, coupled with the experience that I possess and my honest belief that we all here—Labor, Liberal and Greens—find ourselves in this place because we share a commitment to making Canberra as good as it can be, I trust will unite us when necessary to make the compromises needed to deliver the best outcomes for those we represent.

My election to the Assembly is a final step in renewing the Barr Labor team prior to October's election, Madam Speaker. I am proud to be part of a strong, skilful and experienced team. This team—my colleagues—give me the confidence to work hard to continue the long-term vision and passion for Canberra of the Stanhope and Gallagher governments that came before it. We are rejuvenated and ready to take Canberra through the next exciting stage of its evolution.

Madam Speaker, I thank my family for the support they have offered me in the course of my journey that has led to my election and the opportunities the Assembly offers to me to contribute. I thank my supporters for their rock solid trust they have had and the enthusiasm they have displayed in getting me here. Most importantly, to the people of Belconnen and Gungahlin, whom I represent, I thank you for the trust you have placed in me to represent you. I will be driven by that trust every day as I go about my work in the Legislative Assembly and prove myself worthy.

I would like to finish by giving an undertaking, but it requires some explanation because an undertaking for a lawyer has a whole different meaning to the common usage. I see the Chief Justice nodding. My first job out of law school was working for three years for Chris Macphillamy in Manuka. Chris is a very savvy and clever commercial lawyer and I learned a lot from him.

Regarding undertakings, Chris's advice was that at all costs avoid giving an undertaking when acting for a client because an undertaking for a lawyer is accepting personal responsibility for something you say is going to happen. You become personally liable for anything that follows. His advice continued—rarely would you give one on behalf of a client, almost never on behalf of the firm and never, ever personally.

It was and is good advice, which today I will ignore, Madam Speaker. In that context, I give to the electors of Belconnen and Gungahlin my solemn undertaking that I will fearlessly champion their interests and those of Canberra and the ACT to the best of my ability. And when I leave this place, the territory will be a better place than when I arrived. Thank you.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 42

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 42, dated 1 March 2016, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Scrutiny report 42 contains the committee's comments on seven bills, six pieces of subordinate legislation, two national regulations and seven government responses. The committee has considered two national laws for this scrutiny report—the Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2015 (2015 No 804) and the Heavy Vehicle National Amendment Regulation (2015 No 824). I would like to take this opportunity to record the committee's concern about some ongoing issues arising from the consideration of national laws by the committee and, in particular, the absence of explanatory statements for national laws.

I should note at the outset that the committee recognises that the consideration of national scheme type laws has been an issue for committees such as this one and for legislatures for several decades. The formulation of laws that are intended to be passed or promulgated across the various jurisdictions with little or no variation from jurisdiction to jurisdiction challenges the ability of legislative scrutiny committees to apply their scrutiny principles and the ability of legislatures to make amendments because, the argument goes, to make changes would be to destroy the uniformity across jurisdictions that national laws are intended to bring.

However, the two national laws considered by the committee for this scrutiny report raise another issue—the tendency for national laws to be presented without an explanatory statement. The committee has consistently commented on the absence of explanatory statements for any law. While the committee has always accepted that there is no formal, legal requirement that an explanatory statement be provided in relation to subordinate legislation, the committee has always maintained that it is important that an explanatory statement nevertheless be provided. Apart from anything else, principle 2 of the committee’s terms of reference requires it to:

... consider whether any explanatory statement or explanatory memorandum associated with legislation and any regulatory impact statement meets the technical or stylistic standards expected by the committee.

If there is no explanatory statement then, clearly, the committee cannot fulfil this role.

As is often the case in the committee’s experience, the Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2015 are presented to the Legislative Assembly with a tabling statement by the minister but no explanatory statement. In this scrutiny report, the committee has identified, in addition to the explanatory statement issue, a possible retrospectivity issue. The issue is not dealt with in the tabling statement. As a result, the committee requires a response from the minister in relation to the issue. This would not have been necessary if there had been an explanatory statement and if the explanatory statement had, in the light of the committee’s often-stated requirements, addressed the issue of retrospectivity.

As a result of the failure to provide an explanatory statement for this national law, the committee has both drawn the matter to the attention of the Legislative Assembly and requested that the minister provide the Legislative Assembly with an explanatory statement for the national law.

The heavy vehicle national amendment does come with an explanatory statement. The committee has noted this with approval in the scrutiny report. However, it also appears to involve retrospectivity, and the explanatory statement does not address this issue. As a result, the committee is seeking the minister’s response in relation to the retrospectivity issue. This, again, would not have been necessary if, according to the committee’s often-stated requirements on this issue, the retrospectivity issue was addressed in the explanatory statement.

National laws often raise issues for the committee. Apart from anything else, they are often made under complicated schemes that govern the making, publication, tabling and scrutiny of national laws. In the absence of proper explanatory material, the committee—and the Legislative Assembly—has to take time to identify and unravel the various requirements in order to be sure that the national laws have been properly made. This task is made so much more difficult if there are no explanatory statements.

I urge all ministers to provide explanatory statements for any national laws that they table in the Legislative Assembly, and I urge ministers to ensure that the committee's requirements regarding explanatory statements, which are set out in a document on the committee's website, are met. It can only save time for all of us.

The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MS BURCH (Brindabella): Pursuant to standing order 246A I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A.

I wish to inform the Assembly that during the applicable reporting period—1 July 2015 to 31 December 2015—the standing committee considered the proposed appointment of one member as chair to the ACT Radiation Council. The committee has advised the minister it has no comment to make on the proposed appointment.

I now table a schedule of the statutory appointments considered during this period:

Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services—Standing Committee—
Schedule of Statutory Appointments—8th Assembly—Period 1 July to 31
December 2015.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo): Pursuant to standing order 246A I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety relating to a proposed inquiry.

The committee asked me to advise the Assembly that on Monday, 22 February 2016 the committee met and resolved to inquire further into the Auditor-General's report No 2 2015 on the rehabilitation of male detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. The committee had earlier received a letter from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—the PAC—stating that the PAC had resolved not to inquire further in this instance and asking whether the committee wished to inquire into the matter. Following discussion, the JACS committee agreed that it would

conduct an inquiry and that the terms of reference would be the Auditor-General's report.

Pursuant to standing order 246A I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety relating to statutory appointments pursuant to continuing resolution 5A.

I wish to advise the Assembly that for the first half of 2015—from 1 January to 30 June—the standing committee considered 82 proposals for statutory appointments and responded with no further recommendation. It requested further information in connection with one of those appointments.

For the period 1 July 2015 to 1 January 2016 the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety considered 20 proposed statutory appointments in total, and responded with no further recommendation. It requested further information in connection with one of those proposed appointments.

I table two schedules detailing, among other things, the names of nominees to statutory positions, the body and position to which they were proposed to be appointments, the meeting at which the appointment was considered, and the committee's view. I present the following papers:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Schedule of Statutory Appointments—8th Assembly—Period—

1 January to 30 June 2015.

1 July 2015 to 1 January 2016.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR SMYTH (Brindabella): Pursuant to standing order 246A I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I wish to advise of a corrigendum to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report No 23—Review of Auditor-General's report No. 7 of 2015: Sale of ACTTAB.

At paragraph No. 3.4 on page 9, the direct quote at paragraph 3.4 and attributed to an official from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate was incorrect. The corrigendum replaces the respective text in the published report. I therefore seek leave to table a corrigendum to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report No 23—Review of Auditor-General's report No. 7 of 2015: Sale of ACTTAB.

Leave granted.

I present the following paper:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 23—Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 7 of 2015: Sale of ACTTAB—Corrigendum.

Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services— Standing Committee Reporting date

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (10.39): I seek leave to move a motion relating to the reporting date for the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services inquiry into annual and financial reports 2014-15.

Leave granted.

MS BURCH: I move:

That the resolution of the Assembly of 29 October 2015, which referred specified annual and financial reports for the calendar year 2015 and the financial year 2014-2015 to the standing committees, be amended at paragraph (4) after “standing committees are to report to the Assembly on financial year reports by the last sitting day in March 2016 and on calendar year reports by the last sitting day in November 2016” by inserting “except for the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services, which is to report to the Assembly by the last sitting day in April 2016”.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Standing committees—membership

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) agreed to:

That Mr Hinder be appointed to the following general purpose standing committees:

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Standing Committee on Health, Ageing, Community and Social Services.

Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety.

Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Autonomous vehicles Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10:41): There is a simple fact about autonomous or driverless cars, and that is that the first cars are already in showrooms and are on the roads today. The spectrum of automation is very broad. For example, I do not think anyone in the Assembly or the community today would find cruise control at all remarkable. At the other end are cars or other vehicles that need no human intervention at all.

Between these extremes are a mix of technologies which automate some parts of driving—for example, adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assistance and cars that can park themselves. All of these technologies are limited to controlling an individual car. The next level of automation will see vehicles communicate with each other as well. Intelligent transport systems, where vehicles convey their position to others, as well as with infrastructure like traffic lights, will help these cars move ever more efficiently around our cities.

The prospect of self-driving cars has been a technology just over the horizon for quite some time. That horizon has kept edging away from us for so long that it is understandable to think that they will always be tantalisingly just on the science fiction side of believable. The reality, though, is that self-driving vehicles have been in use in the mining sector for some time, where fleets of autonomous trucks have offered a safe and efficient alternative to risky driving scenarios.

Autonomous vehicles are already being tested on public roads around the world, and most large automotive manufacturers already plan to begin producing highly automated passenger vehicles within the next decade. Some, like Tesla, already offer high levels of automation in existing production models. The benefits of driverless vehicles are broad—economic, social and environmental. Properly thought-through regulation, trials, and use can improve public transport networks, give us better active travel options and change our parking arrangements.

The territory government is acting quickly so that Canberrans can see the most immediate benefits, just as we have acted quickly to capitalise on other disruptive technologies. Driverless cars can never replace efficient mass transit systems in our cities. That is an entirely unrealistic argument, mostly made by people who wish it was true to help them win other arguments. We will always need to move large numbers of people in a way that cars inherently cannot. What automated vehicles can do, though, is complement efficient and integrated bus and light rail networks, along with strong, active travel facilities.

The most obvious benefit of a future that incorporates autonomous vehicles is the prospect of improving safety on our roads. On average over the last decade there have been 13 deaths per year on ACT roads, and around 700 injuries. The personal costs of these deaths and injuries, the loss of friends and loved ones, is still far too high. The costs of road accidents are not just borne by those involved and by their loved ones; they cost the national economy \$27 billion every year.

Many crashes are the result of human error or risky behaviours. In the ACT, at least one in 10 crashes is a single vehicle accident, with driver error the sole cause. Almost half of all accidents in the ACT are rear-end collisions. These types of accidents can be easily prevented by autonomous vehicles.

Google's autonomous vehicle fleet has driven more than two million autonomous kilometres over seven years of testing, recording only one minor accident where the autonomous vehicle was at fault. Safety needs to be at the heart of our transport system, at the heart of the technologies on the road, and at the heart of the regulatory arrangements that go with them.

Bringing driverless cars to our city is not just about early adopters of new technology playing with new gadgets. Driverless cars will change lives. Being unable to get a drivers licence due to living with infirmity or a disability means too many in our community miss out on what our city offers, and leaves them isolated from family, friends and support. You cannot have independence without mobility, and mobility is exactly what driverless cars offer. We must make sure the potential freedom driverless cars bring reaches those who need that freedom most.

There will also be benefits for the environment. Autonomous cars can improve fuel economy by up to 10 per cent just by efficiently controlling acceleration and braking. When multiple driverless cars talk to each other they can improve fuel economy by nearly 40 per cent.

Madam Speaker, as you would know, our city is well on the way to having 100 per cent of our electricity supplied from renewable sources. Motor vehicles account for about a quarter of the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions—and that is the case today—and this share will increase as we move towards 100 per cent renewable electricity. Reducing the impact of transport on the environment is the next step to doing our part to reduce carbon emissions and to combat climate change.

Autonomous vehicles communicating with each other, and transport systems more widely, means more efficient and productive use of our city's infrastructure. A driverless vehicle which drops a passenger off and parks itself elsewhere frees up expensive land that is locked up at the moment by parking and would allow for other uses such as housing, entertainment, jobs and parks. Driverless cars support and complement strong public transport networks, giving the public even more ways to get around their city.

Even apart from the economic benefits that flow from safer and more productive transport, autonomous vehicles open up a range of exciting new business opportunities for Canberra. I do not anticipate that car-producing factories will spring up in Hume or Fyshwick, but we do not really need them to. Our city's strength in the global marketplace is in research and development and technology and in business innovation—the fundamentals of being competitive in the automotive industry of the 21st century.

The auto industry is moving from engines and gears to software and services. General Motors has formed a long-term partnership with ride-sharing company Lyft to develop autonomous vehicle sharing services, and it has invested half a billion dollars to bring these services to reality.

Like driverless cars themselves, this is not a never-never proposition for Canberra businesses anymore. Seeing Machines, with their headquarters just walking distance from where we are today, supply major multinational firms with driver monitoring and assistance systems. Locata, based in Fyshwick, have supplied their unique spatial positioning technology for crashes at the US Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Canberra businesses and researchers are working right now on autonomous vehicle technology: in spatial awareness and visual processing; in big data and analytics; in wireless communication, engineering and software development. These opportunities are just the beginning. The big gains will not be just in technology and manufacturing. Technology will change businesses and services in areas like freight and logistics, on-demand transport, insurance, car sharing, the internet of things and other ideas that no-one has even imagined yet.

Autonomous vehicles will have a wide impact on sectors that we might otherwise think of as entirely unrelated. Even parents of international students will be more willing to send their children to our universities if they know there are safe options to get them around their new home city.

Trialling and rolling out autonomous cars is not a question of if, but when. The major industry players are in a race to have ever more autonomous cars on our roads. No-one knows precisely when the first autonomous car will carry a private passenger on a public road, but the frontrunners in the race want to be in that market by 2025. That means children born today may never need a drivers licence.

There will be bumps in the road along the way. There are significant public questions about liability, infrastructure and consumer acceptance to resolve. Every single one of these challenges can be overcome, and I am sure they will be. Research and development in controlled settings has solved many of the technological challenges. More recent testing in public environments in a small number of cities has solved more. Only testing and trials in real-world environments will provide the confidence that will see driverless cars become an everyday part of our lives.

To date, public tests have mainly been restricted to the United States and Europe, with a few states and cities implementing laws governing testing driverless cars on public roads. Activity in the southern hemisphere has been slower, with limited controlled testing and no known testing in open public settings.

In November last year the South Australian government partnered with Volvo to demonstrate the technology on a closed highway as part of the international driverless car conference. In Western Australia the RAC has purchased a shuttle bus and will begin private trials from April, although no date has been set for tests in a public setting. There is ongoing academic research into autonomous cars across Australia. The University of New South Wales has teamed up with car share service GoGet to develop an integrated intelligent vehicular system. Data61 here in Canberra is examining the role of sensors and big data for intelligent transport systems.

The Australian driverless vehicle initiative brings all these streams of work together in collaboration between government, universities and a range of industry partners including Volvo, Tesla, Bosch, Suncorp Group, Toll, GoGet, SMEC and Seeing Machines, amongst others. Work is underway nationally, through bodies such as the National Transport Commission and Austroads, to examine the long-term legal and policy implications presented by the concept of a car without a driver.

For our part, the ACT government has been working with the Canberra Business Chamber to explore opportunities to be a trial site for autonomous vehicles. At the start of 2016 the chamber, the ACT government and the NRMA held an industry forum to discuss the possibilities of autonomous vehicles and attracted representatives from ANCAP, the Australian driverless vehicle initiative, the NRMA, SMEC and Westpac, amongst others. Interest in having trials in Canberra is strong, and it is strong for a reason—and not just local or national interest, but international interest. In many ways the ACT is the ideal place to trial and deploy driverless cars.

My government has a strong track record of moving quickly to encourage innovation and embrace change. We were, of course, the first jurisdiction in Australia to provide a legal environment for modern ride-sharing services like Uber, and we were the first capital city in the world to do so before Uber began operating.

This culture of innovation is deep-seated in the people of Canberra. We are an open-minded city of early adopters and forward thinkers. Our community excels at coming together quickly and constructively to discuss, to test and to iterate ideas. As a geographically small jurisdiction with only one level of government, we have a streamlined and well-defined regulatory environment that responds to proponents' and consumers' needs. As the seat of national government, we also offer close proximity to federal policy advisers and decision makers working on autonomous vehicle regulation.

We are home to some of the world's best researchers and academics across research institutions like the CSIRO, Data61, the Australian National University, the University of Canberra and the University of New South Wales Canberra. We offer nearly 6,000 lane kilometres of world-class road infrastructure to test in all kinds of settings—from urban streets to rural country roads, from open freeways to suburban backstreets, and from our famous roundabouts to our industrial estates.

Person for person, our businesses are the most innovative and entrepreneurial in Australia. More importantly, they are ready, they are willing and they are able to make autonomous vehicles work here so Canberra can continue to be a leader in this field, just as we have led the way on transport innovation around ride sharing.

A fact of the digital age is that technology often progresses much faster than the legislation or regulation that governs its use. One key obstacle to driverless cars is the assumption embedded in the road rules that a car must have a driver. This creates a web of legal and regulatory questions around liability, insurance, licensing, vehicle design rules and rules of the road. Work is underway to address this nationally, but my government is not content to wait for the rest of Australia to move. We can move now, and we will.

This is not about cutting and pasting a regulation from somewhere else on the assumption that they know better than we do. We need to make sure that our regulations actually work: for our people, for our city, and for industry. We must make sure the regulation we draft does not prevent the very activities it seeks to enable. There is no point mandating drivers licences in driverless cars if a key point of driverless cars is to give mobility to those who cannot drive.

One reason that our ride-sharing regulation worked so well is that we consulted closely with industry to get the full benefit from the technology, whilst ensuring protections for the community. Well-meaning but overly prescriptive or mistimed regulation could cripple the potential of this technology. The easiest way for us to make sure no-one ever considers bringing this technology to Canberra is to put overly restrictive legislative barriers in their way. Such restrictions could even have the effect of banning the self-valet park technology available in Tesla models right now.

What we need is clever regulation that gives us the result we want, not a restrictive approach designed for other conditions and other countries. We should be rightly confident that we can build our own scheme that meets proponents' requirements, reflects Canberra's conditions and benefits Canberra's consumers.

The government is already in the position to allow trials of autonomous vehicles by disallowable instrument using existing provisions in the Road Transport (General) Act 1999. This approach means we do not need to impose arbitrary or unnecessary conditions on a proponent looking to bring autonomous vehicles here. I cannot stress this point strongly enough: the path to success is engagement with industry partners. Pleasingly, this work is well underway. The government has already been in contact with leading companies such as Tesla and Google.

When we pull together, Canberrans can achieve remarkable things. My government will continue to work with the Canberra Business Chamber and others to realise the potential that our city offers. We will work with potential trial partners to understand how we can best support a trial within a regulatory framework that ensures safety and meets community expectations.

A principles-based approach lets us consider commercial interests and the needs of individual trials and proponents alongside public safety and use of public assets. We are also reaching out to the Australian government because the possibilities at the national level are so significant. I am hopeful that work undertaken in Canberra will ultimately be for the benefit of the entire nation.

The most important engagement, though, will be with Canberra's community. We will listen. We will learn. I recognise that this is a change that will feel too slow for some, and way, way too fast for others. But as a community, and as a city, I know that we can work together to shape this change in a way that works for us all. I present the following paper:

Error! Bookmark not defined. Autonomous vehicles—Ministerial statement, 8 March 2016.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Women's economic progress

Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Multicultural and Youth Affairs, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.00): Madam Speaker, today is a good time to provide a statement to the Assembly on the status of women as we celebrate International Women's Day.

I had been the Minister for Women for just over a month when our city was shaken by the deaths of two young women in suspected incidents of domestic violence. At the time, I picked up the phone to the ACT domestic violence sector and I asked them what they thought would be a good response to domestic violence and what a good response to domestic violence in this city should look like. They all had a different input, but without fail every one of them asked that whatever the ACT government did in response to this tragedy, we do it properly.

The differences and complexity of tackling domestic violence have never been far from my mind in the past year, and I am sure many others throughout this chamber have felt the same. In that time, I have had the privilege of working with Minister Corbell on cross-government priorities that work from early intervention to legal responses and on to post-violence support; with our local sector, whose commitment to breaking the cycle through innovation and collaboration is unparalleled; with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, who are providing the national evidence base we need to drive innovation; and with my state and federal colleagues on developing and implementing the national plan and the national campaign that we will launch over the coming months.

Throughout all of this work there has been an emerging understanding across the country that we will not merely be able to arrest ourselves out of this problem. There is now a national consensus that ending domestic violence will require a generational attitudinal shift in the way that we value women throughout our society.

International Women's Day gives us an opportunity every year to ask whether we are driving that change across government and throughout our community. It is an opportunity to celebrate our social, economic, cultural and political differences and achievements, reflect on the challenges that remain on the path to equality and focus on action to improve gender equality for this generation of women and for the generations to follow.

This year for International Women's Day the theme is "Pledge for parity". And while we have much to celebrate today, progress towards gender parity has slowed in many places. The World Economic Forum in 2014 predicted that it would take until 2095 to achieve global gender parity at the current rate. Then, only one year later, in 2015, the forum estimated a slowdown in the already glacial pace of progress. This means the gender gap will not close entirely until 2133. So, in 2016, to celebrate International Women's Day globally, nationally and locally, we are pledging for parity. I encourage each of you to be a leader within your own spheres of influence and commit to making pragmatic change to accelerate gender parity.

Madam Speaker, Canberra women have shaped and continue to shape our community. One of our greatest sporting icons is Lauren Jackson and one of our best-ever sports coaches Carrie Graf. One of our highest profile entrepreneurs of recent times is Amanda Whitly from HerCanberra. One of our most important business figures is Robyn Hendry, chief executive of the Canberra Business Chamber.

The ACT government has a long history of recognising women and seeing women in leadership roles in our community. Indeed our first ACT Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett, was the first woman to be the head of any Australian state or territory. Out of the eight ACT government directorates, seven have a female as the director-general, including the Head of Service, each of whom is helping to lead and shape our community.

With these examples of women in significant leadership positions that we are celebrating, we know that women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles across all sectors of the workforce and central decision-making positions across the country. This perpetuates the existing stereotypes about the role of women, both at work and within our wider community. This sends a message to our girls.

Having women in leadership positions not only inspires and encourages other women to participate; it also supports women to continue in such roles and demonstrates to our girls that they can achieve positions of influence and leadership.

In 2007 the ACT government set a target of achieving and maintaining women as 50 per cent of representatives on all ACT government boards and committees. In 2011 overall ACT government boards and committees achieved a representation of 44 per cent female membership. Today, we are still moving towards achieving 50 per cent representation of women on ACT boards and committees. Government must and can lead from the front, and in this area we have done so.

The ACT government has implemented a number of strategies and programs to support women's leadership and participation on boards and committees, including the Audrey Fagan women's leadership program; Australian Institute of Company Directors chair's mentoring program; ACT women's register; and ACT government cabinet board review process.

Madam Speaker, we know that access to paid employment is the cornerstone for economic and social independence. Paid employment provides women with choices about their career goals and aspirations and their living and family arrangements; it also significantly impacts on their quality of life into retirement.

In the ACT, we know that women's work participation levels are higher than the national average, at 67.9 per cent in the labour force compared to the national average of 58.6 per cent. The national gender pay gap is currently 17.9 per cent and has hovered between 15 and 19 per cent for the past two decades. In May 2014, the ACT had the lowest gender pay gap, at 10.1 per cent. While still the second lowest in the country, a note of caution is required because by May 2015 the ACT gender pay gap had increased by 1.6 per cent to 11.7 per cent. This percentage pay gap means that for every \$100 earned by an ACT man, an ACT woman earns \$88.30.

While ACT women do well compared to the national average, unfortunately not all ACT women are economically and financially secure. We have too many marginalised women, including those who have experienced domestic violence, those living with a disability, those that have no English language skills and vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

In a community that is arguably overall the most affluent jurisdiction in the country, we must not be complacent and we must pay particular attention to those who are not enjoying this overall privilege. We know that the majority of Canberrans that experience financial hardship are women. The 2011 census showed that 15.2 per cent of all ACT families with children under 15 years were sole-parent families, and 84.9 per cent of these families are headed by single mothers.

Women are more likely than men, at all ages, to receive income support, due to the lower incomes and poorer job security that comes with balancing casual employment and full-time caring or household duties. We also know that caring responsibilities still largely fall on women—the children after a break-up, the ageing parents or the relatives, the child with a disability—and women are often left with the financial burden of this without having the time or resources to work or upgrade their skills sufficiently.

The ACT women's return to work grants program, now in its eighth year, is one of several gender-specific initiatives which continue to assist women on their path back to the workforce and to financial independence. The grant of \$1,000 offered in this program can be accessed by any Canberra women on a low income who has had caring responsibilities which have impacted on her ability to gain or maintain employment. This grant often goes a long way in helping successful applicants to undertake formal study or training.

Sadly, violence against women remains a great challenge in our community. It is one of the most widespread forms of human rights abuse in our society. Public discussions continue, both at individual and collective levels, to address violence against women. We need to work collaboratively to address the causes of violence and abuse against women, because the consequences have far-reaching and often long-term effects for our children, our families, our community and, sadly, our future generations. This requires us to work collaboratively, because domestic violence is not just a women's issue; it is also a men's issue—and, indeed, an issue for all of us in our community.

I can assure the community that support for domestic violence services will remain a priority for this government. We continue to support initiatives that address community attitudes and support women and children dealing with domestic violence. This includes the 2015 ACT women's safety grants, with funding of \$310,000 already for early intervention initiatives; projects which engage the private sector in addressing domestic violence; and projects that address the diverse needs of women and children who have experienced domestic violence. Twelve projects were funded through the 2015 women's safety grants program. I look forward to seeing how these projects progress and how they will support the diverse needs of women and children who have experienced domestic violence in the ACT.

As I spoke about earlier, Madam Speaker, we must also remain aware of the fact that violence against women is an issue that is underpinned by gender inequality and inequity. The economic cost of all forms of violence perpetrated against women and their children impacts significantly on the local and national economies.

We know that social and economic disadvantage factors, such as poverty, low income and experiences of domestic violence, can result in poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for women. Combinations of these factors can lead to ongoing mental health issues and engaging in unhealthy behaviours such as the consumption of alcohol and tobacco. While men were more likely to be overweight or obese—71 per cent compared with 56 per cent of women—women are less likely to be active, with 69 per cent of women and 61 per cent of men 15 years and over being inactive or engaging in low levels of exercise. More women report high levels of psychological distress than men. Engaging in a healthy lifestyle can improve positive feelings towards their health and wellbeing. However, there continue to be risk factors that are connected with behaviours and lifestyles that impact negatively on the health and wellbeing of women.

Women's safety is paramount, for women to be able to participate in the ACT community at the same level as men. Women often adapt their behaviours because of fear for their safety. For example, women may choose to walk around an oval at night rather than diagonally across it, because of the perceived dangers, or they will go over a roadway rather than through an underpass. Calculating perceptions of safety in the neighbourhood is an important indicator about how women feel in their environment.

Perceptions of risk are affected by a number of factors, including previous experience of violence or media reporting of crime levels and safety. Research indicates that women have a more heightened sense and experience of vulnerability, particularly at night, and more particularly when walking alone. In 2014-15, the annual national survey of community satisfaction with policing measures showed that 90.2 per cent of ACT women felt safe by themselves in a public place during the day and that 40.6 per cent of ACT women felt safe by themselves in public places at night. As a community, we need to be concerned about that data. Sixty per cent of women in the ACT do not feel safe by themselves at night in public places.

There are things we can all do. For example, the ACT government has implemented a women's safety assessment tool that can be used to identify problem areas and potential risks and solutions when planning public events. Women's safety audits have been conducted on the past three national multicultural festivals to identify potential risks such as dark areas or places with few people around.

At a local level, the ACT government supports and promotes the advancement of women and girls through the objectives and actions of the ACT women's plan. The key outcomes of the plan include that women and girls equally and fully participate in the ACT economy and equally and fully participate in sustaining their families and communities while enjoying community inclusion and wellbeing. In the coming months, the Office for Women will concentrate their efforts on developing the next women's plan. This new plan will focus particularly on improving outcomes for marginalised and disadvantaged women in our community.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to speak about the 2016 ACT Women's Awards. I look forward to announcing the winners of the awards at an awards ceremony at the High Court this evening. It is also an opportunity to celebrate with the many women in our community who are quietly shaping our city through their contribution in leadership, mentoring and promoting the diversity of women.

While as a community there has been significant change and attitudinal shift in women's lives, women's roles and how our society views women, there is still a long way to go. As a community and within our own spheres of influence, we must commit to take pragmatic action to accelerate gender parity so that women can contribute equally to the economic, political and social life of the ACT; women are able to work and have a family life; and, more importantly, women are free to live their lives without discrimination, harassment and violence.

Madam Speaker, I present a copy of the statement:

International Women's Day—Ministerial statement, 8 March 2016.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

International Women's Day

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Multicultural and Youth Affairs, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.15): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that 8 March is International Women's Day;
- (b) that the support of the ACT Government for the Social and Community Services Equal Pay Case delivered significant improvements to the equity of women in low-pay sectors;
- (c) that women continue to be over-represented in low income households, in low-pay sectors and in workforces where there is a high level of casual employment;
- (d) that financial security is an important determinant of women's health and well-being in our community; and
- (e) that gender inequality is the primary factor underpinning violence against women;

- (2) calls on the ACT Government to provide an annual statement to the Assembly in the sitting week nearest to International Women's Day addressing women's:
 - (a) safety both in the home and the community;
 - (b) equity in the workplace and financial parity over their lifetime;
 - (c) health outcomes, including weight, alcohol and tobacco usage; and
 - (d) social participation and perception of public safety; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to, where possible, collect sex and gender disaggregated data to make this reporting possible.

This motion seeks to update the process surrounding the delivery of the annual statement on women's economic and social progress. In 2010 former member Meredith Hunter brought a motion compelling the Minister for Women to deliver an annual statement on the economic progress of women in the ACT. In particular, it called for an update on the progress of the Australian Services Union pay claim case that sought to address the underpayment of women in the community services sector.

In that same year national unions and the federal government lodged a test case in Fair Work Australia. It was lodged on the most basic premise—that, as caring roles, community sector jobs had been considered women's work and had been, as a result, both undervalued and underpaid. In 2012 Fair Work made a landmark decision determining this had been the case. A path was then laid out to bring community sector workers to an equitable wage position.

While Ms Hunter's motion is now overdue for an update, I support its purpose and today seek to strengthen and expand the scope of this annual statement. It is no coincidence that women continue to be over-represented in low income households and under-represented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors. The fields they dominate are both underpaid and under-resourced.

Before entering this place, I organised early childhood educators who were seeking the same recognition of historical underpayment as women were experiencing in the community sector. As Minister for Women I am still driven to action by the injustice of their wages and know from the stories those workers have shared with me that low wages and the weight of unpaid caring they often undertook outside work had dramatic impacts across their lives.

The low wages in the early childhood education sector not only disrespect women's work but the reason for the disparity is founded in a historical disrespect for the work of women. In 1969 Zelda D'Aprano chained herself to a commonwealth building to bring about awareness of the disparity in wages for women and the inequity that it led to in our community. Today in Victoria women workers employed in the early childhood sector have chained themselves to the offices of Malcolm Turnbull, calling on the federal government to fund early childhood educators. They have made a claim

to the Fair Work Commission that men are paid at a higher rate of pay and yet they have the same qualifications as early childhood educators have. I hope that United Voice and the early childhood education sector are successful with their claim and that the federal government can get on with fixing the gap in this sector. Low paid workers in the early childhood education sector provide some of the essential services and essential work for women and families so that they can get to work and earn a decent wage, and our early childhood educators should be receiving the same rate of pay.

We see this in other sectors as well. As minister for sport I am passionate about seeing women put on an equal footing with their male counterparts. It has been great today to see that the Matildas are well on their way on their path to representing Australia in Rio after their win early this morning or late last night.

This experience of inequality permeates women's lives, and impacts on their health, income, lifetime financial security, access to housing and the perpetuation of cultures that condone violence against women. Like Ms Hunter, I believe that this Assembly should be compelled yearly to celebrate the gains we make for women, and that we make as women, because we are making amazing progress every year. And we should consider how far we have to go. It is important, too, that we make this reflection on International Women's Day, particularly this year, when the international theme is "Pledge for parity".

International Women's Day is, and should continue to be, an occasion when we celebrate the amazing women who broke through the glass ceiling. So many of them have gone on to dedicate their careers to holding the door open for others to follow and breaking down barriers that still exclude too many who aspire to these roles. Yet the opening up of the professions to women has been possible because there were others willing to take on the work that was once done by women at home.

The women who choose these caring roles are just as passionate, professional and committed as any of their counterparts in any other areas of the workforce. If they make this work their careers, they deserve to receive equal remuneration to their peers in traditionally male-dominated professions. And if they make these roles their life's work as stay-at-home mums or carers, they deserve the respect of our community and the promise of economic security.

Ensuring that all women enjoy the safety and prosperity of this city regardless of occupation or background is the next great challenge for women's equality. As Minister for Women this priority was the first message I heard from the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women and from their input it has gone on to be the central focus of the next ACT women's plan. This annual statement will give the Assembly an opportunity each year to consider the progress of this plan and its results.

The final part of this motion calls on the government to ensure that we are collecting good gender disaggregated data. This data is vital to tracking and reporting on the progress towards the equality of all women—the good news and the bad.

I would like to thank Meredith Hunter for her commitment to the community sector pay agreement and to the pursuit of equality for all women, and I look forward to reporting on progress as a city in future years.

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (11.22): I thank the minister for bringing this motion to the Assembly today. I welcome the idea that we should have an improved statement on women's safety, both at home and in the community, equity in the workplace, financial parity over a lifetime, health outcomes, as well as social participation and perceptions of public safety. This area of policy is one of the areas, fortunately, where we operate in a largely bipartisan manner across the chamber and across the community. There are very few people who would not take real heart from improvements in this area of action.

Today I, too, welcome International Women's Day as an important reminder that there is still a lot to do to allow women to have real choices about their family and their careers. We talk a lot about women's outcomes, whether they are in the workplace, in domestic life, our superannuation or our health. There is still a lot to be achieved to allow women to enjoy the same level of choice about their lives as men do. The practicalities of women's multifaceted lives need also to be welcomed in the workplace. We need to keep having a conversation about making it easier for women to enter work or to return to work after having children.

Likewise, women who prefer to be 100 per cent working at home need to also be respected. If choice is to be real then that choice needs to be respected and promoted as well, because a great deal of work is done in the home, and on working on the next generation and the people who will lead us into the future. We need to keep having a conversation about this and we must never forget to value the different choices that women make. There is still a long way to go in this space but there are small steps that can be made, and it is all about increasing the ability of women to choose their lives.

We heard this morning from Mr Hinder that his mum was denied a loan when she really needed one and was no doubt able to maintain payments, as we all do. My Italian grandmother never learnt to drive. The frustrations that we deal with today are somewhat different because a great deal of work has been done, but it does not mean that there are not frustrations, and that is why I welcome and support this motion today.

I suggest that by working together across the political divide we have a focus on different groups, which is a positive thing, because across the entire debate it means that all women have some focus put on them. I know the government has done a great deal of work, which we are very supportive of, in an area that is commonly discussed today, which is that of violence against women, particularly in the domestic setting. That violence can be in various modes. It is not always just about physical violence, which is what we picture first-up; it is about women having actual control of their lives, their money and their opportunities.

We also hear a lot about women on boards and women at the top of their careers. It is good that we track those statistics and continue to work on improving those outcomes because that gives younger women and women who have not yet got there the hope

that they too can go right to the top. We are so proud of what has been done here in the ACT for women. It is a special place to be a woman in some ways.

I also want to focus on women who are not struggling with domestic violence and women who are not at the top of the boardroom table. I raised this in my maiden speech in this place. There are a lot of women whose progress is about confidence and about us knocking out the little things that still get in the way of women making the same choices as men at the same stages of their careers or after having had time out of the workplace.

We need to smooth the processes for mums. I focus particularly on women who have left work for a period of time, whether it is for a short period to have a baby and do some breastfeeding and get to know their child, or whether it is a longer gap because they choose to be a mum for 100 per cent of their time because that is really important to them. There are still so many small changes that need to be made. We learnt here in the Assembly, when we had a function run by PANDSI only a few months ago, that the ACT Assembly public area does not have a baby change facility and does not have a breastfeeding facility. We as women have sat in this building and have not really noticed that. It goes to show how difficult it can be to identify and resolve all of these matters. We probably need to have a systemic approach.

Many of our systems and offices were designed for an era when men went to work from nine to five and women stayed at home, or the majority of them did. We need to make significant inroads into changing this dynamic. The practicalities of women's multifaceted lives need to be welcomed in the workplace. For example, our laws state that it is legal for a woman to breastfeed her baby wherever she chooses, as long as it is safe. However, how many workplaces welcome babies? Women are often caring for ageing relatives. Where are the workplace policies to support those additional roles? It is probably something that most employees do not know a great deal about, not to mention probably some management.

We talk a lot about women's outcomes, but there still needs to be a great deal of work done to change all of those little things that make it harder for us to achieve the same level of choice about our lives as men have. We still do more tasks around the home on average and we are still not reaching the same career heights on average as men.

I am in a particularly fortunate position, and I do not take this for granted at all. In my home there is a great deal more work done by my husband than me, and I do not think that should be remarkable in any way. Women, when there are children involved, have already spent nine months on each child just bringing them to birth. That is a huge physical task and our bodies are often never the same again. The conversations that women need to be empowered to have in their homes are about the fact that, at the moment of the birth of a child, there is already a nine-month deficit in the amount of work that has been done on the raising of that child. We need to be encouraging women to have those conversations around the dinner table and on the lounge.

I have been more than happy to make that case. My fantastic husband has always come to the party because he wants me to succeed, and not every woman is in that situation. We need to give women the words to say and the statements to make that make them feel stronger about having those conversations.

When women do make it to the top of their chosen field, or even to the middle, we women also have a huge power in assisting other women to come up the chain. I think we are a big part of the solution as well. In my life since coming here I have been actively seeking out women who can stand for election or preselection or stand for roles within the Liberal Party. We talk a lot about partnering with men, but there is so much we can do already. I have said to various mums who want to stand in the ACT election this year that it must be able to be done. “I’ve done it, Mrs Dunne has done it, Ms Lawder has done it—with both younger children and older children. If there are any practicalities that need explaining, I will explain them to you or explain how I have done them. Then you can make your own decisions about that.”

It behoves all of us, if we are going to talk about statistics, to do whatever we can. We are in a fortunate position because this group of people—women—are everywhere. We meet women all the time and we might be able to help them in some way to achieve their dreams and their aspirations for their lives.

International Women’s Day was marked for the first time in 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, where more than a million people rallied for their right to work and to end discrimination. This festival, this event, has been used in various different forms over the last 100 years. It has gone through periods when it was probably not as strongly celebrated, but it is good to see a really strong resurgence of celebration of International Women’s Day.

Just to touch one more time on domestic violence, obviously we have heard that on average every week a woman is killed as a result of intimate partner violence. If a woman is killed by her male partner, it is most likely to have happened in their home. Domestic and family violence is the principal cause of homelessness for women and their children, and one in five women in Australia have experienced sexual violence; that study was regarding women from the age of 18. Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill health in women under 44. It is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$14.4 billion per year. One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone known to them and one in four children are exposed to domestic violence, which is a recognised form of child abuse.

Since I was first made shadow minister for women, I have been calling for a better collection of statistics because the more data that we have the more accurate and more targeted our response can be. I think there is still a great deal to do.

Touching on the topic of breastfeeding and work one more time, it is very important that we realise that we are really not done yet. We are not done yet in the Assembly. I have called on the admin and procedures committee to look at ways that breastfeeding mums can vote from within the Assembly precinct but not necessarily in the chamber, if they were, once in a while, in the middle of a feed at the time that the bells rang. If we cannot get the systems here for women really smooth, at a time in their lives when they really do not feel like lobbying for change on the whole, how can we expect the broader community to get it right either?

We need to support women's dreams for family and their aspirations for children, as well as financial and career success. I am passionate about getting these fine details of change done so that we can really mean it when we say to our daughters that they can choose what they do with their lives.

On one hand women's passion for family and home needs to be strengthened, respected and encouraged. When we make policy decisions in the parliaments of Australia, we should always be thinking about those women who want to be at home; otherwise we are not really supporting choice, as I mentioned. We have not yet finished making all the necessary changes. It is not just about promotion; it is also about return to work and feeling welcome in the workplace. We have come so far, but let us not lose sight of the fact that there are so many changes still to be made.

When a woman announces a pregnancy in our ACT-based labour force, how do we respond? Do management have any training about how to respond to that? I know we do have equity and diversity training, but I am not sure that this is dealt with in the best way that it could be. A lot of women get asked questions when they are pregnant and in the workforce, as we found through the previous Sex Discrimination Commissioner's report—questions like, “Was it planned?” “Are you done yet?” or “Was it an accident?” et cetera. These are demeaning and negative statements, and women often feel quite in a bind when it comes to how to respond. We need to promote the responses that are the best in the situation and also promote the fact that this is not a positive way to speak to women about their commitment to the community in raising the next generation.

The difference for women and men regarding having children and pregnancy is that women wear their choices on their bodies. When we go to work and we are pregnant, there is no way that anyone will not know. When a father goes to work and his wife is pregnant, the world only knows if he tells them. The questions that women are asked about their commitment to work and about whether they really want to advance can be quite distressing. As we know from the statistics in Elizabeth Broderick's report, a great number of women choose not to return to work because they do not feel welcome there.

I applaud the minister for her motion. I hope that when we come back each year we will have better and better statistics to report.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.36): I would like to thank Ms Berry for bringing on this motion today—International Women's Day—and for her ministerial statement that she delivered earlier in celebration and recognition of women and in acknowledgement of the disparities that exist between men and women both here in Australia and in many other countries. Minister Berry outlined comprehensively how far our society has come in terms of improving the status of women but how much further we still have to go to achieve equality on indicators right across the board; not just pay indicators but health, welfare, personal safety, financial security and representation.

The motion does build on the motion that was brought here by my colleague Meredith Hunter in 2010, a motion that acknowledged International Women's Day and also called for an annual statement to the Assembly on the ACT's progress in improving women's economic and financial independence, including an analysis of improvements in the pay equity status of women within the ACT public service.

International Women's Day is a great opportunity to put a place marker in our parliamentary calendar to stop and reflect on the work that we have done in removing the social and financial barriers to gender equality and to review our progress across all the indicators. When my colleague Ms Hunter brought her motion for debate on International Women's Day in 2010 the focus was very much on the financial parity of women with men. Interestingly, the theme for this year's International Women's Day event is centred around just that—take a pledge for parity.

There have been gains made in the standing of women in our society. From 2010 to 2014, for example, the percentage of women on the boards of ASX200-listed companies grew from 8.3 per cent to 18.6 per cent, yet the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's second annual report scorecard indicates that Australia still has far less women in positions of senior management and that there are more women in lower paid jobs and lower paid sectors of the workforce. The national gender pay gap is 18.2 per cent and has been between 15 per cent and 18 per cent for the past two decades. It is encouraging that here in the ACT that pay gap is a little less and sits at around 11 per cent, but it is still not something that we should be complacent about.

Women continue to be disadvantaged in the workforce because of the role they play in being primary caregivers. The 2014 study found that 49 per cent of women experience discrimination in the workplace at some time during their pregnancy, parental leave or on return to work, and one in five mothers indicated they were made redundant, restructured, dismissed or their contract was not renewed because of their parenting obligations.

Women also play a strong role as carers in families, which impacts on their capacity to work. Australian women account for around 92 per cent of primary carers for children with disabilities, 70 per cent of primary carers for parents and 52 per cent of primary carers for partners. It is little wonder that Australian women continue to be over-represented as part-time workers in lower paid industries, and are under-represented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors.

Changing work practices and change in the way we respond in the workplace so that there are genuine choices for women will require a commitment from both men and women. It will be a good thing for men to continue to assume greater family responsibilities, and certainly the research indicates that both men and women in the main want this. It would deliver an immediate practical impact for children and women, but also, as we know, when men face the same issue as women in terms of managing their work-home balance there is likely to be a stronger implementation of practices that support families in the workplace. It is a shame it has to be like that, but it does seem too often to be true. It is that walking a mile in someone else's shoes that helps people get a little more focused on the issues at hand.

At the end of their working life we see that women are once again disadvantaged. While financial security can be an issue for many women throughout their younger years, many more women are affected as they approach retirement. It is not hard to see why this is the case. In 2009-10 average superannuation payouts for women were just over half, or 57 per cent, of those of men. Average retirement payouts in 2009-10 were in the order of \$198,000 for men and only \$112,600 for women. Women are more likely to experience poverty in their retirement years and be far more reliant on the age pension. We must consider policy responses for women in regard to housing, transport and health.

The number of women in leadership positions is gradually increasing. Representation of women in parliaments in Australia, for example, continues to hover around the 30 per cent mark and puts us in about 54th position globally. Yet in those leadership positions, many women have come and gone. Since 2010 we have seen Julia Gillard as our first woman Prime Minister, Nicola Roxon as Australia's first female Attorney-General, Lara Giddings as Premier of Tasmania, of course Katy Gallagher here in the ACT, Christine Milne as the leader of the Greens and Anna Bligh and Anastacia Palaszczuk have both served as Queensland premiers. We have certainly done best here in the ACT, where we had up to 41 per cent of seats filled by women—the best representation in the country. Still, given our small numbers, that does drop quickly when a female MLA is replaced with a male, and I look forward to seeing more women in this place after the 2016 election.

What is interesting for me is that when women take leadership positions in parliaments and in governments there are particular roles that they seem to move into. We associate women with education and social services rather than business and treasury, and these are often the portfolios where they have reached the upper levels. I am pleased that here in the ACT we had a female Treasurer and we also have a female Head of Service for our ACT public service.

Right across the spectrum of workplaces we must continue to break down preconceptions of where women and men can be employed. We must offer the same work opportunities and appointment on merit every time. Evidence suggests that women are more likely to apply when they are over-qualified for a role whereas men will put up their hand without all the qualifications and that both men and women believe men progress more quickly through the workplace. It is unlikely that this happens because of an assessment of ability but, rather, just a long-held and often unintended prejudice. It is something we must all be cognisant of and make greater effort to overcome.

Ms Berry is right in acknowledging that with the prominent and brutal incidents of domestic violence that have received increasing attention in recent times we have all received a wake-up call about the inequality between men and women and the attitudes that underpin domestic violence in our community. We know that one in three women over 15 years of age have reported physical violence, nearly one in five will experience sexual assault, and one in four women report being harassed in the workplace over a five-year period.

When we look at the underlying drivers of domestic violence we know that our attitudes about women must change if we are to ensure that women can live safely and those attitudes are simply not changing fast enough. A 2013 report of the national community attitudes survey highlighted many interesting points about the attitudes towards women and men's roles in society, including that a significant percentage of people believe men make better political leaders, that men should take charge in a relationship and that women prefer men to be in charge in a relationship. These are the kinds of attitudes that put our community at risk of ongoing domestic violence, and we know it is more than just their attitudes about domestic violence that need to change; it is our entire frame about the roles that women and men play in our society.

When we recalibrate our expectations of what it means to have attitudes of equality towards women and then we look around and listen to social media and see commercial advertising aimed at both children and adults, we start to see destructive and negative attitudes towards women still being perpetuated on a regular basis, from the very sexualised advertising that occurs across the ages through to the profiling and packaging of toys that say to our very young children, "You are a girl. You like pink. Your place is the home," and, "You are a boy. You build things and you shoot things." We have become immune to the insidious gender messaging that pervades our society through mainstream and social media, and yet now we know that it is fundamental that we challenge this so that we can be part of challenging that destructive part of our culture where men have power over women.

The Greens are very supportive of the calls made in this motion calling on the ACT government to provide an annual statement to the Assembly that focuses on women's safety in the home and the community; financial parity and equity of women in the workplace; health outcomes including weight, alcohol and tobacco usage; and social participation and perception of public safety.

We also support the call on the government to, where possible, collect sex and gender disaggregated data to make this reporting possible. This should already be happening across a wide range of agencies, but where it is not there must be ways of doing so. Having that data enables us to both measure our progress and identify those places where further effort is needed. The next step is to ensure that the data is used in a way that helps formulate policy responses that address the fundamental inequities in our community.

As Ms Berry has highlighted in her speech, on many key indicators the ACT is performing well. However, there are places where we can do better and we need to continue to strive to be better. Policies that ensure safety and good health for the women who live in this city are of paramount importance. We know that as we seek to build economic equity and security for women and as we see more women in leadership positions, we will also see attitudes towards women in our community shift overall. We need to ensure that some women are not left behind as others move forward.

While we review our achievements in Canberra in terms of women's income, education and leadership, we have work to do on translating those successes so that every woman can live in our society and feel safe and valued. I thank Ms Berry for bringing the motion today and I am pleased to support it.

MS FITZHARRIS (Molonglo—Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research, Minister for Transport and Municipal Services and Assistant Minister for Health) (11.47): I, too, would like to thank Minister Berry for moving this important motion today. Minister Berry, as we all know, is a very strong advocate for women in our community. Her persistence and her work on a range of issues, raising women's issues and bringing women's voices to the fore, has ensured that Canberra women have an even stronger voice, across our own government and indeed across the national stage, in her ministerial capacity.

As she and others have noted, Canberra is not immune to issues of gender inequality or, sadly, violence against women. There still remains an issue of women being over-represented in low income households. The average woman will retire with about half the super balance of the average man. And over 12 months, on average, one woman is killed every week as a result of intimate partner violence.

Madam Speaker, we still have a long way to go when we consider some of these issues. International Women's Day gives us all an opportunity to remind ourselves of the fight we still have ahead of us when it comes to equality and respecting women in our community. But it is also a chance to reflect on the significant contribution that women make to our city and the vision many women have to make Canberra a better place for all of us. It is also an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come.

In Mr Hinder's inaugural speech earlier he shared his mum's own experience of legislation—laws that meant he was separated from his family at a young age. In my own family we experienced the same impact of legislation. My mother, in her primary years, had a father who left the family home, with no benefits and no legislation to support in any way women with the sole responsibility for caring for their children. She was left largely to fend for herself while her mother had to go out and earn a living. Later on in life, when she met my father, who was a young policeman, it was not until the police force had approved of my mother as a potential wife that they were allowed to get married and my father was allowed to remain in the police force. Sadly for him, some of his colleagues' future wives were not approved, and they subsequently left the police force. I am glad that we have moved on. That was only in my short lifetime, some 40 years ago.

Women have shaped and will continue to shape our community. As the new minister for transport, in particular, I am lucky to work with some very talented women who are shaping our city's future. Women make up around 14 per cent of the transport industry's workforce, but things are gradually changing. We have more women bus drivers than ever before, and just last month I was delighted to announce that Emma Thomas will be the inaugural director-general of transport Canberra. From 1 July 2016, Emma will oversee this new agency and the next phase of Canberra's public transport journey. Her role will be to bring together the Capital Metro Agency, ACTION and elements of the Territory and Municipal Services public transport group.

Prior to moving to Canberra, Emma was the State Rail Commissioner for South Australia and Deputy Chief Executive of Public Transport. Her previous experience has also included vice-president roles at Boeing and senior roles in Transport and

Main Roads in Queensland. And she started her career as an engineer serving in the Royal Australian Air Force. She has excellent experience, and I know she is excited about ensuring that Canberra has a truly integrated transport system. This is an exciting time for public transport in Canberra, and transport Canberra will deliver new services that are particularly important for the women in our community.

Alongside Emma working on the light rail project is Pacific Partnership's Saori Peguicha. Pacific Partnerships is the lead agency in the Canberra Metro consortium, and Saori brings local and international hands-on rail delivery experience to the light rail project. She is well known for her innovative approach to ensuring that the ACT's public transport system is integrated. Throughout her 20-year career in rail and construction, she has worked on projects in Mexico, in Malaysia and throughout Australia.

Women like Saori and Emma show that women can excel in industries that might have once been dominated by men. Emma recently told HerCanberra:

It's hard to not notice when you're the only girl in the room, but in recent years I've noticed more women are getting involved in the industry.

It is great to see this shift, because when women move into positions of power and influence, in public and private enterprise, we ensure women's views are better represented in the decision-making process. The truth is that women continue to be over-represented in low income households, in low pay sectors and in casual employment. So having women in positions where they can think about how our public policy affects women can go a long way to ensuring that things like public transport work better for the women who make up 50 per cent of our community.

It is important to understand that public transport is often used differently by women and men, and it is important to make sure public transport is accessible and safe for women. Because women's reasons for travelling are different from men's, the purpose, frequency and distance of their trips may also be different. Ensuring that public transport is reliable, affordable and safe for women must be intrinsic to our city's transport planning.

This is another reason why light rail is a win for our city. It will offer women a safe, reliable and more accessible option for travelling around Canberra. It will be easier to get a pram on and off, so young mothers, many of whom can be isolated in our city if they do not drive, will find it easier to get around. For parents of students thinking of sending their children to Canberra to study, either from throughout Australia or internationally, there is evidence that the major decision-maker in these families on where to send their children is the mother. Decisions that they make knowing that light rail is a safe transport option for the student is important for our international student community in particular.

I have spoken with a number of women who believe light rail will make commuting safer and be more reliable for their children once they start venturing into Civic for a night out. It offers a solution to the growing problem of congestion on Northbourne Avenue. I do not know anyone who would rather be sitting in traffic than spending

time with their family, so this is a win-win for mums, dads, children and families across the city. Well-maintained public footpaths that are well lit, and safe cycle lanes, are also vital for giving women safe access around our city.

I am proud to say that this government is committed to creating better public spaces around our city. Recently we began consultation with elderly residents in Kaleen and Monash following consultations in Ainslie and Weston. Many of the people participating in this consultation are older women. They are telling us about the ways that they would like to move around their suburbs more easily and safely.

We are also about to begin making vital infrastructure upgrades in Ainslie and Weston to help elderly residents get around, with a focus on path replacement, kerb ramp upgrades, new lighting and changes to pedestrian refuge islands. These will help to create more accessible suburbs, allowing women to stay healthy, active and engaged. Such improvements may seem simple, but they can go a long way to giving women, particularly older women in our community, confidence to go to the local shops or get on a bus to visit family and friends.

Public transport might not appeal to everyone, but for many women it is a vital service that connects us socially and economically. We should be doing everything we can to make sure we have a transport system in the ACT that is safe and reliable for women and children. I welcome particularly the collection of more data, outlined in this motion today, about the issues facing women in our community so we can ensure that our policies address any problems and improve outcomes for women across the ACT.

On a final note, I would like to congratulate three female entrepreneurs in our community today. Sarah Pearson from the CBR Innovation Network spoke this morning of the high numbers of female entrepreneurs coming through the Canberra innovation network. Jessica May from Enabled Employment and Michelle Melbourne from Intelledox were named as two of the nine top Australian female entrepreneurs. That is a great credit to the work of women in our community.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Minister for Housing, Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Multicultural and Youth Affairs, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (11.55), in reply: I rise to close the debate on this very important matter in this motion on International Women's Day today. I want to thank members for their positive contributions to this conversation on this motion. It calls on the government to provide additional information as close to International Women's Day as possible for future governments in this place. It is important for us to be able to measure the success of this government, but also to measure the success of our community.

Also, this motion has given us the opportunity to talk about some of the amazing women in our community and celebrate their successes just in this last couple of weeks. I want to reflect on some of the women in our community and the roles that they have played in giving young girls people to look up to and women to look up to for their own futures.

A couple of weeks ago I attended an end-of-year celebration with the Canberra Capitals, who were coming together to celebrate the end of their year and also to say farewell to a couple of very elite athletes. I was so compelled and so moved by the speech that former Capitals and Australian Opals member Lucille Bailie gave in her recognition of Carrie Graf that I wrote an op ed at HerCanberra because I thought that was a story that needed to be told and shared with the broader ACT community.

Lucille recounted a defining moment for Carrie Graf when she was seven years old at a primary school—only a couple of years younger than my own daughter—when, despite being the best cricketer of her age, she was not allowed to play in the school team. Carrie asked why, and the response she got back was, “Because you’re a girl.” From that setback, Carrie did not take no for an answer. The saying that Carrie has been renowned for amongst Caps players is “Fire in your belly, ice in your veins.” Her determination is legendary, but the leadership, care and understanding of young female players still growing up and often juggling a part-time job with basketball are some of the qualities that those in the Caps family will miss the most from Carrie Graf.

We have been lucky to look up to the Caps over the years with leaders like Carrie Graf and Jessica Bibby, but we have also had the Canberra United team in the W-League, another top-tier women’s team with a growing profile, with women like Heather Reid. We have also had access to national women’s teams like the Southern Stars, who played at Manuka Oval last month. And I also make reference to the fabulous Matildas. What a great way to start a celebration for International Women’s Day today.

I also want to pay tribute to the Brumbies. Who would have thought 20 years ago that we would be speaking so publicly about domestic and family violence and supporting women and families who have experienced domestic and family violence where the Brumbies donated \$20,000 if they got 20,000 spectators at their game? They exceeded that and they made the donation. This year they have announced that DVCS, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, is their charity partner for this season. It shows that it is not just government policies that bring change in our community; it is the community itself.

Today I also want to make mention of Alisa Draskovic and the YWCA with their “This is not a wife beater” campaign. People may have seen this crossing their social media pages. They have been bringing attention to the issue of domestic and family violence with a clear message, on coffee cups from cafes all across this city, that we can all contribute to ending violence against women by changing the way we think, talk and act. What I have found so remarkable and inspiring about this campaign is the willingness of cafes, eateries and restaurants across the ACT to come on board with this and have a conversation about it with people in the community who are coming to purchase their morning coffee. It is a great campaign. I encourage members to get on board and take their coffee cups—which they should have received in their offices—to their coffee place and continue the conversation with people in their community about ending family and domestic violence.

I want to finish by saying that today on International Women's Day we stand on the shoulders of giants. We today recognise and celebrate women who never took no for an answer, who sacrificed much to advance the social, economic, cultural and political status for women all across the globe. We recognise the work before us to advance true equality to the benefit of all. I am personally grateful for the work that women have done before me to make the change that we are experiencing and I hope we can continue with that change for further equity and equality in our communities for women, children and young girls.

I thank everybody again for their positive contributions today. I encourage people to get on board with the "This is not a wife beater" campaign and continue the conversation so that on future International Women's Day occasions we can be looking our daughters in the eye and saying that we did everything we could to make their lives as equal as those of the men in our community.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Bill 2016

Mr Corbell, by leave, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Capital Metro, Minister for Health, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change) (12.02): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Bill 2016 makes amendments to the legislation governing the ACT's Civil and Administrative Tribunal to remedy the effects of an error in a recent instrument making appointments to the tribunal. As members would be aware, the ACAT is a statutory independent legal institution which provides a forum to resolve specific types of administrative and civil disputes. ACAT's jurisdiction includes review of administrative decisions, discrimination matters, guardianship and mental health matters, residential tenancy disputes and civil disputes under the value of \$10,000.

This bill, therefore, amends the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 to, in effect, reinstate the appointments of two presidential members of ACAT. This is regrettably necessary due to the inadvertent revocation of the appointments of those members from 1 January 2016. The amendments will not only reinstate the appointments of the members involved but ensure the validity of decisions those members have made during the time their appointments were not in place.

It is deeply regrettable that an error in an instrument has resulted in the need for this bill. However, it is, of course, very important to ensure that the validity of the

appointments of the two presidential members for their original terms of appointment is put beyond doubt and the validity of decisions and orders made by them during the period when their appointments were not in place is also put beyond doubt.

Members of the community have a legitimate expectation that courts and tribunals before which they appear are properly constituted, and I have acted promptly to remedy this problem as soon as it was drawn to my attention. Establishing, beyond doubt, the validity of orders will protect the rights and interests of parties involved in those matters.

I would like to assure members that I take this matter extremely seriously. I have already asked my directorate to explain fully how the error occurred and to put in place procedures to ensure that this situation does not arise again. I want to flag that I intend to seek leave to have this bill debated later this week to ensure that the matter is dealt with expeditiously. This is necessary as, during the period when the appointments in question were not in place, both members made a range of orders, including a number that affect vulnerable Canberrans, such as guardianship and mental health orders. It is important that the validity of these decisions is put beyond doubt at the earliest opportunity to provide confidence to those charged with giving effect to the decisions that they can legitimately do so.

I understand that the urgency requiring consideration of this bill this week means that scrutiny of the bill will be limited, and I apologise to members in advance for this. That said, I believe that the need to put beyond doubt the validity of the appointments and orders made by the members justifies debate on the bill this week rather than delaying consideration of it until the sittings in April.

Recognising the limited opportunity for scrutiny of the bill, I have also foreshadowed this course of action to the chair of the scrutiny of bills committee, the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Rattenbury. I will ensure that briefings are made available, should they be requested, between now and Thursday. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Bill 2016

Debate resumed from 11 February 2016, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (12.06): The Canberra Liberals will support this bill. As the explanatory statement notes, the Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Bill 2016 repeals and replaces the Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Act 1983.

The bill establishes an administrative scheme for providing financial assistance to victims who have been injured as a result of an act of violence. Applications under the new scheme are assessed by the Victims of Crime Commissioner rather than submitted for a decision of the court, as is the case under the repealed act. This is an

administrative, not court-based, framework and, as such, applications will be processed in a more timely manner. Applicants will be case managed through the process, which I think is an advantage.

The new scheme has four types of payments, whereas the existing scheme or the repealed scheme had two types of payments—a special assistance payment and reimbursement of costs incurred. The four types of payment under the new scheme are an immediate needs payment, an economic loss payment, recognition payments and funeral expenses. The four types of payments give the scheme more flexibility to respond to applicants' needs. For example, victims of domestic violence can be provided with relatively immediate assistance to secure their premises.

With regard to domestic violence victims, domestic violence victims will be specifically recognised under the new scheme. There are special reporting class victims, including sexual assault victims, that will recognise that not all victims of sexual assault disclose to police. The new scheme will have the flexibility to respond to these survivors by allowing payments for immediate needs and economic loss.

With regard to people living with injuries, they will receive medical intervention rather than asking them to save up and pay and be reimbursed. It is much clearer to pay service providers directly to deliver a service rather than having the victim, who may be under financial restraint, to pay first and then be reimbursed.

With regard to sexual assault victims, the scheme will not be requiring all victims of sexual assault to undergo psychological assessment to determine the extent of their injury. The definition of injury has been broadened for domestic violence victims. In terms of injury, the definition of injury has been broadened. People no longer have to prove the extent of their injuries, and they will not be requiring victims of sexual assault, as I said, to undergo assessment in all applications.

With regard to economic loss, the amounts will be set out in regulations so people will be able to see those amounts. The maximum amount is \$50,000, which is the same as previously. However, it will be made up differently across the four payment categories.

Turning to the issue of homicide, victims are assessed in their own right, rather than being assessed in a pool. Each dependant will get a recognition payment rather than having to share a lump sum payment with other dependants. There will be recognition of a broader range of people affected by homicide. Eligible people will include those who are dependants of the primary victim or a close family member or in a relevant relationship. Witnesses to homicide can also be recognised.

In terms of the payments, there is an internal review mechanism and an external review mechanism for certain decisions. Time periods to apply have been extended from 12 months from the date of injury to three years from the date of the offence or from when a child victim turns 18. The scrutiny of bills committee has looked at this in report No 42. It noted, "Do any provisions of the bill amount to undue trespass on rights or liberties," in terms of how they relate to the Human Rights Act. The committee did not call on the minister to respond.

The Canberra Liberals will support this bill. At this time I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the role that the Victims of Crime Commissioner, Mr John Hinchey, has performed with regard to the design of this new system. I think that this well reflects his ongoing advocacy for victims of crime. Many of us would have had dealings with Mr Hinchey and have seen his work, particularly recently, on the issue of domestic violence. I take this opportunity to thank Mr Hinchey for his work and congratulate him on the recent award of the Public Service Medal for his role in the public sector and his commitment to victims of crime in the ACT.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Education, Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Road Safety) (12.12): I am pleased to support the Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance) Bill 2016. In my view this is a good reform that is designed to make the financial assistance scheme for victims of crime much easier to access and more flexible and fair.

I have had contact with several stakeholders who are either supportive of the changes or who have no issues with them. I note that John Hinchey, the ACT Victims of Crime Commissioner, has worked closely with the government on developing the new scheme, drawing on his considerable experience working with the current scheme and with victims of crime in the ACT. It appears to me that the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and Mr Hinchey have done a good job in working through this complex area of reform to make it fairer and more accessible, and I congratulate them on their work.

My office enjoys fairly regular contact with the commissioner, and on this issue his view is that the proposed new scheme is an important improvement, and is in fact more generous in its payment schedules than anywhere else in the country. This is a good outcome for victims in the ACT.

It is important to get this overall positive assessment from the commissioner, as the revisions to the scheme and the types and amounts of payments are quite complex. In the new scheme, in some categories of payment a victim may be eligible for less assistance than they previously were. Overall, however, the scheme is a better one that will see more victims eligible for the assistance they need.

One of the key improvements in the new scheme is that it will allow more victims to access compensation whereas previously the scheme's inflexibility would have excluded them. Mr Hinchey provided some quite moving examples to my office of situations where the existing scheme meant certain victims of crime were ineligible for financial assistance. It is good to know that the new scheme will allow more people to get the help and assistance that can help them get their life back on track and overcome the setbacks caused by crimes perpetrated against them or their families.

Victims of crime often face ongoing suffering and hardships from both physical and psychological injuries or other disruptions to their lives, and we need to make sure the financial assistance scheme operates effectively to help them. Of course, money alone often will not erase a victim's trauma, but it can certainly be important in assisting someone on the journey to recovery.

As an example, the new scheme will provide assistance for the relatives of people who die as a result of a homicide, as well as witnesses to homicides. I think we can all agree that witnessing a homicide or having a family member fall victim to a homicide is an almost unimaginably traumatic event that would change one's life forever. Dependants of a homicide victim will now be able to receive recognition payments individually rather than having to share a lump sum payment with other dependants. Witnesses to homicide will be recognised for the first time.

The new scheme will also assist victims by being quicker and simpler to navigate. Currently, the victims of crime financial assistance scheme is court based. This has been the subject of criticism, including by the Ombudsman, who said that the scheme was difficult to navigate and was inadequately meeting the needs of victims.

The bill reforms the scheme into an administrative scheme, allowing applications to be processed more efficiently. It will be managed by the Victims of Crime Commissioner, who is supported by caseworkers. As the Attorney-General outlined in his introduction speech, the intention is that applicants will be supported by holistic case management processes and they will be saved the difficulties of attending court and engaging legal representation. This is a better way to run the scheme, particularly when victims of crime already likely have enough burdens to deal with, without going through extra hassles to receive financial assistance.

Under the new scheme there will be four types of payment available to victims, whereas the current scheme only has two. These are special assistance payments and reimbursement of costs incurred.

The new scheme will allow payments in the areas of immediate need payments, economic loss payments, recognition payments and funeral expense payments. Again I support this change as a way of making the scheme more flexible and able to meet the various needs of victims.

In particular, I note the category of immediate need payments as an important way to respond to the urgent needs of victims. As the Attorney-General explained by way of example, in the situation where a person is assaulted and requires urgent dental treatment but cannot afford it, an immediate need payment would allow the commissioner to pay a dentist or surgeon directly so that the person could be treated. Another example might be if a victim of domestic violence needs immediate assistance to secure their premises.

I am pleased to note that the new scheme specifically recognises victims of domestic violence. The new types of payments covering immediate needs and economic loss will better assist these victims. The bill also broadens the definition of "injury" for domestic violence victims and sexual assault victims, allowing more victims to receive assistance whereas the previous scheme would have excluded them. Amendments will also mean that victims of sexual assault and domestic violence will no longer need to prove the extent of their injuries or undergo psychological assessment in all applications.

In conclusion, I support these changes. I thank the government and the Victims of Crime Commissioner for their work in improving the scheme, and I look forward to the new scheme being implemented so that hopefully it can assist and improve the lives of victims of crime here in the ACT.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Capital Metro, Minister for Health, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change) (12.17), in reply: I would like to thank members for their support of this bill. This is the most fundamental reform to the victims of crime financial assistance scheme since it was first adopted back in the mid to late 90s. It is an important reform that is designed to reduce the re-traumatisation that can often be associated with the efforts of victims to seek compensation and to seek restoration through the existing scheme.

It recognises that victims of crime face an enormous physical, financial and emotional toll from becoming a victim of crime. And it recognises that we need to do better to improve the support we as a community provide to victims of crime through this scheme.

The reforms mean better case management to support applicants as they progress their applications and receive assistance when they need it. It removes the requirement for them to go to court for simple payments for restoration and for recovery. It avoids the complex legal processes associated with that and it reduces reliance on legal representation and all the costs and effort that that can involve.

It still provides for effective oversight and independent review of decision making, because whilst the new allocations for assistance under this scheme will be undertaken administratively, victims will still have access to external review through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

As members have noted in their comments, this new scheme will allow for more victims of crime to receive payments for assistance, so that a broader range of victims and a broader range of offending behaviour against victims will be captured. Victims will be able to apply for a maximum total of \$50,000 of financial assistance if they are a primary victim and it also provides assistance for relatives of people who die as a result of certain crimes—for example, homicide. For the first time homicide victims who are injured as a result of the crime will also be eligible to apply for assistance.

As members have noted, the scheme is based on very extensive and detailed consultation. It responds to the concerns of many people who were unable to access assistance under the current scheme, including many victims of domestic violence and victims who suffered extremely serious but not necessarily permanent injury. Those types of victims of crime were previously excluded from being able to get assistance under this scheme, and this new bill rectifies that.

Under the new scheme victims who have been injured as a result of any one of a wide range of offences will now be eligible for financial assistance. More victims of domestic violence will be able to access support under the scheme. For example,

victims of a property crime in a domestic violence context, including where a protection order is breached, will be able to apply for payments, such as the cost of safety measures for their personal security or for relocation costs. These domestic violence victims are currently not eligible for any payments under the current scheme.

The new scheme provides four categories of assistance for victims of crime, including immediate need payments, economic loss payments, recognition payments and funeral expenses. For the first time victims of crime will be able to access immediate need payments to ensure they receive support when they need it most. These payments are in a capped amount of financial assistance for specific expenses that victims often immediately face, having become a victim of crime. For example, someone who is assaulted and needs urgent dental treatment but cannot afford to pay for it can apply for an immediate need payment, and the commissioner will be able to pay the dentist directly, allowing the person to have the treatment they need when they need it without having to find the money up-front and then seek reimbursement.

The commissioner will also be able to pay, for example, to have home security installed for a victim of domestic violence who has been threatened with further harm by the perpetrator. Simplified application processes will apply to immediate need payments to ensure these payments are made as quickly as possible and when the victim needs it.

The second type of payment will be an economic loss payment, and these payments will cover a wide range of expenses incurred by a victim of crime as a result of an offence. For example, a person who requires surgery as a result of an attack will be able to apply for an economic loss payment to cover any medical expenses. A person who has been sexually assaulted and needs significant psychological support will be able to seek an economic loss payment in this context as well.

The third type of assistance available will be a recognition payment. The current scheme provides special assistance payments to a very limited range of victims. These are currently only victims of sexual assault and victims who have suffered a serious permanent injury. A high threshold is currently applied to determine whether the injury is permanent and currently only two to three payments are made under the permanent injury criteria every year.

The inequitable distribution of payments under the current scheme means that many victims of crime are simply excluded from special assistance payments. For example, under the current law a man who was stabbed and suffered significant back pain that prevented him from sitting for long periods, sleeping properly or bending over was not eligible for special assistance. And neither was a woman who suffered injuries to her eye socket and face as the result of an assault. She had multiple surgeries and developed depression which prevented her from continuing to work.

These circumstances are simply unfair, and that is why this new scheme is being implemented. Under the new scheme both of these people would be able to access financial assistance, including a recognition payment to acknowledge the significant impact that the crime had had on their life. The recognition payments included in the bill will be available to a much broader range of victims of crime than payments under the existing scheme.

I think you can see from that, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a really important reform. All too often victims of crime can be forgotten and the enduring impact of the offender's actions against them can be devastating on their family, professional and working lives and on their personal relationships. There is an opportunity for us to help rectify some of that harm by having a scheme which is equitable, which is fair and which recognises that the impact of crime against individuals can be enduring.

I would like to thank members for their support of this bill today. I would like to thank the officials of my directorate—the Justice and Community Safety Directorate—who have worked for a very extended period of time in formulating the revised mechanisms we are agreeing to today. They have navigated what is a complex and difficult area, and potentially a highly emotive area, in a very sensitive way, in a very considered way and in a very informed way. They have put together for the government a proposal which will deliver justice and fairness to victims of crime in a way that we have not achieved under the existing scheme. I thank them very much for that.

I also thank the Victims of Crime Commissioner for his input into the scheme. His advice and advocacy have been particularly important at a number of key points, and I would like to thank the commissioner for his ongoing dedication in this area. Finally, I thank members for their support of the bill. It is an important reform that will assist victims of crime for many years to come. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.27 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice Canberra Hospital—patient care

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, on 24 February this year, one of your former ministerial colleagues, John Hargreaves, wrote of his experiences as a patient at Canberra Hospital. Amongst other things, he said that “One arm of the medical mafia ... didn't talk to another arm”, making him wonder “Did I just have a nightmare or was it real?” He continues, “The horror stories might just be right.” Further, he said that there was “So much paper, so little information sharing, so little coordination” and in the end finishes with “Thank God I was not in a life-threatening situation”. This related to an experience he had recently at the Canberra Hospital. Minister, what is your response to Mr Hargreaves's allegations that the Canberra Hospital is not the place where you want to have “a life-threatening situation”?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Hanson for the question. I am certainly aware of the comments made by my former colleague Mr Hargreaves, and I was disappointed to read those comments. This highlights exactly why, as minister, I have made timely access to acute care services a priority since becoming minister. That is why we are reducing the number of people waiting longer than necessary for elective surgery at the Canberra Hospital. That is why we are improving access in the emergency department and expanding capacity in the emergency department. I acknowledge Mr Hargreaves's concerns and I think they serve as a timely reminder that there remains work to be done to improve coordination of care in the acute care space. That will remain my priority as minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, why is it that after 15 years of ACT Labor even former ministers are raising some concerns about the ACT health system?

MR CORBELL: I think it would be fair to say that, for as many times as there are complaints and concerns raised about care, there are a very significant number of compliments about the level of care provided as well at the Canberra Hospital but, of course, those are not the subject of questions in this place. I would simply make the point again that our system needs to improve its timeliness to allow more people to get access to the care they need in the time frames that they need it. My focus as minister is on those two key areas in particular, that is, access to elective surgery and access to emergency department care within the clinically preferred time frames. We are undertaking a very significant package of reform to make sure we see improvements in those areas.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, according to the procedures of the Canberra Hospital, did Mr Hargreaves get appropriate care?

MR CORBELL: It would not be appropriate for me to comment on individual cases. There is such a thing as privacy when it comes to patient care and it is not my practice or that of former ministers to go into the specific details of care provided to individuals who attend at our public hospitals.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, what are you doing to fix the fact that there is so little coordination, according to Mr Hargreaves, at Canberra Hospital?

MR CORBELL: The government has a very wide-ranging reform agenda underway right now. This is something that I have instigated since I have become minister where we have focused on coordination across the different areas of the hospital, where we have focused on improvements in work flow practice within the emergency department and where we have reformed and continue to reform the operations and the coordination and scheduling of elective surgery. These remain key areas of priority for me.

We are starting to see significant improvements. For example, when it comes to the number of people waiting longer than clinically indicated for elective surgery, we are making some real inroads in reducing the number of people who are waiting in that area. But there remains important work to be done, and my focus as minister is to get on and do that work to support the work of my officials in driving those changes to support the work of our nurses, doctors and other health staff. That will continue to be my priority in the coming months.

ACT Health—workplace culture

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Health. In the week of 26 February 2016 the results of the workplace culture survey 2015 were presented to the Health Directorate. Minister, does this survey indicate that 48 per cent—that is, almost half of all staff—do not think ACT Health is a truly great place to work?

MR CORBELL: The results of the workplace survey have been used for internal planning purposes. That has been the consistent approach the government has adopted in relation to that survey.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, did this survey identify the presence of inappropriate behaviours, including favouritism? What were the other inappropriate behaviours?

MR CORBELL: I refer Mrs Jones to my previous answer in relation to those matters. But I would make the more general observation that behaviours in the public hospital system nationally—for example, when it comes to areas around junior doctor-senior doctor training—remain of concern.

That is why the government is very focused on the work of the clinical reform body that we have established to drive reform in this area to work with organisations such as the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons to improve the training culture for junior doctors when they are being trained in their relevant specialities. That remains an ongoing body of work that the government is very committed to.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, how is the Labor government supporting nurses and doctors in the ACT by allowing such a toxic culture to exist for 15 years?

MR CORBELL: We do not support that culture but, as Mr Hanson should be aware, given his own background in the military, culture is a difficult thing to change and culture change takes time. For all the time that Mr Hanson was in the military, was he responsible for a toxic culture inside the ADF? It is simply an inappropriate approach.

Mr Hanson: I took responsibility. I did not try and blame others.

MR CORBELL: Yes, and that is exactly what I am doing, Mr Hanson; I am taking responsibility for fixing it by putting in place procedures and arrangements to tackle it. Does that mean that it can be eradicated overnight? Does that mean that it can be changed overnight? No, it cannot; but our focus is on reforming and changing that culture so that it is a respectful environment for our doctors, for our nurses and for other health professionals.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, a supplementary question.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you release this survey and if not, why not?

MR CORBELL: I refer the member to my previous answer.

Economy—reform

MR HINDER: My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer inform the Legislative Assembly about the ACT government's commitment to economic reform and how these reforms are benefiting the territory?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Hinder for his first question in this place and, of course, for persevering through a broken nose, courtesy of a former Canberra Liberals leader, Bill Stefaniak; although I am sure there are many opposite who would be familiar with having their nose being put out of place by Mr Stefaniak over the years. Indeed, he had a great track record of doing that to people on his own team; he did indeed have a habit of doing that to people on his own team.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Mr Barr, would you sit down for a moment, please? I draw your attention to the standing orders that require you to be directly relevant. I do not recall that there was any reference to Mr Stefaniak—a former member of this place—in the question. It behoves you to speak more respectfully of former members of this place. I draw your attention to the standing order and ask you to be directly relevant.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was not aware that there was a standing order that bypassed humour, but thank you for that guidance.

The territory government is committed to undertaking economic reforms in Canberra. These reforms are laying the foundation for our city's long-term growth and prosperity. But it is worth reflecting on why economic reform is important. It is vital, particularly for small jurisdictions, that we continue to evolve, grow, to encourage growth and to encourage investment and entrepreneurship in order to ensure that businesses can operate as efficiently as possible.

In a small jurisdiction like ours, which represents about two per cent of Australia's economy in a country that is about two per cent of the world's economy, we simply must be agile and forward thinking. Our economic reform agenda goes to the heart of this, creating an environment where unnecessary roadblocks to growth are removed. The government's commitment in this area is evident.

In recent years we have undertaken significant reforms to implement a changed business environment in Canberra. The creation of Access Canberra has given businesses and households a one-stop shop for regulatory and compliance issues. Access Canberra was established with a clear mandate to better connect businesses and households to the territory government and is at the forefront of the government's program of regulatory reform and red tape reduction.

In simple terms, it means that businesses and households spend less time on compliance and dealing with red tape. It is focusing on fixing issues and making it cheaper for business and for government. In addition, the recent appointment of the Chief Digital Officer is promoting cohesion and efficiency across government. We are working on the implementation of iConnect, which will provide anytime, anywhere access to ACT government services.

The legalisation of ride sharing is another example of the government's commitment to reform. Whilst other jurisdictions in Australia and around the world were sitting on their hands, the ACT government got on with the job of providing a regulated outcome that is already providing a clear transport benefit for Canberrans. Residents now have access to a whole new form of transport in the form of legalised and regulated ride sharing. The taxi industry is benefiting from lower fees and fewer regulations.

Other examples of economic reforms include the current reform of the energy industry levy, recent changes to the planning and zoning of the University of Canberra campus and our reforms in the human services sector, including being the first jurisdiction to roll out the national disability insurance scheme. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hinder.

MR HINDER: Again, Treasurer, how is the territory government engaging with the commonwealth to promote economic reform?

MR BARR: In light of the Harper competition review that was issued last year, the commonwealth has asked states and territories to explore the potential for further competition reform. As I have noted, the territory government is already working hard in this area but we welcome the opportunity to work further with the commonwealth and, indeed, other states and territories to promote reform. Any future measures may well involve significant resources to implement, and we will continue to work closely with the commonwealth to ensure that states and territories receive, where appropriate, upfront payments to assist with undertaking reforms. I will also be encouraging the commonwealth to recognise recent reforms undertaken by the states and territories in the calculation of incentive payments.

The history of competition reform demonstrates that incentive payments are a very good way to help states and territories to undertake reform, and it is important in a jurisdiction like the ACT—which is already ahead of other states and territories in areas such as our work with the regulation of ride sharing and the establishment of Access Canberra—that our work in this area is recognised.

I do note that the commonwealth, through the Prime Minister, has acknowledged our tax reforms, and I quote again from the Prime Minister's first interview of the year where he said:

There are tax reform changes, particularly at the state level, which every economist will tell you would give you a very significant lift to GDP. For example, if you were to replace stamp duty on property transactions, and replace it with a land tax, a general land tax, there isn't a tax economist or theorist in the country that wouldn't tell you that would be a good move, because taxes on transactions like sales of property obviously inhibit trade, they slow down economic activity. Everyone understands that—

the Prime Minister said—except for his Canberra Liberal colleagues—

so that would get the policy tick. Political difficulty, however, is very, very high—

MADAM SPEAKER: The member's time has expired. Sit down, Mr Barr. Supplementary question, Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: My question is to the Treasurer. Can you inform the Assembly about how the regulation of ride sharing is such an insignificant reform for the territory?

Mr Hanson: Insignificant?

MS BURCH: Significant.

Mr Smyth: How insignificant is it?

MR BARR: The member indicated a significant reform. Those opposite cannot listen, but we know that is the case and that is demonstrated every day in this place in everything that they say and do. So for the benefit of those opposite, ride sharing is indeed a major economic reform for the territory. For consumers, legalising ride sharing provides greater choice and lower fares. This is indisputably a good thing for Canberrans. It is indisputably a good thing for Canberrans.

Ride sharing gives Canberrans a new way of finding employment. The flexibility of ride sharing gives Canberrans who may not be otherwise able to work the chance to earn money by offering rides via ride sharing apps at times that suit them. In addition, the regulation of ride sharing has provided legal certainty to consumers and transport providers.

Unlike other jurisdictions, where ride sharing continues to operate in a legally uncertain environment, here in the ACT all parties can offer and take rides confident that they are doing so with the full protection of territory law. The legalisation of riding sharing has included a package of reforms for the taxi and hire car sectors.

Drivers and owners are now benefiting from significantly reduced fees and less red tape and regulation. This, I remind members, was a key recommendation of the Harper competition policy review and the ACT was the first jurisdiction in Australia to make it happen.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: Treasurer, why is it so important that the government continues to implement economic reforms for the long-term benefit of the territory?

MR BARR: Economic reform is vital if our city wants to keep on growing. Standing still is not an option. The economic environment today is different from that of 20 years ago and it is different from that of 20 years before that. Unless governments are active in taking decisions to implement and bed down reform, we run the risk of economic atrophy. The alternative to reform is to remain stuck with outdated and inefficient ways of doing business which come at a cost to our community. That is why this government will continue to undertake, and to advocate for, economic reform. That is what responsible and far-sighted governments do. We will work with the commonwealth; we will work with other states and territories; and we will work with the local region. By implementing reforms, significant economic reforms, we create the foundation on which our territory can grow and our economy can prosper.

Most importantly, we can keep people in work. It was very pleasing to see that the territory has achieved an all-time record level of people in employment—according to the ABS for last month—an all-time record level of employment in spite of the 10,000 jobs that were cut by the Liberal Party in the 2014 budget. The Liberal Party are the party of cutting jobs in this city; Labor is the party of growth and jobs for Canberra. It has always been that way, and it continues to this day. We will implement the reforms that will see our economy grow. Those opposite just cut jobs.

Tuggeranong—offensive odours

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Municipal Services. In February, I moved a motion in the Assembly calling on the ACT government to take action to determine the cause of the foul smell in some Tuggeranong suburbs. I received a briefing towards the end of February about this matter. In that briefing, I was told that the Environment Protection Authority had not even started its analysis into the cause of the smell. I was also told that I would be kept informed about this issue. As recently as 5 March, a constituent told me that they had once again experienced the foul smell in their suburb. Minister, as of the end of February, why hadn't the EPA started its analysis into the cause of the foul smell?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Lawder for the question. It is my understanding that EPA have been investigating the smell for some time, and certainly before the end of February. If that is not the case, I will seek further advice and come back.

I add in relation to this issue, as I mentioned the last time this was asked about in the previous sittings, that I have myself made a visit to the area. I again ask for support from all members: if they receive complaints about the potential odour, to let me know directly. The best thing that we can do is have as much data and evidence as possible, as specific as possible, so that we can continue to investigate the potential cause of this odour.

I have also received a briefing from a number of government officials involved quite extensively in working on addressing this issue. This includes officials from the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate who are proactively looking at additional management strategies at the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre if indeed that is in some way linked to the odour. It has not yet been found. I believe it is not an easy problem to ascertain. But, again, I would ask, please, that any information, as specific as possible, be forwarded to me.

I would note that Ms Lawder has not written to me or contacted my office directly since this time. I would again encourage her, for I think at least the third or fourth time—if she would like to have this issue resolved in a responsible and practical way—I again ask for information to be provided to my office and I will follow up on that as I have committed to do a number of times.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why did it take the EPA so long to start its analysis? I repeat that the words used to me were that they did not have enough data to start analysis of the foul smell at the end of February. Why is it taking so long to start the analysis of the data?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Lawder for the supplementary. Again, the data is being collected. Analysis, as I understood it, was underway. I will come back to the chamber on that specific question of beginning the analysis. Again, I would stress that the better data we have, the better analysis we can undertake.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what, if anything, are you doing to work out what the cause is of the smell in Tuggeranong?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Wall for the supplementary. As I have indicated in my previous replies today and my previous replies in the last sitting period, the EPA remain active, as do officials, collecting data on the number of sites currently in operation on the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre. If those opposite would like further briefings on this, I can certainly provide them. The data that is being collected is being analysed, and I refer you to my previous answer on this. The more detailed data we can get the better. I understand that officials have been in touch with individual residents and have asked them to keep diaries so they can better understand the nature of the problem. I understand that is underway.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS FITZHARRIS: Those opposite might laugh, Madam Speaker, but if they would actually like some proper, detailed data gathering to be done, if they would all like to go out and spend time 24 hours a day, seven days a week, then certainly I would welcome them doing that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, is putrescible waste responsible for the smell?

MS FITZHARRIS: No, not as far as we are currently aware.

Environment—Mugga Lane tip

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Municipal Services. Minister, according to the ACT government's ACT NOWaste Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre communication and consultation report, published in December 2012, the Mugga Lane tip is the only active landfill site for putrescible waste in the ACT. Minister, what is included in this definition of putrescible waste that applies within the territory?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Wall for the question. I understand that the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre is a low putrescible waste facility. I will come back to the chamber in relation to the specific definition of that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, do other states and territories include green waste in their definition of putrescible waste? If included, would the ACT's putrescible waste levels be as high as or higher than other states and territories?

MS FITZHARRIS: I will take that question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, is the fact that your directorate is directly handling the issue of the foul smell in Tuggeranong because you have identified that the smell is caused by the Mugga Lane tip?

MS FITZHARRIS: I refer to my earlier answer: no, it has not been identified that the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre is responsible for the odour. I have indicated that I am responsible for coordinating this work across government.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, can you guarantee that Tuggeranong residents will not have to put up with the smell next summer, the year after that and the year after that—forever?

MS FITZHARRIS: I can guarantee that we are doing everything we can to get to the bottom of this issue. As has been raised in the chamber before, this is a different issue from that experienced over the 2014-15 summer. We will continue to work hard to get to the bottom of this.

Gaming—poker machines

MR SMYTH: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, I refer to claims made by Mr Richard Farmer in the *Canberra Times* of 7 March 2016. Mr Farmer claims that your chief of staff had suggested increasing the cap on poker machines in the ACT by 500 machines to allow the casino to have poker machines. This was said in a meeting between Mr Farmer and your chief of staff. Chief Minister, did your chief of staff suggest increasing the cap on poker machines to allow the casino to have machines? If not, what did your chief of staff tell Mr Farmer in this conversation?

MR BARR: No, my chief of staff did not make that statement. Mr Farmer is lying. In relation to the government's position on poker machines, we support a reduction.

MADAM SPEAKER: Could I just draw members' attention to the general provisions of the standing orders, before I call Mr Smyth, and remind people that when they are speaking of named members of the public who do not have recourse to correcting the record they should be careful of the language they use. It is a general rule in this place, general form, that we tend, as much as possible, to avoid naming members of the public. When it is unavoidable, I think it is also incumbent upon us to be careful with the language that we use. Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, why is the government's consideration of this proposal being conducted in secrecy so that the community does not know what is going on?

MR BARR: It is not, Madam Speaker. It is obviously a very public process. It has been on the front page of the newspaper on many occasions.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, will you categorically rule out increasing the cap on poker machines?

MR BARR: Yes, Madam Speaker. I categorically rule out there being more poker machines in the ACT. The government's objective is to reduce the number of poker machines.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, why are you handling this matter rather than the Minister for Racing and Gaming?

MR BARR: It is an unsolicited proposal to government and, as head of the government, I have responsibility for matters relating to unsolicited proposals through those guidelines that fall within my portfolio responsibilities.

ACT Policing—drug testing

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the minister for police. On 5 March 2016 the *Canberra Times* reported that an ACT doctor was planning to provide a service to test illegal drugs for sale or distribution at public events with or without government approval. Minister, have you or any of your directorates been approached to seek permission to test illegal drugs for sale or distribution at public events in the ACT?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Doszpot for the question. Not to my knowledge, no. But I would point out to Mr Doszpot that my understanding is that the doctor in question was proposing to undertake such activities in New South Wales; I understand particularly in Sydney. Therefore, the question of approvals or otherwise does not arise in the ACT context.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what is the government's position concerning the testing of illegal drugs for sale or distribution at public events in the ACT?

MR CORBELL: The government has no plans to pursue regulation or otherwise of this matter, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, have you received any advice concerning police action to ensure that testing of illegal drugs for public sale or distribution does not occur in the ACT?

MR CORBELL: The existing provisions of the law would apply if those circumstances arose. As I indicated to Mr Doszpot earlier, my understanding is that the doctor that Mr Doszpot refers to was commenting on his intention to potentially be involved in such testing in New South Wales, not in the ACT.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, are you aware if the ACT police have referred the matter to New South Wales police for investigation?

MR CORBELL: No, I am not, Madam Speaker. In any event, it would be an operational matter for the police.

Housing—government purchases

MR COE: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Chief Minister in his capacity as Minister for Urban Renewal. Today's *Canberra Times* states that the government has purchased 203 dwellings from the private sector. Chief Minister, what legislative instrument is being used to authorise the acquisition of these properties?

MR BARR: I will take that question on notice and provide the instrument to the member.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Chief Minister, have all the properties that have been purchased been purchased through private treaty or have any been purchased at auction?

MR BARR: I will take that question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, are the criteria and policy used to determine what are appropriate dwellings for purchase publicly available and, if so, where?

MR BARR: I believe so, Madam Speaker. I will find the correct reference for the member and provide that information to her.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, which agency is now listed on the title as the owner of these units: Housing ACT, the LDA or some other agency?

MR BARR: It will be an ACT government entity. I will check and provide the member with that information.

Energy—battery storage

MS BURCH: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change. Minister, can you inform the Assembly about the opportunities for battery storage in the ACT?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Burch for her question. There are considerable opportunities for battery storage for stationery energy here in the ACT. As a jurisdiction committed to 100 per cent renewables by the year 2025 we are very well placed to take advantage of these opportunities.

Storage means, of course, that the intermittency involved with the generation of electricity from renewable energy can be addressed. It can better support the power system. It can reduce the need for augmentation of the electricity supply network through conventional means and it can provide an additional source of income for households that install battery storage.

Energy storage has been described as the coming revolution or consumer tsunami in the energy sector. It has been described as the next big thing by Bloomberg New Energy Finance and by *Forbes Magazine*. Citygroup estimates that by the year 2030 the global energy storage market will reach 240 gigawatts, representing investment worth over \$400 billion globally.

Here in the ACT, as an innovation-based economy, there are significant opportunities for us to take advantage of this extraordinary global level of growth and secure some of that investment here in our own city for the benefit of our own community. That is why the Environment and Planning Directorate has been working with the CBR Innovation Network to commission a renewable energy study that has highlighted energy storage as a significant opportunity for growth in the ACT.

It is why we are working very closely with the distributive storage industry, particularly start-ups, locally based here in the ACT economy—start-up companies like Reposit Power and others—to provide an opportunity to develop a next generation renewables strategy for the ACT.

The next generation renewable strategy has now been resolved by the government based on the next generation solar expression of interest process that was run last year. This provided some very valuable insights into how we can capitalise on the opportunities that are going to exist, particularly for early adopter cities and early adopter communities, in the battery storage space.

We will be taking advantage of not only the technology but also of the economic growth opportunities that come from it. That is why the government is now pursuing its next generation renewable strategy.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: Minister, can you update the Assembly on the next generation renewable power pilot that is currently underway?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Burch for her supplementary. As I mentioned last year, yes, the government completed its expression of interest process for next generation solar. As a result of that we took a deliberate policy decision not to use large-scale renewable feed-in tariff law to support large-scale solar with storage but instead to support distributed solar and storage across the household, small commercial and retail sectors here in the ACT.

I announced in December last year \$600,000 worth of funding for distributed solar storage grants that will be awarded through a competitive process to support energy innovation, linking renewable energy generation and storage businesses together. This will provide us with some really valuable insights into how the regulatory environment operates to support solar with storage in the household sector in particular. The pilot process will award up to three deeds of grant worth \$200,000 each—with a maximum grant of one per proponent—for the installation of energy storage systems across the ACT this year. This will allow us to properly test the levels of battery storage that can be accommodated in our grid, what the regulatory challenges are that will need to be addressed and make sure that we get safety and cost issues appropriately addressed.

But what this is fundamentally about is supporting the deployment of battery storages into the household sector, giving households the opportunity to save the energy they

are generating with their PV and selling it back into the grid at a time when it is needed most and at the same time encouraging start-up businesses to grow and invest here in Canberra as part of a new low carbon economy for our city.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hinder.

MR HINDER: Minister, can you outline for the Assembly the next steps in the next generation renewables strategy once the pilot is complete?

MR CORBELL: I thank Mr Hinder for his supplementary. The government's ultimate objective is to see 36 megawatts of battery storage installed in over 5,000 Canberra homes over the next four years. This is going to make a significant contribution to a 100 per cent renewables target by the year 2025. It is going to significantly support local start-up and interstate start-up businesses that choose to come and locate here in the ACT. We will support this process with a further renewable energy auction round of 109 megawatts to supply the renewable electricity needed to support the storage of renewable energy in the battery rollout. So it is going to be a very significant opportunity.

It is worth highlighting that this means savings for electricity customers in what would otherwise be pass-through costs associated with the need to augment the electricity network. If we do not see batteries rolled out in this way, we are going to need to augment, upgrade and renew our existing electricity grid infrastructure. The cost of that—around \$62 million to \$220 million in net present value terms. By installing batteries, we avoid the need for that augmentation cost. That means a saving to electricity customers.

So there are real economic opportunities, real savings for households and real, meaningful ways of improving the penetration of renewable electricity into the electricity market. We will also see the development of a new renewable energy precinct as part of this work to drive and co-locate these businesses that come to the ACT and grow in the ACT because of this initiative.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hinder.

MR HINDER: Minister, can you tell us more about the renewable energy precinct?

MR CORBELL: We obviously want to see the start-ups co-locate and agglomerate here in the city—close to each other, close to other renewable energy businesses—so that we start to develop a critical mass, positioning our city as a leader, an early adopter and a knowledge centre of excellence for renewable energy expertise and development. We are working closely as a government with the ANU and businesses located in the city west precinct because of that proximity with research and other activity that occurs at the ANU.

We have already seen Windlab, the ACT-based wind developer, relocate from Barton into this precinct on Marcus Clarke Street. Their global operations hub is now based there in the city centre. They are growing their staff levels considerably over the next five years. They are going to be a very important anchor tenant in the precinct, but there will be more.

We will be looking forward to working with the winners of the next generation renewable strategy auction process in terms of how they will locate their businesses here in the city, how they will grow their operation centres, as well as administrative and other headquarters functions, so that we see more jobs, more growth and more economic opportunity in the renewable energy sector as part of a smart, innovation-based economy for our city's future.

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

Continuing resolution—freedom of speech

MADAM SPEAKER: I go back to the point I made before and draw members' attention to continuing resolution 7 on page 83 of the standing orders, which relates to the exercise of free speech. Paragraph (2) of that says:

That the Speaker, whenever the Speaker considers that it is desirable to do so, may draw the attention of the Assembly to the spirit and the letter of this resolution.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Crimes (Sentencing and Restorative Justice) Amendment Bill 2015, dated 22 and 23 February 2016.

Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, dated 23 February 2016.

Human Rights Amendment Bill 2015, dated 22 and 23 February 2016.

Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, dated 23 February 2016.

Planning, Building and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (No 2), dated 22 and 23 February 2016.

Powers of Attorney Amendment Bill 2015, dated 23 February 2016.

Protection of Rights (Services) Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, dated 22 and 23 February 2016.

Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (No 2), dated 22 and 23 February 2016.

Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Amendment Bill 2015, dated 22 and 23 February 2016.

Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2015, dated 23 February 2016.

Mr Barr presented the following papers:

Public Sector Management Act, pursuant to sections 31A and 79—Copies of executive contracts or instruments—

Long-term contracts—Joanne Greenfield, dated 11 February 2016.

Short-term contracts:

Grant Kennealy, dated 3 and 11 February 2016.

Joseph Murphy, dated 8 and 15 February 2016.

Karen Doran, dated 2 and 11 February 2016.

Karl Alderson, dated 2 and 11 February 2016.

Lisa Holmes, dated 3 and 11 February 2016.

Tracy Stewart, dated 16 and 18 February 2016.

Contract variations:

Fiona Barbaro, dated 8 and 15 February 2016.

Ian McGlinn, dated 15 and 18 February 2016.

Kim Smith, dated 2 and 11 February 2016.

Rex O'Rourke, dated 5 and 11 February 2016.

Richard Baumgart, dated 8 and 11 February 2016.

**Planning and Development Act 2007—variation Nos 332, 333 and 334 to the territory plan
Papers and statement by minister**

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations): For the information of members, I present the following papers:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approvals of Variations, including associated documents—

No 332 to the Territory Plan—ACT Public Housing Redevelopments—Narrabundah section 62 block 3 (Gowrie Court) Zone changes and amendments to the Narrabundah precinct map and code, dated 10 February 2016.

No 333 to the Territory Plan—ACT Public Housing Redevelopments—Griffith section 39 blocks 2 and 8-17—Stuart Flats and Griffith section 43 block 1, 2 and part block 5, dated 10 February 2016.

No 334 to the Territory Plan—ACT Public Housing Redevelopments—Red Hill section 25 block 1, section 26 block 1, section 29 blocks 26 to 34, section 31 blocks 1 to 15 and block 49, and section 32 blocks 51 to 55 Red Hill Housing Precinct—Zone changes and amendments to the Red Hill Housing Precinct map and code, dated 18 February 2016.

In accordance with the provisions of the act, these variations are presented with associated documents.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the papers.

Leave granted.

MR GENTLEMAN: The three variations to the territory plan—332 Narrabundah, 333 Griffith and 334 Red Hill—are for sites in Narrabundah, Griffith and Red Hill and were part of the omnibus draft variations to the territory plan that were publicly released in 2015. The territory plan variations seek to implement elements of the ACT government public housing renewal program and will facilitate residential redevelopment of the three sites. This will allow the Community Services Directorate to update its ageing public housing portfolio and to better respond to the needs of public housing tenants. All three variations seek to rezone blocks in Narrabundah, Griffith and Red Hill to allow for new development and also greater density consistent with our urban renewal agenda. One of the key benefits arising from the rezoning of these parcels of land is that it will provide opportunities for a diversity of housing types and densities in the inner south.

Draft variations 332 Narrabundah and 333 Griffith were released for public comment between 2 July last year and 17 August. Draft variation 332 Narrabundah attracted 26 submissions. The main issues raised related to building heights, density of development, traffic and parking, and landscaping and open space. A report on consultation was prepared responding to the issues raised in these submissions.

Draft variation 333 Griffith attracted 17 submissions. The main issues raised related to building heights, density of development, traffic and parking, and the loss of part of the Light Street-Evans Crescent open space. A report on consultation was also prepared for draft variation 333 responding to the issues raised in the submissions.

As a result of the issues raised in the public submissions, supplementary traffic studies were undertaken for both the Narrabundah and Griffith sites to address traffic and parking concerns raised by residents. Roads ACT has reviewed the traffic studies and confirmed for Narrabundah that the impact is not significant and can be managed with existing infrastructure provisions. For Griffith there will be some impact on intersection operations in the vicinity, and this will be included in the TAMS residential street improvement program.

Draft variations 332 Narrabundah and 333 Griffith were not amended as part of the public notification or as a result of the supplementary traffic studies. This is primarily because both draft variations contain provisions that seek to manage and minimise the potential impacts of the redevelopment of the sites.

Draft variations include a number of amendments to the Narrabundah and Griffith precinct codes relating to desired character, building height, setbacks, pedestrian access, landscape character and visual corridor. I was reassured in approving the variations that the increased building heights primarily front an oval and therefore have minimal impact on the existing residences in Narrabundah and Griffith for the heights are appropriate and for a major transport corridor and already well-developed commercial centre.

I am satisfied that the issues raised by the community both during the extensive pre-consultation activities and during the statutory public notification period have been adequately addressed. As such, I did not feel it necessary to refer the variations to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services.

I move now to variation 334 Red Hill. Draft variation 334 was released for public comment on 2 July 2015 and closed on 31 August 2015. This was after an extension of time, and that was granted on 17 August. Draft variation 334 attracted 97 submissions. The main issues raised related to building heights, density of development, traffic and parking and the landscape character of Red Hill. A report on consultation was prepared for variation 334 responding to the issues raised in these submissions. The significant community concern around the height density of the draft variation has been noted. Accordingly, the variation was amended to reduce the building heights. In this regard, the regional precinct code has been amended to reduce the six-storey elements to four storeys.

Additionally, a supplementary traffic study was also undertaken in order to address traffic and parking concerns raised by residents. Roads ACT has reviewed the report and indicated TAMS will include both La Perouse Street and Cygnet Crescent in the TAMS residential street improvement program to address the potential impact of the proposal on roads in the area.

I am satisfied that the issues raised by the community have been adequately addressed by the changes made to draft variation 334. As such I did not feel it necessary to refer the draft variation to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services. Variation 334 Red Hill will support the ACT planning strategy's 2012 goal of increasing the range of housing within established areas and delivering 50 per cent of new housing through urban renewal.

The site is of a size to accommodate high density development and is close to key employment locations of Parliament House, Parkes and Barton. I believe variation 334 will enable a flexible approach to the redevelopment of the area by allowing a mix of development types to be constructed. Enabling buildings between two and four storeys will provide a range of housing options for the community providing greater housing and lifestyle choice.

Planning and Development Act 2007—variation No 341 to the territory plan

Paper and statement by minister

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No 341 to the Territory Plan—Gungahlin bus station—change to Public Land 'Pe' urban open space overlay for part of Boulevard Park, Gungahlin Town Centre, dated 10 February 2016, including associated documents.

In accordance with the provisions of the act, this variation is presented with associated documents.

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

Leave granted.

MR GENTLEMAN: Variation plan No 341 facilitates the relocation and development of the new Gungahlin town centre bus station. The transport for Canberra 2012 to 2031 policy envisages a convenient, efficient, integrated and sustainable transport plan for the city. The realisation of the light rail and implementation of the new frequent network will contribute to an integrated transport system which provides access to fast, frequent and reliable public transport services.

As members of the Assembly will be aware, Gungahlin town centre and its surrounding suburbs is a rapidly growing and maturing district of Canberra. To accommodate the growth and respond to the increased transport needs of the Gungahlin community, the government is implementing a light rail connection between the city and the Gungahlin town centre. The new bus station in Gungahlin Place in the town centre will cater for buses servicing Gungahlin which enter the town centre. It will also be in close proximity to the light rail terminus, providing for an integrated and efficient intermodal connection.

To accommodate the plans for the layout of the new Gungahlin town centre bus station, the existing verges along Gungahlin Place need to be moved to allow space for bus stops and for retaining a lane of traffic. The underlying zoning of Boulevard Park pedestrian plaza in Gungahlin Place is commercial CZ1 core zone, which permits a public transport facility on the land. However, the plan of management for the public land overlay over the linear park contains specific requirements for the pedestrian plaza which are inconsistent with the use of the land as a bus station.

The Conservator of Flora and Fauna supports the changes to the public land overlay provisions. In a letter to the Environment and Planning Directorate in September last year, the conservator stated that:

The open space in the area is hard landscape and does not contribute to either ecological connectivity or water-sensitive urban design. The trees have not reached maturity, so any unforeseen loss of existing vegetation will not cause a significant impact.

Variation 341 amends the public land urban open space overlay for parts of Boulevard Park where road widening works are required for the bus station and associated intersection upgrades. The variation retains most of the pedestrian plaza areas that are covered by the overlay for public use. The draft variation was released for public consultation over a six-week period between November and December last year. At the close of consultation period, no public submissions had been received on the draft variation.

Under section 73 of the Planning and Development Act I have chosen to exercise my discretion not to refer the draft variation to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services. Accordingly, I have approved the variation to the territory plan for the new Gungahlin town centre bus station. I look

forward to the development of the new bus station in a timely manner to support and enhance public transport accessibility, efficiency and integration in the new town centre.

Papers

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Freedom of Information Act—Freedom of Information Amendment Regulation 2016 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2016-3 (LR, 15 February 2016).

Health Act—Health (Fees) Determination 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-8 (LR, 18 February 2016).

Public Trustee Act—Public Trustee (Fees) Determination 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-10 (LR, 18 February 2016).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-6 (LR, 11 February 2016).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2016 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-7 (LR, 11 February 2016).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2016 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-9 (LR, 22 February 2016).

Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act—Utilities (Technical Regulation) (Light Rail—Regulated Utility Service) Regulation 2016—Subordinate Law SL2016-2 (LR, 15 February 2016).

Small business

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM SPEAKER: I have received letters from Ms Burch, Mr Doszpot, Mr Hanson, Mrs Jones, Ms Lawder, Mr Smyth and Mr Wall proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, I have determined that the matter proposed by Mr Hanson be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of small business in the ACT.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (3.26): It is with great delight that I speak about this important issue in the Assembly today. I am sure that many would share my enthusiasm for small business. I know that Mr Smyth, my colleague, certainly does, as does Ms Lawder, and as do you, Madam Speaker. I know that many of you have spoken about this issue before, but it is one that I think we should keep talking about. We should not simply just mention small business.

Certainly the Canberra Liberals will always put small business to the fore when we are talking about important issues in the ACT. In Australia, 96 per cent of all businesses are small businesses. They employ over 4.5 million people, producing over \$330 billion of our national economic output per year. They comprise half of working men and women. Really, they are the engine room of our economy.

In 2013-14 Australians started over 280,000 small businesses. I do not know how many would have failed since then, but I do note that the rates for small business failure are high. When you see a figure like that for the number starting up, you have to really think about the risk, the hard work, the sweat and toil that have been put in by so many people as they invest not just financially but emotionally in those small businesses.

In Canberra, we have 26,000 small businesses, with 97 per cent of small businesses employing less than 30 people. 16,000 are micro businesses employing one or two people. Again, these businesses in many ways are the engine room of our economy. We know that we have a large public sector in the ACT. We have some other great sectors as well in education, ICT and others, but small business is a very important part of our economy.

In February I outlined my vision and priorities for Canberra. At the fore of that vision was economic growth, because it is through economic growth that we create wealth in our society that can then fund health, education and other important services. But it also creates so many of the jobs that particularly our younger people would be able to access, particularly in times, as we know, when the federal public service is not in a period of growth.

As a Liberal, it is certainly in my DNA to support economic growth and business, and in particular small business. But it does require a dynamic and confident public sector supported by government. As I said in February, we do need to transition away from a government that, as a culture, has the CFMEU at its heart. We are not going to have the sort of enterprise to support particularly small business while we have a government that is beholden to the CFMEU.

If there is any doubt that that is an overstatement, you have to remember that it is the CFMEU officials that are running some branches of the Labor Party. In fact, in the Dickson sub-branch, the president was recently suspended because he faced criminal charges. But what did the Labor Party do, Madam Assistant Speaker? They replaced him with another CFMEU organiser also facing court action. When the secretary of the Labor Party was asked, "Is this the sort of Labor Party that you want? Is this appropriate? Why isn't this member being suspended also?" his response was—I will paraphrase, "If we kicked everybody out of the Labor Party for facing fines, we wouldn't have anybody left."

That is an extraordinary thing to say about this CFMEU-dominated, anti-business Labor Party. It reminds me—

Ms Burch: A point of order.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Point of order, thank you, Mr Hanson. Ms Burch.

Ms Burch: The MPI is about the importance of small business in the ACT—

MR HANSON: Can you stop the clock, please?

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please. Sorry, Ms Burch, could you start that again?

Ms Burch: On the point of order, I think the MPI is about supporting small business in the ACT; it is not a narrative on the Labor Party or the comments by the secretary of the Labor Party.

Mrs Dunne: On the point of order, if I could, Madam Assistant Speaker, there is no—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: When I call you—

Mrs Dunne: question before the house.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: When I call you, Mrs Dunne.

Mrs Dunne: Sorry.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Yes, Mrs Dunne.

Mrs Dunne: There is no question before the house; so the rules about relevance do not apply.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I do not uphold the point of order, but I would point out, Mr Hanson, about relevance in your general narrative. I am sure you are getting to the point of small business.

MR HANSON: Madam Assistant Speaker, the point of relevance does not apply because there is no question before the house. I thank the Speaker; lovely to have her on my side for once. It reminds me of some of the other anti-business actions and attacks on small business that we have heard from the Labor Party. I remember, when we were in an estimates hearing with Mr Smyth, asking the question about parking in Civic and what impact that would have.

At the forefront of our minds as Liberals we were thinking, “What’s this going to mean for all the small businesses in this town who are desperately trying to attract people to their businesses?” when we know that parking is so important if you are going to attract people to come to use your cafe, your shop or your retail establishment. What about the workers, the poorly paid workers in many cases, in retail and in hospitality? Maybe it is their second job. They now have to pay additional parking until 10.30 at night.

What was Mr Barr's response? There was not any concern for the workers, was there? There was not any concern for the businesses? It was, "If you're having a \$100 dinner in Civic, it's the difference between sparkling water and still water." That is the attitude of this elitist out-of-touch government writ large by the Chief Minister. He loves to quote from the Liberal Prime Minister, ironically, about rates and how wonderful he thinks he is. He keeps patting himself on the back about how reformist he is. He loves his reformist zeal as he gets the pats on the back from economic purists about—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, would you sit down for a moment.

MR HANSON: Certainly.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Earlier I did point you to relevance, as was raised by Ms Burch, and you managed to contradict me and say that there was no point of relevance, which is not very respectful to the chair. But I would like to refer you to the—

MR HANSON: Have you stopped the clock, Madam Assistant Speaker? Is that possible—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please.

MR HANSON: as I am admonished.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you. As to relevance, it is stated in *House of Representatives Practice*:

The chair may take action under standing order 75(a) on the grounds of irrelevance if a Member's speech strays from the approved topic of discussion. Although standing order 76 refers to 'question under discussion' and there is technically no question before the chair, the action of the House in supporting a proposed discussion of a particular matter in effect confines the discussion to the matter proposed.

So, firstly, once again, may I point out to you about remaining relevant and also about being respectful and not contradicting the chair. You may continue, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Thank you, Madam Assistant Speaker. Of course, rates are enormously important to businesses. What we have seen since the Barr reforms of 2012 is rates for small businesses going through the roof. The rates now being paid by businesses, the land tax, the other fees and charges, the impost indirectly on them through paid parking and so on have made so many small businesses in this town unviable. Many are either closing their doors or, as Mr Wall will attest to because I know he goes and knocks on many doors, they are seeing that it is better for them to open their doors in Queanbeyan or elsewhere rather than operate in the ACT because of those rates.

But what we need to do is encourage small business. We need to try to transition away from an economy that is dependent on the federal government. We know that the statistics in terms of small business and private sector employment, relative to government sector employment, were much healthier—60-40—when we last had a Liberal government. They have declined under this government.

That is only going to be fixed if we look at things like rates, if we look at things like parking, if we make life easier for small business, if we tackle the restrictive regime in terms of regulation and taxation that affects business every day. We have announced I think a very important change when it comes to getting business in this town moving. That is the repeal of the lease variation charge. That is one that will not only have a significant effect on the shape of this city, getting densification into our city and town centres, but also will have a really good impact on so many businesses in this town.

What it will mean is not just the builders going into Civic and going into town centres and renewing our town centres and creating all that extra economic and business activity in the building sector. What it will do, by getting the extra number of people into Civic and into our town centres, is create that population density that will allow retail to flourish and our cafes, bars and restaurants to have extra activity because there will be more people in those locations.

I notice that Mr Barr recently said he would like to see more people in Civic. Meanwhile, he has a tax on development, a tax on progress. It is the very tax that is stopping people from going into Civic. So we want Canberra to be a place where people want to do business. That point I was making earlier about changing the culture is so important.

We will be having much more to say about small business in terms of regulation, in terms of taxation, in terms of the change of culture. But one thing we have done that I think is very important is to create the shadow minister for small business. Mr Andrew Wall comes from a small business. He understands, lives and breathes small business. We have somebody at the forefront who is always reminding me and others about the impact of everything we do: every time we pass a law, every time we look at a piece of policy. He reminds us what the impact is going to be on those small businesses and the people that they employ.

I know that he has been very active in knocking on doors out there, understanding what it is that is confronting small business. I know that one particular area of interest was the newsagents and the regulation change. I was talking to a newsagent on Saturday night who applauded Mr Wall for the work that he did in trying to stop the Lotto products moving to service stations, which then was just another hit on those existing small businesses that are already facing so many difficulties.

This business, in particular, is one that is struggling to remain viable because of the costs—in particular, the rates that they are paying. Encouraging small business, through allowing it to thrive, is the best way that we can create those jobs that we need because—

Members interjecting—

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! It is not a discussion across the chamber.

MR HANSON: We know that Labor does not have a particular regard for small business. It was in July 2000, when he was Labor leader, that Kim Beazley—remember Kim Beazley, Madam Assistant Speaker?—said in a frank confession, “We have never pretended to be a small business party. The Labor Party has never pretended that.” Some of those opposite do pretend that. Sometimes they do, because they probably think there are some votes in it, as they are hurting small business in this town, as they are having with a beer with their CFMEU mates at the Labor Club or down at the Tradies. At least Kim Beazley was honest.

We know what we have seen under this government locally but also federally where so much of the policy applies. The previous Labor government introduced 21,000 new regulations. They were imposed on business and repealed almost nothing; 21,000 extra laws that business had to comply with.

But what we saw from the federal Liberal government in the last budget was a real series of reforms that energised business. I think anyone in small business that you spoke to who saw the initiatives that were introduced in the last budget applauded the federal government for the changes to the tax regime and for some of the other regulatory changes that were made to help small business. The changes allowed big government essentially to get out of their way and helped them do their job.

We have a range of issues facing small business in the ACT. A baseline survey done as a consultancy report for the Canberra Business Chamber was provided to me. I am aware that, arising from the work that they have done, they have got a response from small business in this town.

If you speak to small businesses, a number of the issues that are really affecting them relate to tenders and procurement processes. I know from speaking to a range of small businesses that when they deal with the ACT government in the tendering process they find it excruciatingly difficult, enormously difficult, to the point where there are many small businesses that I have spoken with who say, “We simply don’t do business with the ACT government. We do not do business with the ACT government; we do business with the federal government; we do business with the private sector, but when it comes to dealing with the ACT government sector, it is just so difficult.”

This report that was released recently shows that in terms of tender evaluation, there is a whole range of categories relating to timeliness, transparency, notice of documentation and so on where the scores really are very poor. For many of the categories we are seeing satisfaction rates of a third or less than a third being reported by small business when it comes to dealing with the ACT government, particularly in relation to the tendering process.

I know that Mr Wall will speak and others want to speak as well about this important issue. I could talk today about the issue of businesses on Northbourne because of the tram. There are many other issues that have come to light arising from our

doorknocking. We will continue to do that. But, in closing, let me say that we will always be on the side of small business. We mean it sincerely. When we are in government, small business will thrive. As a result, we will see more jobs and more economic opportunities. *(Time expired.)*

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children and Young People, Minister for Disability, Minister for Small Business and the Arts and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (3.43): Madam Assistant Speaker, you would think that the leader of the Canberra Liberals, when he comes into this place with a topic of public importance called “The importance of small business in the ACT”, might have something interesting to say, something more to say than what he has said before. But all we heard for the last 15 minutes of his time in this debate was a rehash of the usual invective that he likes to throw across the chamber. We heard more about unions and the ALP than about what the Canberra Liberals plan to do as their election policy for small business in this town.

Madam Assistant Speaker, as you will know, I have had 16 years working as an owner and operator of small business in the ACT. Mr Hinder, who joined us this morning, brings a wealth of business experience. Ms Burch has her own experience in small business. We would have to say that for the Canberra Liberals, small business is still the forgotten people.

Opposition members interjecting—

DR BOURKE: At least you get the idea. Small business plays a significant role in building a strong and diverse economy, creating jobs and driving investor confidence in our great city.

Small business is growing in Canberra. ABS data released in February 2016 indicates that as at June 2015 there were 25,689 businesses in the ACT, a one per cent increase on the previous 12 months and in line with national growth. They can cover every conceivable form of business activity, from all the traditional trades to personal services businesses and online and home-based businesses, including craft and social enterprises. They play an important community-building role in the city beyond the impact of their economic activity. They are the friendly faces at our local shopping and business precincts. They are at the heart of revitalisation of our urban precincts—New Acton, the ANU exchange, Braddon and Kingston Foreshore. And many local community and sporting organisations would be all the poorer without the support and promotion they receive from our small business community, with both financial and in-kind donations and contributions.

Around 96 per cent of our total business population is defined as small business. Many successful businesses have started from a simple innovative idea and grown to become nationally and internationally renowned. Many of these began as a home business operating out of garages and spare rooms.

Madam Assistant Speaker, today being International Women’s Day, I am going to acknowledge the role women play in small business today. According to a report published by the ABS in 2013, around 30 per cent of businesses in the ACT are

owned by women. I am pleased to say that the momentum is growing in the ACT, with the participation rate of women entrepreneurs in programs like the Griffin accelerator now at about 50 per cent.

And Canberra is achieving national recognition for what is occurring here. Just yesterday the *Sydney Morning Herald* published its listing of Australia's nine most influential female entrepreneurs. Two Canberra entrepreneurs—Ms Jessica May, founder of Enabled Employment, and Ms Michelle Melbourne, co-founder of Intelledox, placed first and sixth on that list respectively, an incredible result and incredible recognition. I am pleased to say that both Jessica and Michelle have been active around various ACT government enterprise development programs and are now providing great leadership and motivation for a new generation of entrepreneurs in this city.

Small businesses also provide employment opportunities in all walks of life, from young people getting their first part-time job to flexible working arrangements for people whose personal circumstances mean that they are unable to access mainstream employment opportunities, such as people with a disability or with carer responsibilities.

Another area of support this government is providing is for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access business and entrepreneurial activities. I am pleased to advise that we have worked closely with the CBR Innovation Network to establish two important new activities: the Canberra Business Yarning Circle, a workshop and feedback initiative focused on integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into Australia's business community, aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the ACT Indigenous community; and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business development and entrepreneur support program, which has been established to support a connected and active Indigenous business development network here in the ACT.

It has been said many times before that the best thing that governments can do for small business is to let them focus on the day-to-day running. It means providing a supportive and logical regulatory framework, providing accessible government service delivery mechanisms that make sense from a small business perspective rather than a government's perspective, providing a fair and supportive tax system, and managing the economy in a way that supports growth and development.

The ACT government will continue to focus on the things that can make a tangible difference locally using the policy and program levers that we have.

Opposition members interjecting—

DR BOURKE: They love this, Madam Assistant Speaker, don't they? It is something new for them; it is called policy. The ACT government's business development strategy, "Confident and business ready: building on our strengths", outlines our approach to small business and also the development and diversification strategies we have in place to grow the economy.

The ACT's strengths that will shape the future development of our private sector economy are in and around the knowledge economy, digital technology and ICT, spin-offs from our incredibly important tertiary education centre, but also the volume of opportunity that will flow from the commencement of direct flights to Singapore and Wellington later this year. Direct international connectivity will be a game changer for our economy, bringing many economic benefits to the economy and small businesses, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors. The confident and business ready strategy articulates three key approaches that underpin business policy and program design: creating the right business environment, accelerating innovation to create wealth and jobs, and supporting business investment in future growth areas.

In relation to small business, the ACT government has had a strong focus on business environment settings. For example, we have established Access Canberra as a no-wrong-door approach to dealing with the ACT government. Access Canberra has been proactive in supporting small business growth and development and has played a pivotal role in reducing the cost of doing business in the ACT through a number of initiatives, including streamlining approval processes for liquor permits for pop-up bars and low-risk events; providing a seamless customer experience by increasing the number of services available online, including, for example, working with vulnerable people registration renewals; broadening the number of services available across the shopfronts, for example, the inclusion of business interaction with government at the Gungahlin shopfront; coordinated inspections and regulatory activities to reduce the number of interactions between government and businesses, both at the licensing and compliance stages, for example, the joining up of liquor and gaming inspections and WorkSafe and construction inspectors; better coordination of event approvals, streamlining regulation and reducing duplication of processes where possible; and three-year licensing for a range of sectors, such as for security guards and agents.

Focusing on making things easier for a customer is the important element of what Access Canberra is about. And small businesses are an important customer. To that end, we are developing simple streamlined information to small businesses, recognising that small business operators in the territory are more time restricted than large businesses.

Effort and progress continue to be made in moving services online so that small businesses can transact with government at any time and at their convenience. Access Canberra is also simplifying forms and making them more accessible and, where possible, populated, completed and submitted online. Clear examples include payroll tax forms, outdoor cafe permits and funding agreements for registered training organisations applying for funding from the government.

The ACT Labor government has also established a jurisdiction-leading approach to business innovation support, and we continue to implement programs and measures to help small business sell to the world and to market and promote Canberra nationally and internationally.

In summary, local businesses play a vital role in supporting the ACT's economic growth and diversification, helping to create a vibrant and diverse city that is confident and business ready. This government understands that. This government knows that. The Canberra Liberals seem to have simply no idea this afternoon.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (3.53): I thank Mr Hanson for the opportunity to speak on small business today. I will spend a couple of minutes just giving one case study that shows that if everything Dr Bourke has said were not so tragic it would be laughable. Dr Bourke, who likes to say that he has a great understanding of small business, had better listen up to what is happening to small businesses in this town. I will give you one example.

I have a mechanic. He has been my mechanic and my family's mechanic for about 15 years. A while ago, about five years ago, with the assistance of the Motor Trades Association and with the agreement of the ACT authorities, he set up a home business in his double garage under his house in a Weston Creek suburb. He runs an impeccable business. Madam Assistant Speaker, you will turn up to put your car in to have it serviced and there are a couple of cars in the driveway. You turn up to visit them after hours and you would not know that they were operating a car repair shop from their garage. The place is immaculate.

I turned up about three weeks ago to have my shock absorbers fixed after I hit a pothole in the ACT caused by lack of repair. As it turned out, I turned up in time to see my mechanic being visited by someone from Access Canberra to say that they had had a complaint about the operation of his business. I was interested, so I stood around for a while. I was actually waiting for one of the members of my family to come and give me a lift, to pick me up. I stood there and listened to this conversation for a while. People from Access Canberra were very polite and they did make the point to my mechanic and his wife, who is the business manager, that they had no intention of closing them down but that there had been complaints and they had to investigate the complaints. I watched as the members of the staff from Access Canberra measured up the workshop. Yes, it did comply with the rules. Yes, they had the right number of employees on the site. There was an issue that maybe their signs were not in quite the right area, but when we looked at that, that was not a problem either.

Since then, I have had a number of conversations with my mechanic and his wife, who is the business manager. They have received about four different lots of ambiguous communication from Access Canberra that say, "Look, your business is fine. You do everything by the book. But it would be better if you have a DA." I went through the rules in relation to setting up a home business and I went through the guidelines. They say that to be code exempt, that is, to be in the code track and therefore to be exempt from a DA, you have to be able to answer yes to various questions. I went through these myself, and I went through them with my mechanic and his wife. They can answer yes to every one of those questions. They comply absolutely and completely with the guidelines in every case.

Last week, they went to have a pre-DA conversation where they were told things like, "Look, there's nothing really wrong with your business, but it would be easier in the long run if you had a DA. It will cost you a few hundred dollars but we can't tell you what it will cost you." And this was the real doozy: "We're thinking of changing the policy. If you get in now and get a DA, you'll be safe for five years." These are almost exact words: "We're on your side at the moment, but if you don't have a DA and things might change, we may not be on your side."

I was interstate last week when I received a tearful phone call from the wife of this mechanic. She was in tears because she was feeling intimidated. She does not know why she needs to have a DA. She has been to her lawyer. Her lawyer does not know why she needs to have a DA. This is a family that have chosen to operate their business from home because of personal circumstances, some of the ones that Dr Bourke talked about. They have members of their family who are profoundly disabled, they have carer responsibilities for them, and it is better and easier for that family to run their business from home.

They have a range of issues that cause them to tick all the boxes in relation to operating a home business. But what has happened after three weeks of communication with Access Canberra? The Chief Minister during question time was talking about how great Access Canberra was and how it opens the way for businesses. Everything they say sounds great until somebody has to confront the circumstances.

This small business employs three people and provides exemplary service. This mechanic is not some fly-by-nighter. He is approved by the ACT government to give rego inspections. He is completely and utterly qualified on all aspects under the fair trading arrangements. He complies with the code of conduct set out by small trading. He was assisted by the Motor Trades Association and Mr Gentleman to set up his home business. We are now in a set of circumstances where they do not know what the future will bring. They do not know whether or not they will be closed down. They have been told that they need to have a DA, but they are afraid to apply for a DA because they do not know how much the goalposts will change during the process and whether the government wants to close them down.

This is what happens when you have a government that does not understand business.

Mr Doszpot: And does not care.

MRS DUNNE: And does not care. I have written to Mr Gentleman; I have raised this matter with Mr Gentleman. I put on the record again—and I made this point in my letter to Mr Gentleman—that it is causing considerable personal distress to and having a huge impact on this family. No-one will give them a satisfactory answer as to why they need to change the way they operate their business and no-one will give them a guarantee that they will be allowed to continue the operation of their business. This is why this government has it so wrong when it comes to small business.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.00): The Greens agree with Mr Hanson that small businesses are vital to the ACT economy and that the ACT needs an innovative and sustainable private sector which generates significant and meaningful employment in the region. It is quite clear that we need to be less of a single employer town, and I think that whilst we are making progress in that area, clearly, there is more to do. I also agree with Mr Hanson that a diversified, resilient and dynamic business sector will support a prosperous community. What we perhaps differ on is how to get there, but that is a matter for discussion, I suppose.

Certainly, the Greens differ from the Liberals in this area largely because I have not heard any actual, concrete proposals from the Liberals. We were assured today that we would hear a lot more, but I think it is instructive to reflect on the recent example provided by Mr Wall.

Members will recall that last year Tatts announced that it signed a deal to begin selling lottery products in several Woolworths petrol stations in the ACT. The newsagency industry became rightly concerned that a major corporation was moving to absorb further revenue streams from small business. I said at the time that the Coles-Woolies duopoly presented a very real problem for Australia and that it had a particularly detrimental impact on small business in Australia. Such a level of market concentration will never be good for the community, and we should be resistant to moves by market heavyweights that will price local businesses out of existence.

In response to the Tatts announcement, Mr Wall tabled his Lotteries Amendment Bill, which was intended to prevent the sale of lottery products in businesses over a certain size. The bill was tested in the Assembly and found wanting. At the time, Madam Deputy Speaker, as the minister, you outlined various reasons that the bill was unable to deliver what it intended to, and provided Mr Wall with a bit of a cheat sheet, really, on how to fix the bill through the detailed explanation that you gave to the Assembly.

The question is: what has happened to the legislation since then? I understood that Mr Wall would go away to work on his bill to ensure that it was more effective and did the job that he wanted it to do. However, months later we are yet to see the bill. We have had the entire summer break, we have come back, we have had two sitting weeks in February, we are now into a sitting week in March and there is still no sign of the legislation. This was despite the fact that I had indicated to Mr Wall my in-principle support for the legislation and my willingness to work on it, but that it was his job as the sponsor of the bill to draft the amendments to his legislation to make it workable.

What we see here is a classic case of the way the Liberal Party operates—that is, Mr Wall got the headline, but he could not be bothered to do the homework. That is right: he could not be bothered to do the homework, because we still do not see this legislation. Having stood up as the champion of small business—“I’m going to fix it for you”—months and months later, there is still no resolution to this matter. There is no sign of the bill and there is a big question mark about whether we will ever see it in this place.

When the Liberal Party stands up and says, “We’re going to do such and such for small business,” it is worth taking that with a grain of salt, because when the litmus test is put on, we actually see zero output, no performance and no outcome. That is really disappointing when it comes to supporting small business in this place.

After the collective sigh of relief at the removal of the former Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, we are now finding that we are getting equal levels of disappointment when it comes to small business from the new Prime Minister. We have, of course, seen the extensive cutbacks to the public service, but the irrational cutbacks to science and

research are continuing under the new prime ministership, and that is already impacting on local small businesses in the ACT and it will directly undermine innovative small businesses in the future.

Despite the reassuring words from Mr Turnbull, the reality is that we have not seen a reversal in the savage and ideologically driven cuts on renewable energy and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. Similarly, we are seeing very significant reductions in scientific staff at the CSIRO. While this February has broken world-wide heat records, and we have been reminded that more than ever we need support for science, what we are actually seeing is a reduction in climate science at the CSIRO and we are seeing a reduction in opportunities for innovation and the small businesses that will help us adapt to the changing climate and to develop technologies to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Canberra-based research and development into renewable energy can lead to start-up industries of the future, with enormous expert potential. What is the Liberal Party's response? To drop a price on carbon and wind back the renewable energy target, both market-based instruments that support the growth of small businesses of the future. That is what we see—again—the disconnect between the rhetoric and the reality of what actually gets done when the Liberal Party has the opportunity.

In contrast, the ACT Greens have actively worked to improve the ACT's planning and regulatory environments for the ACT's small to medium enterprises. We have a long-term vision for a positive transition of business to a clean, green economy in the ACT. The industries of the future, the industries that we are seeing globally, are booming, are creating jobs and are providing outstanding business opportunities for those people who are looking particularly to the future.

The ACT has many unique business opportunities and, by working together, business, government and the community sector can achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, significant innovation, more efficiency and great returns for those people who are willing to take the risk of starting up a small business. And it is a risk. Anybody who has been involved in small business, who has worked in small business or who has talked to small business owners across the board know that there is a risk involved.

Just last week I was with Mr Gentleman and Dr Bourke in Tuggeranong as part of the pop-up cabinet. We went around to a number of small businesses in Tuggeranong and we heard those stories and had those discussions. So we know there is a risk involved, but we can work together to both minimise those risks and ensure that those who do take those risks are rewarded suitably down the line.

In terms of the Greens, we have talked about some items in the parliamentary agreement. We have also been advocating for small business in the Assembly for some time, including support for new and existing business incubators and other support for small business operators and entrepreneurs.

It is interesting to look at the fundamental factors behind the success of start-up culture in cities overseas. It is talent networks within a city that increase the likelihood of technological and other innovation, and some cities attract more talent than others.

Start-ups are largely driven by the younger generation, people in the 25 to 34 years of age bracket. These people are highly mobile. They want an innovative environment to live and work in, and also with good access to local cultural opportunities and a positive social atmosphere.

These things include working and living spaces that can be used by entrepreneurs and creatives, parks, cultural venues, great places to go and eat, good walking and cycling infrastructure, and good public transport—all the sorts of things that this government is working to deliver for this city so that we can ensure that the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs choose Canberra as the place they want to be, the place they want to take the risk and the place they want to create the investment.

One area we are particularly interested in is the night-time economy, because it is an important part of a creative city that we do have a night-time economy. That could be by supporting live music venues, our artists and our musicians, as well as the venues that can host these opportunities: restaurants, the hotel industry, the whole set of business opportunities that go together there. We do have some challenges in the night-time industry, and that is why I have been canvassing in this place for the need to deal with the tension between urban infill, the arrival of new residents into these vibrant areas and the potential for increasing complaints. We read about this in the *Canberra Times* recently: the potential for complaints as people start to see the other side of that vibrant economy, which is night-time noise. We need to do more to designate entertainment precincts, and to ensure that the building standards provide adequate insulation against noise, so that we can have that night-time economy whilst protecting the amenity of residents in the area.

Canberra, of course, has its world-class university system. That means we are well placed to tap into the virtuous circle that attracts new talent as well. The 2015 report *Smart work in the ACT and region*, produced by the globalisation and cities research program at the University of Canberra, with Regional Development Australia, shows how well placed Canberra is in relation to smart work.

Smart work builds upon the knowledge economy and the advancement of information and communications technology. Canberra is identified as having a strong base for smart work with its highly educated workforce and knowledge-based economy and higher rates of internet connection. That is an important point, of course—the higher rates of internet connection. Again we have seen reports this week that residents in the southern part of Canberra—south of the lake—struggle to get good internet connection. It begs real questions about the federal government's strategy on internet rollout across this country.

Interestingly, the report from the University of Canberra identifies Gungahlin as a potential smart work hub for a number of reasons, including the capital metro light rail project. I would like to urge my local colleagues to convince their federal counterparts of the importance to small business of high-speed internet connections and the rollout of the NBN. It is a critical piece of infrastructure for this nation.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (4.10): In the 30 seconds remaining to me I will be very quick. Business in Canberra want three very simple things: they want to be able to

fight for work fairly, they want to get paid for the work that they do and they want government to stay out of their way. That is something the Canberra Liberals have fought for historically. We will continue to fight for it into the future, be it on increasing rates, increases to payroll tax or gouging through lease variation charges. We have stood strong on those and we will continue to do so into the future.

Discussion concluded.

Protection of Rights (Services) Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Debate resumed from 18 February 2016, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.11): Madam Deputy Speaker, this legislation we have before us today seeks to amend a number of territory laws and statutes to make changes to the functions of statutory office holders within the new restructured Human Rights Commission and the expanded Public Trustee and Guardian office. In essence, these are consequential amendments that have arisen from the legislation that was passed in this place in the last sitting period.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you may recall that the Canberra Liberals did not support those changes. I refer members to my previous speech that I made in this place about those changes and the concerns that were raised not just by me, I might add, but by a significant number of people that put in submissions and, indeed, as I understand it, a number of people who are going to be affected by those changes in those human rights organisations.

There were, in essence, aims put forward by the government in terms of what they were seeking to achieve, which was stated as a more cohesive and unified agency, improved accountability and governance and more efficient and effective service delivery. But as we said at the time, there are a whole range of concerns, including increased friction that will arise between the various commissioners; a reduction in autonomy for the various commissioners; conflicts of interest that will arise; the particular roles the commissioners have, which are very separate, risk being lost in this change; the balance of power between the various commissioners has changed in favour of the president; and an increased emphasis on government expectations.

These are consequential amendments. We did not support the original bill, but I will not be seeking a division on this bill today because, in essence, the damage has been done. But in speaking to this legislation I make it very clear that we did not support the original bill for which these are the consequential amendments and which one could argue should have been addressed at the time.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Education, Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Road Safety) (4.14): I support the changes in this bill. They are relatively minor amendments consequential to the new administrative structure established for the ACT's statutory office holders.

I agreed to this new structure in the Assembly in February because I think it is a suitable balance that will assist the officers to perform their important functions in an administratively efficient way and, in some circumstances, will also assist the public to utilise the services of the office holders. As an example of the consequential amendments, the bill updates the language in several acts so that instead of using the phrase, “Public Trustee” it uses the term “Public Trustee and Guardian”. It also fixes minor drafting errors.

As well as making consequential amendments the bill also finetunes some aspects of the scheme. It provides, for example, that the President of the Human Rights Commission has to consult with the other commissioners when developing the governance and corporate support protocol. This is a minor but sensible change that reflects the ongoing importance of the commissioners in the structure of the commission. There are several other minor amendments that reflect feedback from the commissioners and which support the day-to-day workability of the new scheme.

The bill also makes several minor amendments to definitions and other provisions to support the operation of the new scheme to ensure all acts are up to date and consistent. For example, it updates the definition of “forensic patient” in the act to align it with definitions in the Mental Health Act 2015 and the Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Amendment Act 2014 which have recently commenced.

Lastly, I note that the bill inserts a new provision into the Human Rights Commission Act. This will ensure that after three years the government reviews the new structure of the Human Rights Commission and the Public Trustee and Guardian. This was a concept I raised during the debate in February about the new structure of the commission and the Public Trustee, and I welcome the attorney inserting this review clause into the legislation. I think it is important that after a suitable period we again review how the revised structure is performing to ensure it is operating as efficiently and effectively as it should and that it has met the expectations that were intended during this restructuring of the office.

On that basis, I will be supporting this legislation because I think it makes necessary improvements to fulfil the objectives of the recent amendments.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Capital Metro, Minister for Health, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for the Environment and Climate Change) (4.16), in reply: I thank members for their comments on the bill. As members have indicated, this bill is a consequential amendment bill driven by the Assembly’s adoption of the Protection of Rights (Services) Legislation Bill in the last sitting of the Assembly. This provides of course for a new structure and governance for the Human Rights Commission and establishes a new Public Trustee and Guardian office. This bill makes consequential changes to 35 pieces of legislation. It highlights the role of the commission and the public trustee in the ACT protection of rights framework.

I believe these are important changes that embed the governance changes in the new protection of rights act that has been adopted by this place and, most importantly, it provides for a Human Rights Commission model which is much more akin to the

Australian Human Rights Commission model. I note the commentary of Mr Hanson, but I simply say to him that what we have done in reforming the governance of the Human Rights Commission is effectively put in place a model which is highly similar to the very successful Australian Human Rights Commission model, which has operated in Australia now for at least 20 years and which has a presidential member, a series of other commissioners, and a collaborative governance framework but still with the capacity to deal with disputes and to deal with deadlock within the commission to ensure that there is clear direction, process and accountability in the way rights protection functions operate.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that these reforms mean that more dollars are able to be spent on front-line rights protection and less on administrative overheads, less on the costs of simply running multiple small organisations and much more focus being able to be brought to the key and overriding importance of the role of our rights protection agencies in protecting the rights of the most vulnerable in our community. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Debate resumed from 18 February 2016, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.20): Madam Deputy Speaker, we will be supporting this bill in principle. But in doing so, let me be clear at the outset that there are some consequential actions that are going to be made within ACT Policing that I do not support. The bill and the explanatory statement state that the aim of the bill is to enhance the ability of the police to prevent drivers or riders from fleeing from police, to apprehend and prosecute drivers or riders who commit this offence. Indeed, it increases the range of offences and the severity of penalties for failing to stop for police. When it comes to the legislation, this is the sort of framework that the Canberra Liberals have been looking at quite closely.

However, I am aware that the Chief Police Officer, should this legislation be passed today, will be implementing guidelines that reduce the ability of the police to undertake pursuits on our streets of criminals who commit offences and particular crimes that essentially may be causing danger on our roads. I do not agree with those changes, and I will speak further to that. I was also, I would have to say, a little surprised to find out that the Australian Federal Police Association had not been consulted on these new pursuit guidelines. I would have thought would have been part of the process.

Turning back to the bill, it makes a number of amendments to the road transport legislation and establishes a new offence for failing to stop for police—section 5C of the Road Transport Act 1999—with a maximum penalty for the offence for a first offender of 100 penalty units, 12 months' imprisonment, or both. For a repeat offender, the penalty is increased to 300 penalty units, three years' imprisonment or both. It amends the maximum penalty for the existing aggravated offence of furious, reckless or dangerous driving, and the maximum penalty is increased from two years' imprisonment and 200 penalty units to a maximum of three years' imprisonment or 300 penalty units. The aggravating factor is that a person failed to comply with a request or a signal from the police to stop the vehicle. For a repeat offender the new penalty is five years' imprisonment or 500 penalty units.

The bill applies the existing licence suspension and disqualification provisions in the road transport legislation to the new offence. A police officer who believes on reasonable ground that a person has committed the offence must give the person an immediate suspension notice. This notice suspends the person's right to drive for 90 days until stayed by a court or the case is determined, whichever is earlier. The offence will be an automatic licence disqualification offence on conviction. This would see the licence of a person convicted of the offence automatically disqualified for at least three months for a first offender and 12 months for a repeat offender

The bill applies existing vehicle seizure and impoundment provisions in the road transport legislation to the new offence. Once a police officer believes on reasonable grounds that a particular vehicle was used in an alleged offence of failing to stop for police, the police officer will be able to seize the motor vehicle or, alternatively, issue a surrender notice for the vehicle. The vehicle seized may be kept for three months or until a court considers the matter, whichever occurs first. The legislation gives the police officer the power to enter private property without the permission of the owner-occupier for the sole purpose of seizing a vehicle under the vehicle seizure provisions.

The bill increases the penalty for the offence of failing to provide information to a police officer about the driver of a vehicle when that request relates to the investigation of an offence under new section 5C of failing to stop for a police vehicle. The maximum penalty in those circumstances will be increased to match the maximum penalty applying to the new offence of failing to stop for a police officer. In addition, the offence when committed in the context of an investigation into a vehicle failing to stop will trigger the licence suspension and disqualification provisions in the road transport legislation.

The ACT Law Society has been asked if they have a comment on this bill, as have the bar. We have not received any comments. The scrutiny committee's report 42 drew a number of additional matters to the attention of the Assembly but it did not call on the minister to respond.

As I said, I will be supporting the legislation. I have spoken to the AFPA over a period of years in actual fact, and I have been aware that they had the desire for their members to have a specific offence with significant penalties as a response. I think

some of the provisions there that allow police officers to seize vehicles and go to the residence of someone suspected of having engaged in a pursuit or failed to stop for a police officer are sensible. But with regard to the consequential changes that are going to be made within ACT Policing, I do have a concern.

The way it has been characterised to me is that there are issues with pursuits, and I agree with that, and that there are issues of safety, and I agree with that. That is why there are now protocols in place in ACT Policing with regard to pursuits. But the reality is that if someone has a broken tail light or whatever the issue might be, that is not the offence they have committed. The offence they commit that would then lead to a pursuit is, in essence, this new section 5C—the failure to stop for a police vehicle. As I have just discussed, that carries some very serious penalties, equivalent on the statute books to some pretty serious crime, such as assault occasioning actual bodily harm and so on with penalties that carry long prison terms.

The point is not that someone with a broken tail light is not considered to be a person that necessarily warrants some pursuit through the streets, but the problem is that if someone fails to stop for the police, if someone actually decides, “Yep, I’m not going to be stopping for the police,” they have a reason for doing that. By that very action, and with the passing of this legislation today, they have actually committed a very serious offence.

What the bill is saying is that the committing of a very serious offence will essentially be allowed to occur and the discretion for police officers to take action on our streets will be taken away from them. I would say we want to make sure police officers engage in a pursuit safely. As I said, they have those protocols already. But to take away their discretion means that with impunity people will be able to commit offences, be it what is being introduced today or other offences, and the police in many ways will be powerless to pursue those people if the Chief Police Officer brings in these changes.

It is a point of difference. I acknowledge that there are always in these matters arguments for and arguments against and I am not naïve to the very delicate balance and the desire we all have ultimately to make sure our roads are safe, our community is safe and, indeed, our police officers are safe. But on this issue I err on the other side and I would say that I would be supportive of a police force that is permitted to continue with protocols that currently exist that would allow pursuits to occur. I would not want to see the deterrent effect that those powers currently have on our streets, where people know that they may be pursued if they commit an offence, removed. If those changes do come in then, in essence, it is taking away that deterrent, and I think that that is problematic.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome this legislation today. I think it is good. I think it will help. I think that it will make a difference in terms of road safety. But I think the mooted consequential changes to be made to procedures to a large extent will negate the good work being done through this legislation.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Capital Metro, Minister for Health, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and

Minister for the Environment and Climate Change) (4.30): As Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I am pleased to speak in support of this bill today. At the outset, Madam Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge the considerable time and effort that you invested in the development of this policy during your period of tenure in this portfolio. The results that are before us today are in significant part due to your efforts, and I commend you for them.

The bill makes amendments that give police powers to use alternative avenues to identify, apprehend and prosecute offending drivers without the need for a pursuit. In this day and age, pursuits no longer need to be the primary means for apprehending a driver who flees from police. There can be other, safer ways that police can apprehend an offender, and often those who do not stop for police are known to police, or they can be identified through other means.

The amendments in this bill, therefore, mean that police are more likely to identify offenders, and those offenders will face increased penalties when they are caught. These changes are being introduced following an internal review of police pursuits initiated by the Chief Police Officer, changes in the road safety environment observed in other jurisdictions, and taking into account recommendations from coronial inquests where a person has died in connection with a police pursuit.

The ACT will be the fourth Australian jurisdiction to adopt a limited pursuits policy. Attempted evasions of police have resulted in six fatal collisions on ACT roads since 2004. Some of those fatalities have been innocent third parties. Evading police is unacceptable. It is a dangerous form of criminal behaviour. It is not worth the risk to those involved and to the wider community, and with the changes in this bill it will certainly not be worth the penalties. The bill, in conjunction with the new ACT Policing limited pursuits guidelines, will reduce risk in the road environment, including the possibility of death or serious injury where drivers are being pursued by police.

The reality is that a fleeing driver represents a very significant road safety risk. They are likely to behave in a more dangerous manner if they are being pursued. They increase the threat they pose to public safety, particularly to innocent third parties, and if they are posing an immediate threat to life or serious harm then it is appropriate for police to be able to consider other available means to identify and apprehend them without entering into such a risky environment.

I would make the point that the police have never had unfettered discretion when it comes to the issue of pursuit. There are guidelines now that specify when a police officer can and cannot pursue. It is not an unfettered discretion now. There will be new guidelines in the same way that there are guidelines now, and police officers must adhere to those guidelines that are issued by the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police.

I would like to commend ACT Policing for its new limited pursuit policy that restricts pursuits to situations where they are necessary to prevent a serious risk to public health or safety or an offence has been committed or is about to be committed which involves serious injury to or death of a person. As a result of these changes, we will

only see police pursuits occur in circumstances where the overall harm the police are seeking to prevent outweighs the risks involved in conducting a pursuit. We need to be very clear that the majority of pursuits in the past have been for traffic and property offences. In the future, in ordinary circumstances, police will not pursue simply for a property or traffic offence. Fewer pursuits on our roads will mean a safer environment for road users, police and the broader community.

I note Mr Hanson's claim that the Australian Federal Police Association were not consulted in relation to these changes. That is not true. They were consulted. Regrettably, there have been some internal leadership changes within the association. Those have been well publicised, but it would appear that as a result of those internal divisions, which I am pleased to say have now been resolved, there was perhaps, it would appear, a lack of communication between outgoing and incoming office holders. But it is simply not the case to say that there has been no consultation with the AFPA, because there was.

The new ACT Policing limited pursuit policy, together with the amendments in this bill, provide a crucial road safety reform for the ACT. The government is pleased to be working with ACT Policing on reducing the road safety risks to our community in this way. Limiting police pursuits does not give criminals a green light to break the law. The amendments contained in this bill mean that while offenders may not be apprehended immediately, it will only be a matter of time, and when police do catch up with them, offenders will now face harsher penalties for failing to stop.

The bill creates a new offence of failing to stop for police, with offenders subject to a maximum penalty of up to 12 months imprisonment and up to \$15,000 in fines. Repeat offenders could face an increased maximum penalty of three years in jail and up to \$45,000 in fines. Drivers can also have their licence suspended and their vehicle seized.

The bill also increases penalties applying to the responsible operator of a motor vehicle who fails to provide police with information about the identity of the driver at the time of the alleged offence. This avoids creating an incentive to refuse to disclose information about the driver and supports police in being able to apprehend offenders through an enhanced investigative approach.

The new offence and increased penalties more closely align the ACT to the penalties that apply in other jurisdictions. They more accurately reflect the dangers posed by irresponsible offenders who fail to respond to a police request to stop their vehicle. The bill will help reduce the number of police pursuits in the ACT by giving police the powers they need to pursue alternate avenues of identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offending drivers.

The government is confident that this bill, and the new ACT Policing pursuits policy, will strike the right balance between protecting life—the lives of police officers, the lives of innocent third parties on our roads and the lives of people themselves who flee—and the need to arrest and prosecute offenders. It is a reflection of the government's commitment to increasing the safety of all road users and is consistent with our vision zero road safety philosophy. I am pleased to support this bill today.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Education, Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Road Safety) (4.37), in reply: I thank members for their comments and support of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I am very pleased that we are passing this legislation in the Assembly today.

As I discussed when tabling the bill, this is a significant milestone for road safety in the ACT. The amendments made by this bill, in conjunction with ACT Policing's implementation of a revised limited pursuit policy, will deliver significant road safety benefits for all road users in the territory. The changes are a crucial road safety initiative intended to reduce the trauma, injury or death that can occur from a police pursuit.

As members know, the ACT's Chief Police Officer has committed to commencing this revised policy once this bill has passed the Assembly. I take this opportunity again to thank the Chief Police Officer, Rudi Lammers, for his commitment and cooperation on this issue. My thanks go also to ACT Policing, who will implement the policy, and who are of course committed every day to serving and protecting the community. Like the attorney, I would also like to thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your work on this when you were responsible for the police portfolio in the ACT.

Under the new policy, police will no longer pursue drivers unless it is necessary to prevent a serious risk to public health or safety, or an offence has been committed, or is about to be committed, which involves serious injury to or death of a person. This new policy reflects both the government's and ACT Policing's commitment to harm minimisation and public safety. Pursuits will only occur where the harm caused by failing to stop the vehicle outweighs the harm that all too often is the result of a pursuit.

Police pursuits unfortunately do pose significant risk to the community. While ACT Policing officers receive significant training and are highly skilled, the same cannot be said of those drivers seeking to evade police. Statistics show that these drivers are often young and inexperienced. In many instances they are also likely to be affected by alcohol, drugs or both. This combination has all too often led to tragic consequences. In the ACT since 2004 there have been nine people killed in crashes related to police pursuits. Nationally, between 2000 and 2011 there have been an average of 15 crashes and 18 deaths each year related to police pursuits, with 218 deaths in total.

While any death arising from a pursuit is a tragedy, it is particularly distressing that 82 out of these 218 deaths were of innocent parties—either occupants of other cars or bystanders or other road users. These figures include six police officers who lost their lives while seeking to uphold the law and protect their community. Just this weekend we saw another New South Wales police officer lose his life in the course of his traffic duties.

Victorian road safety expert John Lambert has reported that the fatality rate when police vehicles are involved in an accident is about 3,500 times the average. The per

kilometre fatality rate during police pursuits is 23,000 times higher than normal, and police vehicles are involved in crashes at about 300 times the level expected in normal traffic.

We should all reflect on this for a moment. Deaths related to police pursuits are a significant proportion of all road deaths in the ACT. In a jurisdiction where we are committed to a vision zero road safety philosophy, where we aim for zero deaths on the road, where our policies are supposed to acknowledge the fact that every life is precious and unique, it is incumbent upon us to address this significant area of road trauma. These figures highlight the fact that there are very real dangers posed by drivers failing to stop for police and support the need for a reduction in the number of police pursuits in the territory.

Police pursuits have been the subject of several coronial inquiries across Australia. In 2014 a New South Wales coroner described the practice of conducting high speed pursuits as a form of Russian roulette. The coroner also stated that although it is impossible to predict when someone will be killed or injured during a pursuit it is the inevitable result of police pursuits that someone will be.

A Victorian coroner who examined the deaths of teenagers in a pursuit in that state found that while police pursuit policies often incorporated risk management practices, they failed to properly consider the question of what would happen if the police did not stop the drivers of the cars they were pursuing.

Other jurisdictions that have introduced a similar limited police pursuit approach have seen dramatic improvements in road safety. Tasmania virtually eliminated deaths and injuries from police pursuits when it banned pursuits related to traffic offences and stolen cars in 1999. Queensland experienced a significant drop in injuries from pursuits following the introduction of its new policy in 2011. Twenty-three people were injured after pursuits in the year before the new policy was introduced, with only two people suffering injuries in the six months afterwards.

In Victoria there were 145 pursuits a month prior to the introduction of their new policy in 2015, with almost 80 per cent of those pursuits terminated by police because the risk was judged to be far too high. Pursuit numbers have unsurprisingly dropped significantly in that state to fewer than 10 a month since the new policy was introduced.

Some members of the community raise the question as to what will happen if the police do not stop the drivers of the vehicles they are pursuing. I noted Mr Hanson's reaction to the revised pursuit policy was to immediately raise the fear that people would be committing crimes willy-nilly, that police would be powerless and there would be no deterrence. He has made the assertion again today, when he talked about people being able to operate with impunity. We can simply look at the evidence to see that this is not correct. It is an unfounded fear and it is disappointing to see Mr Hanson speak to perpetuate it.

For example, Victoria Police said that the percentage of people who evade police who are charged for their criminal behaviour has remained the same, at about 18 per cent.

In 2001 Tasmania Police introduced a restrictive policy that allowed pursuits only for violent offences such as murder and kidnap. The policy specifically prevents police from pursuing stolen cars. In 2010 Tasmanian Assistant Commissioner Scott Tilyard said:

We recognised that pursuing vehicles is a high-risk activity and the number of people who get killed or injured far outnumbered the people killed or injured as a result of firearms.

He continued:

One of the things that people will say is that if police can't pursue for a whole range of things, then crime will get out of control ... but in our experience that has certainly not been the case.

He went on to say:

In the last 10 years our crime categories have reduced significantly in Tasmania. For example, motor vehicle stealing, which used to be one of the main triggers for pursuits, has actually gone down. Back in 2000, nearly 4,000 cars were stolen each year in Tasmania, last year we just had 1,300 stolen.

Further to those comments by the Tasmanian assistant commissioner, a literature review conducted by the Australian Federal Police in 2007 reported:

Studies show that jurisdictions which have tightened their pursuit policies have seen a decrease in the number of pursuits and a resultant decrease in collisions, injuries and deaths without an increase in people fleeing from police.

These are just a few Australian examples, but evidence from overseas also supports the case that the introduction of a limited pursuits policy will not lead to drivers seeking to avoid punishment by failing to stop for police.

I also note the suggestion that vehicles being pursued in New South Wales will drive into the ACT to avoid punishment. I wish to highlight that a driver who drives into the ACT while evading police will face the same sanction, and in some circumstances a higher punishment in the ACT under the changes made by this bill than they would face in New South Wales.

Consistent with the new policy, vehicles driving into the territory from New South Wales will continue to be pursued where necessary to prevent a serious risk to public health or safety or an offence has been committed or is about to be committed which involves serious injury to or death of a person. There has been no change to police operational practices regarding the management of cross-border pursuits.

Members may also wish to reflect on the fact that one of the most serious crashes in the ACT, which resulted in four deaths, was related to a police pursuit that originated across the border. If we can save lives by reducing the number of pursuits and the risk of pursuits, we are doing a good thing.

The Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 is an important aspect of the police pursuit reforms. It supports the effectiveness of the new limited pursuits model. It will complement ACT Policing's new policy by punishing drivers who fail to stop and providing more effective investigatory powers to identify drivers in the first place. It substantially increases the penalties for failing to stop a motor vehicle for police. Currently, a driver who fails to stop their vehicle when requested or signalled to do so by a police officer faces a maximum of 20 penalty units. That penalty is inadequate and does not reflect community sentiment as to the appropriate punishment that should apply to drivers who fail to stop. The consequences of failing to stop can be stark and the penalty for this conduct should reflect that.

The bill also increases the penalty for the offence of furious, reckless or dangerous driving where the aggravated factor of failing to stop for police is present. Drivers who commit this offence will also face the immediate sanction of licence suspension and vehicle seizure. A police officer who believes on reasonable grounds that a person has committed the offence must give the person an immediate suspension notice. This notice suspends the person's right to drive for 90 days, until stayed by a court or the case is decided, whichever is the earlier.

A person who is convicted of the offence will also receive an additional automatic licence disqualification. This would see the licence of a person convicted of the offence automatically disqualified for at least three months for a first offender or at least 12 months for a repeat offender. The motor vehicle used to commit the offence will also be seized. This provides both an immediate sanction and a deterrent. Seizing the vehicle also prevents the vehicle from being used again for a similar offence.

A police officer who believes on reasonable grounds that the vehicle has been used to commit the offence of failing to stop for police may seize the vehicle. A motor vehicle seized immediately following the offence being committed can be kept until the court deals with the offence or for a maximum of three months for a first offender. In addition, following a person being convicted, the court can order that the motor vehicle be impounded for a maximum of three months for a first offence. Repeat offenders can have their vehicles forfeited to the territory.

Currently, police officers may only enter private property to seize a vehicle with the permission of the owner or occupier. ACT Policing have reported that people are refusing permission for police to enter the property in an attempt to frustrate the strict statutory time frames within which police must act to seize the vehicle.

This bill stops people seeking to avoid facing the proper punishment for their actions by removing the need for police to obtain permission from the owner or occupier to enter premises where the police are seeking to seize a vehicle used to commit the offence of failing to stop for police. Where a police officer has a reasonable belief the motor vehicle is located on the property, the officer may enter the property only for as long as necessary to seize the vehicle or alternatively to determine that the vehicle is not present. A police officer may not enter any building on the property other than a garage, shed or other structure where the police officer believes on reasonable grounds that the motor vehicle is located.

One of the difficulties that police have encountered in the past when investigating police pursuits is that registered owners of the vehicle are not fulfilling their obligation to provide information about the identity of the driver at the time the offence was allegedly committed. The maximum penalty for failing to provide information about who was driving the vehicle is 20 penalty units.

This relatively low maximum penalty creates an incentive for registered operators of vehicles to refuse to provide information about who was driving the vehicle, recognising that often the driver will be the registered operator themselves. The registered operator who knows that there is a very low value maximum penalty for not disclosing the identity of the driver has no incentive to identify the driver, thereby exposing the driver to the penalty for a more serious offence potentially punishable by imprisonment. This is particularly the case where the registered operator or a member of their family or a friend was the driver of the vehicle.

This bill removes that incentive. The registered operator of a vehicle that fails to stop for police who does not provide information about the identity of the driver at the time of the offence will be subject to the same penalty that would apply to a driver convicted of failing to stop for police, namely, 100 penalty units, 12 months imprisonment or both, or, for a repeat offender, 300 penalty units, three years imprisonment or both.

The registered operator who fails to provide information about the driver will also see their licence suspended and on conviction they will be disqualified. Their vehicle will also be seized. This change is crucial to the success of these reforms. In the vast majority of cases where police might consider a pursuit, police have identified the vehicle used to evade them, if not the driver themselves. Police will no longer have any reason to pursue the vast majority of vehicles as these amendments give them strong new laws that will greatly enhance their ability to identify the driver.

To conclude, these changes will make our roads safer. Police pursuits have been repeatedly shown to be one of the highest risk driving practices occurring on our roads. This bill and the associated policy changes introduced by ACT Policing will significantly reduce the number of pursuits on our roads. Let no-one be under any illusion that these changes will mean that drivers will get away with evading police. Both ACT Policing and the government are confident that the changes provide both a suitable deterrent against trying to avoid police and will help ensure that any fleeing drivers are more likely to be identified than they are currently. Drivers who fail to stop for police will face a swift and effective punishment. It may be hours or days later, but it will happen.

I now take this opportunity to present a revised explanatory statement to the bill, which addresses comments made by the scrutiny committee.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Catholic Schools Week

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (4.53): This week, Catholic schools and churches around the ACT and New South Wales are celebrating Catholic Schools Week. As is usual, there is a theme, and this year's theme is "I belong, you belong, we belong". It is a time of reflection, for students in Catholic schools to celebrate their faith and to reflect on others less fortunate in society.

There are numerous events in schools and churches throughout Canberra this week, and I highlight just some that I will be attending in my capacity as shadow minister for education.

Tomorrow, I feel privileged to be able to join the staff and students at St Michael's Kaleen for a breakfast to celebrate this important time in the Catholic school calendar. The St Michael's breakfast is an annual event and one that I look forward to each year and have attended each year since 2009.

On Thursday, I will be at St Mary MacKillop College for a celebratory mass to celebrate the sesquicentenary, the 150th anniversary, of the Sisters of St Joseph. St Mary MacKillop College, at both of its campuses, has played a significant role in the education of young people in the Tuggeranong area. It is a school that I visited frequently when I was the member for Brindabella, and I continue to take a close interest in it. On Friday I will be in attendance at the annual Catholic Schools Week and recognition awards mass at St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka.

The February school census data for this year is not yet available, but the February 2015 data indicated that over 18,600 students in the ACT attend a Catholic school, be it an early childhood school, a systemic Catholic school or one of the independent Catholic schools. I can only assume that the numbers this year will be even bigger.

Collectively, that means that approximately 26 per cent of students are educated in a Catholic school. As we know, the ACT is unique in the percentage of the school population that attend a non-government school. And their numbers are growing. In fact, some Catholic schools and other non-government schools could grow more were it not for the fact that they are at maximum enrolment.

In recent years there has been a new Catholic primary school start in Harrison, and St John Paul college has finally been constructed at Nicholls, after much red tape from the ACT government. In addition there are now seven early learning centres at Curtin, Gowrie, Harrison, Holder, Nicholls, O'Connor and Charnwood.

The vital role that the Catholic Education Office and the Catholic Education Commission play here in the ACT cannot be overstated. It is fortunate for the ACT government that the Catholic Education Commission has seen fit over a number of years to plan ahead and to build schools in areas of increasing demand.

With so many ACT public schools becoming overcrowded and the preschool year being proposed as an optional year of learning for some families who cannot access a place at a local preschool, non-government schooling will play an even greater role in educating Canberra's children. I congratulate the Catholic Education Office, the Catholic Education Commission and Canberra's Catholic schools—their principals, their teachers and their staff—for the great work they do and for their significant contribution to education in the ACT.

Tuggeranong Vikings sports awards

MR WALL (Brindabella) (4.57): I rise this afternoon to speak about the award recipients at the 2015 Tuggeranong Vikings Rugby Union and Sports Club awards that I recently had the privilege of attending, on 19 February, with my colleague Mr Smyth.

The night, conducted in the auditorium at the Tuggeranong Vikings club at Erindale with a packed room, staged several awards. I would like to congratulate all those that were nominated in the various categories for their outstanding contribution to not just the sporting code of their choice but the community more broadly.

I would like to pay particular congratulations to the winners on the night. Chris Currie from the Panthers Volleyball Club was the winner of the Vikings 24/7 Fitness award in recognition of his role as a volunteer. Chris has held the position of president within the club for the past 10 years. He has a passion for volleyball which has also seen him work in coaching roles as well as convening the ACT high schools competition and the primary schools program.

Tuggeranong Netball Association's division 1 state league team were the winners of the Power Kart Raceway award for best team performance. The division 1 team managed to take out the grand final at the ACT state league competition for the first time in 19 years, such a well-deserved win for the club and the team alike.

Valeriy Shuster from Canberra gymnastics took out the club Coca-Cola shield award for outstanding coaching or officiating achievements. Valeriy's coaching saw four of his gymnasts receive podium results at the 2015 nationals. He has been a stalwart of the Tuggeranong gymnastics club.

Felicia Thomas from the Tuggeranong Vikings BMX Club was awarded the ActewAGL shield for outstanding achievement in junior sport in Tuggeranong. Felicia has amassed a number of big wins this year, and is currently the reigning 14-year-old girls ACT state champion and the Australian nationals champion for girls aged 13 to 14 years in the cruiser class, to name just a few of her achievements.

Melinda Ingram from the Vikings touch football association took out the Sportsman's Warehouse HR Heher Shield award for outstanding individual senior sporting achievement. Melinda has represented Australia twice, most recently at the 2015 touch world cup as a member of the over-27 women's team. Melinda also volunteers as a coach and continues to work on player development within her club locally.

In addition to the major award categories, a large number of young sporting talents received sports scholarships provided by the Vikings group of clubs. These scholarships continue the tradition of supporting amateur and emerging professional sports talents not just from the Tuggeranong area but from across the ACT. The kind of support that the grassroots sporting organisations receive from licensed clubs in the ACT, such as Vikings, helps make the social and physical benefits of being involved in our community accessible to all Canberrans and goes a great distance to building the social fabric that is so important to all of us.

As one of the members for Brindabella, it is always great to see the variety of sporting codes and talents that are on show within my electorate. I would like to again congratulate everyone that was nominated in each of the categories on the night. I again pay my congratulations to each of the winners, but also give a very special thank you to the Vikings club, which again hosted the awards and which also are the major sponsor of most of the clubs involved, and to the corporate sponsors, without whose support it would be difficult to have prizes or for the awards night to be held. Once again, my congratulations to all involved in the 2015 Vikings Sports Awards.

Koalas—habitat protection

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Education, Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Road Safety) (5.00): Today I rise to deliver some good news in the Assembly and share it with members. Last week on 1 March, the New South Wales environment minister announced the establishment of four new flora reserves on the New South Wales far south coast which will provide protection to the last known far south coast koala population. Members will wonder why this is relevant to the Assembly, but I will come to that point in a little.

The four areas of state forest are in coastal forests between Bermagui and Tathra; Tanja, Mumbulla, Murrah and Bermagui south of the river have now been declared flora reserves, not only protecting the vital koala habitat but also priceless heritage for the Yuin people, the traditional owners of the land.

Almost 12,000 hectares will be added to the New South Wales forest reserve system to be managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which will significantly boost habitat connectivity throughout the south-east coastal forests. These reserves will support not only the koala population but also 25 threatened species, including the long-nosed potoroo, the yellow-bellied glider and the powerful owl.

I am extremely pleased to hear this good news, as this is one of the areas I campaigned on in the 1990s. There have been campaigns to protect these particular forests for over four decades. In the 1970s the higher areas were protected as national parks—Mumbulla Mountain and Mount Gulaga, or Mount Dromedary—but the lower forested areas with their important tracts of old growth forests have continued to be logged for woodchips. Since the 1990s logging of these coastal forests has been highly controversial with extended community blockades and protests in the area.

Many Canberra residents have participated in these forest blockades and protests over the years, and many people from both this city and this region have taken a very active interest in this issue. Personally I went to these forests in 1995, and my chief of staff, Indra Esguerra, was also heavily involved in these activities. Many other people who call Canberra home have also fought hard to raise the profile of these forests and ensure protection of them. Last week local south-east forest campaign group Chipstop spokesperson Harriet Swift said:

It is especially pleasing that Mumbulla, which is so important for the local Aboriginal community, will now be safe.

Mumbulla logging was found by a court to be illegal in 2011 because it was a gazetted Aboriginal place. The logger contracted there to the Eden chip mill was compensated with \$18,000 to stop logging despite the logging being found to be illegal, but the local Aboriginal community received no compensation for the damage done to their priceless heritage.

Logging proposed for Tanja was deferred twice because of community protests and the discovery of koalas. These reserves are significant to the local Aboriginal community. The New South Wales government will now work with the Aboriginal owners of the neighbouring Biamanga National Park to ensure they have a proper say in how these reserves are managed.

Inalienable freehold title to Biamanga and Gulaga was given to the Yuin people in 2006. With the vesting of title, the parks were rededicated back to the government for the purposes of national parks under 30-year leases. The leases provide Aboriginal owners with financial benefits in the form of rent as well as increased involvement in land and cultural heritage management. Although they are separate national parks, Biamanga National Park and Gulaga form part of one continuous cultural landscape.

The New South Wales government has provided a \$2.5 million subsidy package to facilitate the sourcing of timber from alternative south-east New South Wales state forests. Unfortunately this does not mean full protection for the neighbouring old growth forests in the region, and in fact, given that the woodchip quotas to the Eden chip mill have not been reduced, logging will undoubtedly intensify in these other forests.

Environmentalists, and the Greens, would have preferred to see the forests receive the strongest protection as a national park. However, the creation of flora reserves is certainly a wonderful first step. On behalf of the ACT Greens, I would like to congratulate all those conservationists who have campaigned so hard over so many years to protect these wonderful forests of the south coast.

Clean Up Australia Day

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.05): I would like to take this opportunity today to talk about Clean Up Australia Day which took place over the weekend and to thank the thousands of volunteers around Australia who joined in the clean-up efforts to help clean our environment of thousands of tonnes of rubbish for Clean Up Australia Day.

Clean Up Australia Day has been around for 26 years now. Ian Kiernan famously started Clean Up Australia Day. Over 682,000 volunteers rallied around Australia this year. As a progress report late on Sunday night, there were about 7,117 locations across Australia that were being cleaned up. Up until this weekend, Australians had donated more than 31.2 million hours towards removing accumulated rubbish from their local communities through clean up Australia activities.

On Sunday I was down at Lake Tuggeranong with quite a large group of people who were cleaning up around the outskirts of the lake. I would like to thank all of those volunteers who took part on Sunday at Lake Tuggeranong. We have many outstanding people in Brindabella in my electorate who are only too happy to volunteer their time, and they make valuable contributions to our community and make our area a better place to live and work and play. They really deserve our thanks.

At the clean-up I went to at Lake Tuggeranong there were, I think, 46 people who turned up on Sunday morning, including a number of cub leaders and the sea scouts, and they filled approximately 50 bags of rubbish. At the end there was also a barbecue sponsored by the Tuggeranong Community Council. I would like to say thank you to the Tuggeranong Lake Carers for organising the clean up down there at Lake Tuggeranong, particularly Glenys, Beverly, Bill, Lesley and all the other people.

Initiatives like Clean Up Australia Day provide us with a great opportunity to really help make a difference in our local parks, lakes, bushlands and streets and help us to keep Canberra's unique landscape places where plants, wildlife and people can thrive. According to the Clean Up Australia Day website, approximately 80 per cent of the rubbish that is picked up on Clean Up Australia Day is recyclable material. If only those people that dumped those bits of rubbish had put them into the recycling bins we would all be a lot better off. But as you well know, during Clean Up Australia Day the rubbish is sorted into general rubbish and recycling bags—the yellow bags are for recyclable materials and the white bags are for the others.

It was a great event down there at Lake Tuggeranong. It was a pretty hot morning, but congratulations to those people who turned up and helped. I look forward to joining the Lake Tuggeranong carers and others around the Tuggeranong area for their event again next year.

Canberra area theatre awards

MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.08): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to congratulate and to acknowledge all those involved in the Canberra area theatre awards. The

awards for 2015 were announced at a gala event held on Saturday, 20 February at the School of Music at Llewellyn Hall. This was the 21st year of the awards, so a special birthday celebration was held following the awards. I, along with my colleagues Andrew Wall, Brendan Smyth and Giulia Jones, was privileged to be part of the audience for the occasion.

As I have done in earlier years, I would like to quickly race through the winners for the event.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are practised at it, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Mary Porter professional development scholarship, Kyle Nozza of Wollongong; best set designer for a play, Michael Sparks, Canberra rep society, and Sam Lloyd, Bay Theatre Players; best set designer for a musical, Amy, Mal and Donna Copeland, *Little Shop of Horrors*, So Popera Productions; best costume designer for a play, Anne Kay, *Casanova*, Canberra Repertory Society; best costume designer for a musical or variety show, Fiona Leach, *Mary Poppins*, Free-Rain Theatre Company; best costume designer for a school or youth production, Jo Howard, Daramalan Theatre Company, Canberra; best lighting designer, Adam Loughlin, Peter Copeland, Rosie Goderie and Nadina Zappia, *Alchemy*, Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts; technical achievement, the School of Arts, Creativity and Innovation team for the construction of the elephant from Canberra Grammar School and James McPherson, *Into The Woods*, Dramatic Productions, Canberra; John Thomson magic moment of theatre award, collapse of the pyramid from the Canberra Grammar School and reveal of the giant in the QE bed, *The BFG*, Child Players ACT; best original work, Cate Clelland and Fraser Findlay, original settings of songs, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Canberra rep; best original work for a school or youth production, Chris Richards, Rosie Goderie, Nadina Zappia and Adam Loughlin, original concept and concept development, *Alchemy*, Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts; best ensemble in a play, the cast, *Skin*, Canberra Youth Theatre; best ensemble in a musical, Nell Shephard, Crystal, Liberty Thirsk, Chiffon, and Libby Malcolm, Ronnette, the vocal trio, *Little Shop of Horrors*, Pigs Fly Productions; best orchestra for a school or youth production, *Hairspray*, Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts; best orchestra, *Into The Woods*, Dramatic Productions; Patricia Kelson encouragement award, John Truscott, for dance, *The Good, the Bad and the Downright Cute*, Legs dance, Canberra; best youth actor in a featured role in a play, Jack Overton, Frederick Fellowes/Philip Brent, *Noises Off*, Lake Tuggeranong College; best youth actor in a featured role in a musical, Matthew Hajner, Edna Turnblad, *Hairspray*, Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts; best youth actress in a featured role in a play, Annalivia Keaveny, “Death as a Beggar-Woman”, *Blood Wedding*, Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts; best youth actress in a featured role in a musical, Nina Wood as Motormouth Maybelle, *Hairspray*, Hawker College; best youth actor in a leading role in a play, Andrew Taylor as Lloyd Fellowes, *Noises Off*, Lake Tuggeranong College; best youth actress in a leading role in a play, Glynis Stokes, Lucy Evans, *The Art of Teaching Nothing*, Free-Rain Theatre Company; best youth actor in a leading role in a musical, Jacob Sgouros, Peter Allen, *The Boy From Oz*, Chevalier College; best youth actress in a leading role in a musical, Isabel Clarke, Judy Garland, *The Boy From Oz*, Chevalier College, Bowral; best variety performance by an individual or ensemble, Craig Schofield, Terry Schofield,

Dave Bracher and Tony Clarke in *Jersey Boys*, Monaro Committee for Cancer Research; best dance performance by an individual or ensemble, Mara Glass, *The Candy Man*, *The Chocolate Factory*, Classical Ballet Centre; best actor in a featured role in a play, Jesse Tankard, Ben Hecht, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, Spectrum Theatre Group; best actor in a featured role in a musical, Jack Martin, Lefou, *Beauty and the Beast*, Griffith Regional Theatre; best actress in a featured role in a play, Yanina Clifton, *The Crucible*, Canberra rep; Lola Nixon best actress in a featured role in a musical, Christine Wallace, *Mary Poppins*, Free-Rain Theatre Company; best actor in a leading role in a play, Simon Lovatt, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, Spectrum Theatre Group, and Tony Turner, *Casanova*, Canberra rep; best actor in a leading role in a musical, Brent Dolahenty, *Legally Blonde*, Wagga Wagga City Council; best actress in a leading role in a play, Jo Darby, *Shirley Valentine*, Wagga Wagga School of Arts Inc; best actress in a leading role in a musical, Meredith Adams, *Mary Poppins*, Bidgee Theatre Productions, Wagga Wagga; best choreographer, Trish Brown, Kym Darmody, Caitlin Shilg and Genevieve Hall, St Clare's College, Canberra; best musical director for a school or youth production, Jarrod Schindler, *The Buddy Holly Story*, Marist College, Canberra; best director of a school or youth play, Emma Wood, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, Narrabundah College, Canberra; best director of a school or youth musical, Simon Hughes, Canberra Grammar School; best musical director, Damien Slingsby, Dramatic Productions, Canberra; best director of a play, Jarrad West, Canberra rep.

I shall continue the rest tomorrow.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.13pm.