



Debates

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Legislative Assembly for the ACT

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Tuesday, 3 May 2016

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Tuesday, 3 May 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 custodians, and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 44

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (10.01): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 44, dated 2 May 2016, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Scrutiny report 44 contains the committee's comments on three bills, 21 pieces of subordinate legislation and four government responses. It also included comment on the government's response to the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill 2016.

The committee also considered a letter from the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change concerning the proposed introduction and passage of the Renewable Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The committee thanks the minister for advising the committee of the minister's intention, but notes that the time frame does not provide adequate opportunity for the committee to consider the bill against its terms of reference.

It is acknowledged that from time to time urgent legislation will come before the Assembly which must be dealt with expeditiously and, as a consequence, will not have the benefit of comment from the scrutiny committee during debate in the Assembly. However, such occasions should be rare and exceptional. Regrettably, Madam Speaker, this was the fourth occasion this year that a minister has written to the committee seeking dispensation of the scrutiny committee's obligations under its terms of reference and the standing orders.

The committee also observes that very few proposed government amendments to bills are referred to the committee, as required by standing order 182A. Rather, the government's common practice has been to seek the Assembly's agreement to suspend standing orders to deal with its proposed amendments, purportedly because they are urgent or minor and technical. The committee reminds the government that it should refer proposed amendments to it and that the appropriate time frame is at least 14 calendar days before it is proposed to move an amendment.

On a related procedural issue, ministers have requested that the committee agree to dispense with the relevant standing orders. The committee reminds ministers that such decisions are matters for the Assembly, not the committee. Scrutiny report 44 was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services— Standing Committee Statement by chair

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (10.05): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services relating to a correction of a tabled report. On 5 April of this year the committee tabled its report No 12 entitled *Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2014-2015*. The report as tabled included five recommendations in the text but only four recommendations in the summary of recommendations. Therefore, I seek leave to table a correction to fix this error.

Leave granted.

MS BURCH: I present the following paper:

Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services—Standing
Committee—Report 12—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2014-2015—
Correction.

Ministerial delegation to Singapore and China Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.05): I would like to report to the Assembly on a ministerial delegation that I led to Singapore and China between 11 and 18 April this year.

The primary objectives of the Singapore leg of the mission were to consolidate the relationship between the ACT government and Singapore Airlines ahead of the commencement of direct flights in September; to gain an insight into the scale of Singapore Airlines' operations and their business model prior to the commencement of services; to discuss Canberra's future economic, social and cultural agenda and potential collaboration opportunities with the Singapore government; to promote Canberra's strengths and capabilities in world-leading research and development, and attract the attention of Singapore companies to Canberra's innovation landscape; to support and collaborate on mutually beneficial activities for Canberra and Singapore businesses; and to promote the benefits of direct international flights through media engagement.

The primary objective of the mission to China was to attend the Australia Week in China activities, which was the largest ever trade delegation that has left Australian shores. The mission also focused on promoting opportunities to grow Canberra's inbound tourism market with China and international education through partnerships with universities in the ACT.

Before I detail the mission's activities, Madam Speaker, allow me to reinforce the significance of the Australia-Singapore relationship. Singapore is Australia's fifth largest trading partner and the largest trade and investment partner in ASEAN, with total bilateral goods and services trade of \$30.2 billion in 2014. Investment is a very important element of the bilateral relationship. Merchandise trade of \$21 billion in 2014 underpins the trade relationship.

Singapore is Australia's eighth largest export market with merchandise exports of \$8.4 billion in 2014. Total services trade of \$9.1 billion in 2014 reflects our developed services markets. Services exports of \$3.6 billion in 2014 consisted largely of business services such as research and development, professional and management consulting, transport and technical and trade-related services. Services imports of \$5.5 billion consisted of transport services and professional-management consulting.

Singapore's investment in Australia is substantial. As of 2014, Singapore was Australia's fifth largest foreign investor with a stock of \$80 billion of investment, or just short of three per cent of the total foreign investment stock in Australia. Total investment from Singapore has grown at an annual average of 15.4 per cent over the past five years.

Singaporean investment has traditionally been concentrated in real estate, and in particular tourism infrastructure. However, significant investments in power assets and agribusiness have been driven by energy and food security priorities. Australia is the third largest investment destination for Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, accounting for 14 per cent of its total invested funds.

Madam Speaker, Australian businesses in Singapore span a diverse range of sectors, reflecting the strong and sophisticated domestic market and Singapore's role as a regional hub for commercial operations. Importantly, though, there is a body of Australian experience and knowledge already well established in Singapore that we can and will tap into to ensure Canberra businesses find the export markets they need in Singapore itself but also beyond to key markets such as China and India.

Singapore's economic strategy to position itself as the ASEAN hub for commercialisation and innovation, transport and logistics, and financial services provides commercial opportunities for ACT businesses to access both regional and global supply chains. That is why it is important to engage with Singapore government officials as well as the business, tourism and education sectors.

My government, in partnership with the Canberra business community, has worked hard to build a strong relationship with Singapore over several years. The relationship at a business and government level between Singapore and the ACT is strong, and the strength of that relationship is evidenced by securing direct international air services between Singapore and Canberra and Canberra and Wellington.

This is a game changer for our city if ever there was one. The commencement of these services will provide significant opportunities to grow two-way trade and investment between Singapore and Canberra as well as a foundation reason to explore cultural, social and educational links to a number of cities in the region.

This trade mission was built around a diverse program that will promote opportunities for education, cultural, social, trade and investment links with Canberra and the broader region. The ACT government will continue to proactively engage with the Singapore government and the business community in the lead-up to and beyond the commencement of direct aviation services.

My first day of official engagements in Singapore involved a briefing from Australia's High Commissioner to Singapore, Mr Philip Green. This covered a range of current issues regarding the bilateral relationship between Australia and Singapore and provided a useful platform for the remainder of our visit. I would like to again thank the high commissioner for his invaluable assistance and, indeed, all of the DFAT officials who have assisted the ACT.

I must admit to a degree of excitement in anticipation of my next official engagement, which was at the Singapore Airlines training centre, to gain an insight into the level of training Singapore Airlines flight and cabin crew go through prior to entering service. The Singapore Airlines training centre was officially opened in 1993 by Singapore's then deputy prime minister.

All Singapore Airlines staff, both ground and flight crew, go through training at the centre every year to ensure they maintain a high level of knowledge and accreditation, helping Singapore Airlines continue to provide a level of service that other airlines talk about.

Singapore Airlines currently employs just short of 10,000 crew. As we are all aware, on 20 January this year their CEO, Mr Goh, announced at a media conference held at Canberra Airport the decision to fly direct international services from Singapore to Canberra and Canberra to Wellington. These services commence from Singapore on 20 September 2016.

Cooperative marketing campaigns will be undertaken in partnership with Tourism Australia and Singapore Airlines to stimulate inbound leisure and corporate traffic from New Zealand, from Singapore and from hundreds of connecting destinations including throughout South-East Asia, India, China, Europe and the United Kingdom.

The ACT government has committed \$1.6 million in our 2015-16 budget over two years to the airline stimulus fund. The fund will support the new tourism cooperative marketing activities and the industry growth partnership plans.

My time in Singapore focused on continuing to build the momentum in our relationship with the Singapore government to support bilateral engagement. My meeting with Singapore's Senior Minister of State, Josephine Teo, reinforced the opportunities that will extend from Canberra and Singapore being directly connected by these new international services. The meeting discussed land transport network policy frameworks and included discussions regarding Singapore's experiences in developing an efficient public transport network.

I was also pleased to witness Canberra start-up Mineral Carbonation International—MCI—sign a \$100 million memorandum of understanding with Singapore company ArmorShield Holdings, which has extensive networks and experience in doing business in China. MCI is a local Canberra company that now enjoys global success. By developing technology that stores carbon dioxide in carbonates used in building materials, MCI is partnering with industry leaders around the world to reduce construction and building industry emissions.

The MOU is a platform for MCI to grow its business networks in Singapore and China. MCI's success is a very practical example of why our city is a true knowledge capital and enhances our standing as a clever, connected and creative city. These are attributes that are attractive business propositions to offshore investors looking for opportunities in our city. It was an honour to witness this Canberra company's technology developments and I was proud to have the opportunity to promote MCI's successes, together with our city as a place of innovation and entrepreneurship.

I will be very surprised if we do not hear a lot more about this company and their success in China in reducing levels of air pollution in that country. This little Canberra company will play a key role in the global fight against climate change—yet another Canberra success story.

My first day in Singapore ended with a networking reception hosted by the Australian high commissioner to celebrate the establishment of the Canberra-Singapore direct flight route. The reception was attended by key senior Singapore government officials and business executives, including both the chairman and CEO of Singapore Airlines.

I took the opportunity to speak about the bigger opportunities to connect with Canberra businesses, regional food and wine makers, educational services and the enormous knowledge assets that our city offers. I think our newly appointed ANU Vice-Chancellor and Nobel Laureate Professor Brian Schmidt summed it up beautifully when he said to me recently, “We will be six hours from Singapore and eight minutes from the airport.”

On day two of the mission I attended the launch of the Canberra International Support Network and was pleased to witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Canberra Business Chamber and the Singapore Business Federation, which will focus on promoting expansion of trade, tourism and business between Singapore and the Canberra region.

The Canberra International Support Network is a new initiative for Canberra businesses to share knowledge and opportunities. The first International Support Network will focus on Singapore, with other trade partners to follow. It will enable those wanting to use direct flights as a springboard to export to Singapore and beyond to learn from those Canberra businesses that have already been successful.

The new support network is a demonstration of Canberra's sense of community and local businesses' commitment to collaborate to make our city more competitive. It aims to support our local businesses to expand overseas, whilst also drawing further investment into the Canberra region. It will play a key role in ensuring business in the capital region takes full advantage of the new capital express route.

The Singapore Business Federation is a highly influential organisation representing 22,500 Singapore companies as well as key local and foreign business chambers, and it champions the interests of the Singapore business community in the areas of trade, investment and industrial relations. Its membership base comprises all registered Singapore companies with a share capital of more than half a million Singapore dollars.

Partnering with Singapore's pre-eminent business chamber is also a fantastic outcome that will open up a range of new and exclusive opportunities for our local businesses to engage with Asia. In addition to trade, investment and tourism, the relationship between the ACT and Singapore also includes government cooperation.

For the past two years the ACT government has been working with Singapore government agencies to share ideas on developing support for vulnerable families. The relationship began with a visit to the ACT by the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development in January 2014 as part of a five-day study trip to Australia. During this trip the ACT government's better services team shared with the ministry its work on the strengthening families program that supports families with complex needs. This cooperation has continued and is helping both governments continue to develop policies to support vulnerable people in our communities.

To date the strengthening families program has supported 65 families, including 293 individual family members. As part of my Singapore program, I had the opportunity to meet with senior officials from the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development to discuss ways to continue this cooperative model. I was advised that the program has been extremely successful in Singapore, enhanced by common approaches and principles to supporting vulnerable people of our respective societies. Formal evaluation results of Singapore's pilot program will be available in mid-2017.

My delegation then travelled to Shanghai to attend the Australian government's largest ever trade mission to China—Australia Week in China 2016. Before discussing that week, Madam Speaker, please allow me to highlight the significance of the Australia-China relationship. China is, as many people are aware, Australia's largest two-way trading partner with trade of around \$150 billion annually, and China is the world's second largest economy. China is Australia's largest export market for both goods and services, accounting for nearly a third of our country's total exports, and it is, of course, as many are aware, a growing source of foreign investment. Australia's and China's economic ties will be significantly deepened through the China-Australia free trade agreement, which entered into force on 20 December 2015.

ChAFTA will unlock substantial new benefits for Australian businesses by giving unprecedented access to the world's second largest economy and greatly enhancing our competitive position in key areas such as agriculture, services, premium food and wine, technology and infrastructure investment. Over 85 per cent of the value of Australia's goods to China will now enter duty free, rising to 93 per cent after four years and 95 per cent when ChAFTA is fully implemented.

Australia Week in China was delivered across numerous Chinese cities between 11 and 15 April. Led by the federal Minister for Trade and Investment, Steven Ciobo MP, the week attracted a high level of federal, state and territory ministerial participation and comprised around 1,000 delegates. Thirty ACT businesses participated in various streams of the week, showcasing the best of the Canberra region to China.

With more than \$150 billion in annual two-way trade, China is now Australia's number one export market, our largest source of international students, our most valuable tourism market, our fastest growing source of foreign direct investment and our largest agricultural goods market. The International Monetary Fund predicts China will grow by 6.3 per cent in 2016, which is almost double the latest global growth projections of 3.2 per cent.

To put this in perspective, and to quote the Hon John Brumby, the National President and Chairman of the Australia China Business Council, during his opening remarks at Australia Week in China:

6.5 per cent growth means around \$US700 billion of new growth per year. To put it another way, China is creating a new economy the size of New Zealand's every 90-100 days.

A new economy the size of New Zealand's every 90 to 100 days. Madam Speaker, opportunities to attract Chinese travellers to Canberra via Singapore were on my agenda during the visit to Shanghai. My China program included meetings with the Chairman of China Eastern Airlines, Mr Liu Shaoyong. The meeting was attended by the Hon Richard Colbeck, the federal Minister for Tourism and International Education, along with the Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk.

The meeting was an opportunity to seek China Eastern's views on plans to expand its Australian operations and to establish networks with senior China Eastern officials to assist future engagement regarding the opportunities that Canberra presents for direct services into our city. China Eastern is based in Shanghai. It carries over 65 million travellers annually and ranks in the world's top 10 airlines in terms of passenger volumes. China Eastern is growing its international routes to diversify intensifying competition within the Chinese domestic aviation market and the growth of the country's domestic high-speed rail.

Madam Speaker, China Eastern currently operates services from Shanghai to Brisbane and Cairns during the Chinese New Year peak season and to Sydney and Melbourne, as well as a service between Nanjing and Sydney three times per week through its strategic alliance with Qantas. In June 2015 Tourism Australia signed a new, extended three-year MOU with China Eastern where both parties will invest up to \$11.5 million over the life of the arrangement.

Madam Speaker, China remains the ACT's largest international market for tourism. For the year ended December 2015 the ACT recorded a 12.1 per cent increase in Chinese visitors over the previous year. With these facts well in mind, during my

meeting with senior representatives from Singapore Airlines in their north Asia and China markets as well as Tourism Australia's representative for the entire north Asia region, we discussed opportunities to grow Canberra's inbound tourism market from China through Singapore Airlines' direct flights to our city.

More tourists and more inbound visitation means more economic activity and more jobs for Canberrans, which is one of the many ways that direct flights will boost our economy. There are great opportunities to grow visitor numbers from China, Hong Kong and other north Asian countries by working strategically with significant partners like Singapore Airlines and Tourism Australia.

My official Australia Week in China program included participation in the gala showcase event for the week hosted by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, where the thousand Australian delegates were joined by an equivalent number of Chinese delegates for the largest event of its kind delivered as part of an Australian government trade mission. Lunch for 2,000 people is something quite extraordinary. It provided a unique opportunity for the members of the Canberra delegation to engage with a broad spectrum of Chinese investors, businesspeople and government officials.

Shaw Vineyard Estate was one of the Canberra exporters at the event and is one of our region's top wine exporters. Shaw will be just one stop away from China come September, where they have recently opened a retail shopfront. Shaw is focusing on developing an export market into Asia, marketing to China and Hong Kong, the Philippines, Taiwan and South Korea, and is aiming to have an established export market within the next three years.

Growing our economy's exports is an important part of the government's vision and is strongly supported by our business development strategy. Trade and investment with China is central to our country's future prosperity, and Chinese markets offer a relatively new and large market for expansion for our local businesses.

During my visit to Shanghai I also joined University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen Parker at a series of meetings with the East China University of Science and Technology. The university is a research university founded in 1952. Originally specialising in chemistry, it has evolved to offer a range of courses in science, engineering, information management, economics, business, the arts and law.

A range of postgraduate masters programs have been established between the East China University of Science and Technology and the University of Canberra. At the meeting with President Jing-ping Qu of ECUST, Professor Parker explored avenues for further engagement between the two universities, particularly in the areas of sports and health science.

During the last leg of my trip, in Hong Kong, I met with senior executives of Cathay Pacific freight and DHL Freight to promote the opportunity for the two organisations to leverage the geographical potential of Canberra Airport as an inbound freight gateway. The ACT government and Canberra Airport have successfully demonstrated that the region presents a viable commercial international passenger proposition, and we are convinced that the same is true for freight.

The first national or international freight operator that recognises the location benefits of Canberra will, indeed, gain a significant competitive advantage. Canberra Airport provides Cathay Pacific freight and DHL Freight with the opportunity to improve their business operations by virtue of substantial market coverage, easy access, great service levels and reduced costs of operation.

Canberra is perfectly situated to be the trade hub for all the quality goods produced in our region, whether it be dairy, meat or seafood. Importantly, for all those businesses that currently export through Sydney, Canberra will represent a much cheaper, more efficient and faster way of getting their valuable cargo to the market. Of course, these flights open up massive opportunities for companies to export for the first time.

In conclusion, whilst this delegation is consistent with previous delegations in terms of aiming to establish strong and enduring connections between Canberra and our international partners, this delegation had on offer the added benefit for the first time in the territory's history of direct international flights into our city.

During this delegation I could proudly declare that Canberra is now truly a global city, that the rest of the world, but particularly importantly Singapore and China, are now finally on our doorstep, and that Canberra and our international partners will stand to gain from the significant positive economic and social impacts in terms of trade, investment, higher education and tourism.

It is important to highlight that the very tangible and enormous benefit and opportunity that Canberra and the region will enjoy from these flights has not come about by accident; it has come about through the hard work of a range of individuals and groups. Stephen Byron and the Canberra international airport obviously played a leading and invaluable role, working side by side with my government in securing these flights. This breakthrough moment for our city was only possible because the airport and the government saw the opportunity and we did the hard, hard work over the long haul in more ways than one to make this a compelling case.

The business community has also demonstrated the tremendous value of establishing direct links between international centres of commerce and Canberra's high tech, high value and high achieving businesses. This combined effort has taken years and six trade missions to Singapore. This hard work has paid off, but nothing can replace, of course, face-to-face engagement on the ground, which is why I have put personally so much time and effort into this over many years.

The relationship building which is essential to any deal takes time and it takes money. Every government of every colour in every jurisdiction nationally and internationally conducts these trade missions, and they are worth it. They are worth it for the governments that conduct them, the businesses that join them and the countries and cities that receive them. It is how cities become internationally engaged and it is how trade is conducted.

My government will continue to engage internationally. We will continue to pursue opportunities that will benefit Canberra, and we will continue to boast and brag about

how good, how competitive and how clever our businesses are. And we will definitely continue to see success and see that success translate into economic activity, into jobs, into revenue and into social, sporting and cultural benefits for Canberra and for our region. That will remain my personal mission and the mission of my government. I present the following paper:

Ministerial Delegation to Singapore and China—April 2016—Ministerial statement, 3 May 2016.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Multicultural communities—funding and support 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) (10.31): I would like to begin by thanking Mrs Jones for her motion and for this opportunity to speak about the initiatives, programs and policies the ACT government has in place to recognise, protect, engage and encourage our growing multicultural community.

The ACT government is very proud to promote Canberra as an inclusive and cohesive society. This is because our identity as a city has been proudly and profoundly shaped by each person who makes our city their home.

I am reminded of the stories I grew up with of postwar migration, where more than 100,000 people came to this region from over 30 countries to work on the Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme. These individuals and families have helped to shape this region, just as newly arrived migrants continue to shape this region today.

It is amazing to think that Canberra now has residents from nearly 200 countries, with over a quarter of Canberra's total population born overseas. Each person represents a variety of faiths, cultures, histories and experiences that we see represented every day in friendships and in community life. The social harmony we see is not achieved without action. This government is committed to proactively addressing racism and intolerance to ensure all Canberrans can benefit from an inclusive community. Indeed, we have a strong legacy of proactively supporting a culturally inclusive community.

The first multicultural summit in 2005 provided an opportunity for our cultural communities to have a voice in shaping government policy. This summit was instrumental in the development of the 2006-09 ACT multicultural strategy. Three years on we continued this good work with a new multicultural strategy for 2009-12, again based on the rich input of our cultural communities.

Of course it would be remiss of me not to highlight our most recent achievements under the 2010-15 ACT multicultural strategy. In 2011 we launched the ACT services access card, an Australian first, to provide improved and easier access to a range of ACT government services for asylum seekers. This card enables people to access services such as concessional public transport, education, and legal and healthcare services, which are all essential supports for people in these circumstances.

We also launched the many voices ACT language policy, which expresses the importance of effective communication to ensure that all people can participate in our city's cultural, social and economic life. This includes providing access to interpretation and translation services, supports to develop English language skills, and valuing the acquisition of languages other than English in order to celebrate cultural diversity.

We also invested \$1.8 million in 2013-14 for the introductory English centre at Wanniasa Hills primary as well as providing more than \$1.1 million to community groups through our multicultural grants programs during 2010-13. These funds were used to support a diverse range of activities, including community language classes, multicultural radio programs, and programs aimed at enhancing social cohesion and harmony in our city.

We also know that our mainstream services are essential in providing accessible and inclusive supports for our community, including our culturally diverse community members. I am very pleased that the multicultural health policy "Towards culturally appropriate and inclusive services: a coordinating framework for ACT health 2014-18", was also launched under the 2010-15 ACT multicultural strategy.

Of course, I cannot miss the incredibly valuable work experience and support program that has supported around 700 individuals from refugee and culturally diverse backgrounds since the turn of this century. This program provides meaningful work experience, networks and professional confidence to assist individuals to access employment opportunities in our city.

Along with this impressive list of achievements, we were also the first jurisdiction to cement our commitment to social inclusion in law, with the introduction of the ACT Human Rights Act. This landmark achievement ensures legal protections for all people to live free from discrimination. We were also the first Australian jurisdiction to declare a refugee welcome zone, just last year, which was a pinnacle moment for this government and for our city. I am very pleased to report that the ACT government is ready to welcome refugees to our great city. Our networks of support services are ready to offer their support as well.

Recently, I met with over 40 representatives of local refugee service providers to understand their capacity and readiness to assist those fleeing devastating circumstances in Syria and Iraq. I am confident that Canberra is well placed to meet the needs for these refugees. In fact, in April I was pleased to welcome 36 Iraqi refugees—14 children, 10 women and 12 men. I am very proud to share that these new community members were welcomed into our city with a personal pick-up from the airport and a special reception and orientation by Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services.

Madam Speaker, radio has long been one of the most effective ways that communities around the world can stay in touch. This continues to be the case today, and for migrants radio is important in keeping up with the news from their county of birth as well as their new home. This is why the ACT government invests in hundreds of community radio programs, an important way to combat social isolation for those who do not speak English well, or at all.

Hundreds of community groups have implemented projects through our multicultural grants programs. Since the turn of the century approximately 3,000 projects have been undertaken by community groups to help build our harmonious and inclusive society.

I am particularly pleased to see this commitment to social harmony being expressed in initiatives such as the *One Canberra Reference Group Report*, which I was happy to table in this Assembly on 27 October 2015. That report is unique because it is a whole-of-community action plan that will help us build and promote a community identity based on a set of values that have been defined by, and for, all Canberrans. That in itself will be the key—promoting the values that our community works together to define.

Just last year I was proud to table the 2015-20 ACT multicultural framework and first action plan. This framework was once more developed collaboratively with an extensive consultation process that drew on the collective ideas of hundreds of people across our community. The plan is built around three broad themes: accessible and responsive services; citizenship, participation and cohesion; and capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity.

The framework gives full expression to the ACT government's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, maintaining social cohesion, building social capital, and minimising social exclusion for culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans. Some key actions that will be progressed under this framework include a focus on young people through leadership and recognition initiatives, enhancing access to information for refugees, and further investment in social cohesion initiatives outlined in the *One Canberra Reference Group Report*.

None of this vital work would be possible without the partnerships we have with our multicultural community groups and organisations. In fact, every cultural community in the ACT plays a critical role when it comes to welcoming and supporting new members of our community. These partnerships have grown over time and cannot be underestimated.

In 2005 it was this government that recognised the immense value of these partnerships, culminating in the establishment of our very own Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre. Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre for the past 10 years has been of great use to growing multicultural communities, and it is no secret that in recent times the venue has reached full capacity. Due to the growth of emerging communities, and going into the future, we have started to look at other more appropriate and cost-effective options that would provide local multicultural groups with appropriate venues to conduct their activities.

The centre serves as a venue for multicultural peak bodies and cultural groups that support their respective members throughout the year. The centre is also home to Muslim prayers on Fridays, a Chinese seniors group, a Tongan language school, an Italian choir, English language classes, a multicultural youth centre and a range of other activities that benefit over 120,000 participants and visitors each year. And, appropriately, I am very proud to say it is home to over 26 Australian citizenship ceremonies every year.

In December 2015 this remarkable community space in the heart of our great city celebrated its 10th birthday. Indeed, the centre has grown to be a highly regarded community asset, symbolically in the heart of the capital city of Australia, for the numerous multicultural groups that make use of this facility. Likewise, our multicultural community has grown in the past 10 years, and while the centre continues to be a contemporary landmark for Canberra, we know that many of our cultural groups require more space to accommodate their annual cultural events and other activities.

For this reason, we are exploring options to support our cultural groups' need for physical space into the future. For example, we are looking to increase the capacity of community facilities such as the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre by considering the relocation of non-community activities that are undertaken in these venues. We are also looking at ways school halls and gymnasiums around Canberra can be better utilised for community use when not needed by schools on weekends and after hours. We are also looking at existing grants programs to provide the funding for community groups to gain easier access to suitable venues for their activities in Canberra.

As I have mentioned, our community partners play a critical role in delivering our harmonious community. I would like to talk about some of the organisations that we fund. Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services is funded to provide support and settlement services for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The service assists new arrivals to find accommodation, employment, training and education services, family support, financial management and community engagement.

Multicultural Youth Services provides supports to young asylum seekers, migrants, refugees and people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This service provides information, referral, consumer protection and financial literacy programs, participation in tailored school holiday programs and coordination of activities and play groups for young parents.

The ACT Canberra language schools association is funded to promote advocacy and support for community-based language schools in the ACT, and to provide additional support to the community language school to enable additional training for languages other than English teachers in the ACT.

The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum receives funding to support its advocacy work for the benefit of Canberra's multicultural community. An important component of this funding supports a multicultural network for culturally and linguistically diverse women, focusing on specific issues such as preventing discrimination and domestic violence.

Companion House is funded to work with adults and children who seek safety in our great community from persecution, torture and other war-related trauma. This service provides counselling, migration support and community development for new arrivals in the ACT.

All of these services provide important links to both culturally specific groups and mainstream services in recognition that cultural inclusion is everyone's business, and should not be the sole responsibility of multicultural-specific services. Collectively, this group of services provides a range of activities and programs aimed at strengthening social cohesion which are delivered through effective partnerships as I have outlined today. As I have said, it is these partnerships that enable barriers to be addressed to ensure equality of access to services and opportunities for our multicultural community.

One of the reasons why I am so proud to have the role of minister for multicultural affairs in this government is that I get to see, each and every day, the wonderful and inspiring work being undertaken through our community to celebrate our multicultural diversity. I am confident that as a community we can lead the nation, not only in our diversity but also in how we utilise all the benefits of that diversity to build a cohesive and welcoming Canberra. I have that confidence because the citizens that make up this great city demand and expect this to continue.

I present the following paper:

Multicultural communities—Funding and support—Ministerial statement, 3 May 2016.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Renewable Energy Legislation 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) (10.46): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am very pleased to present to the Assembly today the Renewable Energy Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill will place the territory at the forefront of action to address

climate change, both across Australian jurisdictions and among the leading regions worldwide. It also ensures that the government is protected against uncertainty towards reaching our 40 per cent emissions reduction target by the year 2020.

This bill contains amendments to the Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act 2011, which I will refer to as the FiT act, and the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010, or the climate change act. Both will see the ACT achieve 100 per cent renewable energy by the year 2020 and will set a new principal target of carbon neutrality by 2050.

These two amendments are placed together due to the interconnectedness of the climate change act with the FiT act. The climate change act sets the targets for emission reductions that the government must achieve, while the FiT act sets out the technical parameters of how this can be achieved through our procurement of large-scale renewable energy.

To give the Assembly some context, I will briefly outline the process that has led to this bill being presented today. Firstly, in November last year we celebrated the fifth year of operation of the climate change act. This triggered the commencement of a review of the operations of the act, as required under section 26.

Simultaneously, global leaders from 195 nations met in Paris for the 21st United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—Conference of the Parties, otherwise known as COP21. This successful meeting saw an agreement on enhanced action on climate change by all nations present. This agreement is known as the Paris agreement, and was opened for signature on 22 April this year in New York. Importantly, this agreement states that the parties agree to aim to undertake rapid reduction, in accordance with the best available science, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century.

In assessing the operations of our own legislation, the review compared the content of the act with the current climate change policy context. It also compared the technological advances in renewable technology with the appropriateness of our targets. The bill that I am presenting today stems from the recommendations that have been made in that review.

Two key recommendations stood out for immediate action. The first is the need to legislate our 100 per cent renewable energy target, announced as policy by the Chief Minister in September last year but brought forward here in this bill from 2025 to the year 2020. The second is to improve our carbon neutrality target, or zero net emissions target, so that we are aligned with the outcomes of the Paris agreement.

Achieving 100 per cent by 2020 can easily be done under existing auction processes that are currently underway and with more cost certainty in 2020 than in 2025. A 2020 date takes advantage of favourable market conditions for the ACT, where we have so far achieved the lowest cost for renewable energy seen in Australia. A 2020 date for a 100 per cent renewable energy target also moves the ACT from equal second to first among global regions with renewable energy targets reporting under the international initiative of the carbon disclosure project.

A RET is set through disallowable instrument under the climate change legislation. On Monday, 2 May this instrument was made, setting the 100 per cent renewable energy target by 2020, and has been publicly notified. Setting a 100 per cent renewable energy target for 2020 triggers the amendment of the feed-in tariff act, which sets the maximum capacity of megawatts allowed to be released for procurement. To have the renewable energy built and operational by 2020, this amendment needs to be actioned immediately to award the grants in the final renewables reverse auction process. This process commenced on 1 April this year and will be closing shortly.

Increasing the overall megawatt cap in the feed-in tariff law from 550 to 650 megawatts and allowing a final capacity release of a further 91 megawatts ensures that the next generation renewables auction can procure these renewable energy projects this year. This takes advantage of the low costs that are currently available and which we have enjoyed to date in the renewable energy market and ensures that those projects and that energy are being produced by the year 2020.

The feed-in tariff act has so far procured 40 megawatts of solar and 400 megawatts of wind capacity under our innovative reverse auction system. We have received strong support for our process and we have seen record low prices achieved for ACT consumers. The next gen renewables auction this year is currently set to award 109 megawatts, with the additional 91 megawatts to be added to the auction process, making for a neat 200 megawatts.

Over the months following COP21 in Paris, the government received a number of representations from the community and broader stakeholders requesting that the government step up its zero emissions target. These submissions were taken into consideration as we progressed options for amending the climate change act's principal target. I stand here today with the knowledge that there is strong public support for this legislative change. The original target of net zero emissions by 2060 will be amended by this bill to a 2050 target, eliminating the need for an interim target of 80 per cent emissions reduction by the year 2050.

By changing this target we are sending a strong signal to our community, to industry, to Australia and to the broader global community that, as a city, as a jurisdiction, we are serious about responding to the challenges of climate change. We are fast to react to international best practice and as a region we are serious in making the transition to a low carbon future. Together with aiming for 100 per cent renewable energy, the ACT is positioning itself as a global leader in climate change action and setting the standard for other states and regions to follow. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Nature Conservation 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) (10.54): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The government is presenting the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill to the Assembly today. The Nature Conservation Act 2014 commenced on 11 June last year. The focus of this amendment bill is to make minor changes to the way threatened species are listed in the ACT to reflect national agreements.

In April 2014 environment ministers agreed to the national review of environmental regulation to identify opportunities to harmonise and simplify regulations while maintaining environmental protection. The streamlining of the assessment and statutory listing of threatened species and ecological communities was identified as a key area for reform.

Statutory listing of species and ecological communities is a key foundation for helping to conserve biodiversity. All states and territories provide legislative protection for the wildlife within their respective jurisdictions. Currently state, territory and Australian governments all use slightly different criteria and categories for assessing and listing threatened matters.

Most jurisdictions have agreed, or are in the process of agreeing, to an intergovernmental memorandum of understanding: agreement on a common assessment method for listing of threatened species and threatened ecological communities, which sets out the reform measures and provides an implementation framework.

The government anticipated many of these reforms and included relevant provisions in the Nature Conservation Act 2014. However, the government could not anticipate all of the reform measures required until after the MOU was finalised. The MOU was finalised by officials in July last year. On behalf of the territory, I signed the agreement on 15 November last year, soon after the commonwealth and Western Australia. I understand that Tasmania and the Northern Territory have now also signed the MOU, with other states still considering their position.

The main reforms agreed at a national level to harmonise and simplify regulation are: all jurisdictions to adopt a common assessment method to assess nationally threatened matters based on the International Union for Conservation of Nature—IUCN—categories and criteria; mutual recognition of other jurisdictions' assessments and listing decisions for nationally threatened matters, supported by enhanced information exchange and sharing between jurisdictions; and a single operational list of threatened matters whereby national and regional lists are mutually exclusive and the same species or ecological community on different jurisdictions' lists must have the same threat category.

The common assessment method would be applied in a hierarchical way so that the conservation status of a species or ecological community is first assessed at a national scale. Species and ecological communities that are currently listed as threatened would be transitioned to an agreed threat category on the ACT threatened species list, either nationally or a regional category.

Where a nomination about a species or ecological community is likely to be listed as nationally threatened, the scientific committee must undertake consultation on the nomination as part of the assessment process. This is currently an optional process but is required for national listing.

The current act provisions require both a listing advice and a conservation advice to be prepared by the scientific committee. These inform decisions by the minister on listings and on actions needed to be taken once the species or ecological community has been listed. The provisions in the bill incorporate the listing advice requirements into the conservation advice so that only one advice is prepared. The bill also provides that the ACT can adopt a conservation advice prepared by other jurisdictions where this is appropriate.

There are also provisions relating to providing increased flexibility about when an action plan is required to be prepared for threatened species and ecological communities. Under the new arrangements for action plans the scientific committee is responsible for advising the minister that an action plan is needed and, following a review and if appropriate, that an action plan is no longer needed. This will allow resources for preparing action plans to be provided for those species of greatest concern in the ACT. For example, a species may be critically endangered but only frequents the ACT irregularly. In these cases the conservation advice would be sufficient.

A range of transitional provisions have been included. Primary amongst these are provisions that allow species and ecological communities currently listed under the Nature Conservation Act to stay in their current categories until processes are undertaken to transfer them to a more appropriate category on the list, if necessary. Consequential amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2007 included in this bill update the definitions and categories used in schedule 4 as they relate to environmental impact assessment of threatened species and ecological communities.

I commend the Nature Conservation Amendment Bill 2016, along with its consequential changes to the Planning and Development Act 2007, to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Retirement Villages Amendment Bill 2016

Mr Rattenbury, by leave, presented the bill, its explanatory statement, a Human Rights Act compatibility statement and a copy of the review of the Retirement Villages Act 2012.

Title read by Clerk.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Education, Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Road Safety) (11.00): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the report of the review of the Retirement Villages Act 2012 and the Retirement Villages Amendment Bill 2016. I made a statement in this place in August last year about the review of the Retirement Villages Act. I informed members about the progress of the review and the anticipated time frame.

As some of you may recall, the Retirement Villages Act commenced on 4 March 2013. The act replaced the former retirement villages code of practice, which had been made under the Fair Trading Act 1992. The review of the act was a legislative requirement. Section 265 of the act requires the minister to review the act as soon as practicable after the end of the second year of operation. The review of the act is now complete. The Retirement Villages Amendment Bill proposes amendments to the act in response to the recommendations made in the review.

Before I discuss the amendments proposed by the bill, I would like to take some time to discuss the review process. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the Retirement Villages Act review advisory group. This dedicated group of stakeholders helped inform the terms of reference for the review and to develop its final recommendations.

The review advisory group included representatives of the ACT Retirement Village Residents Association, the ACT Property Council Retirement Living Committee, Aged and Community Services Australia association of ACT and New South Wales, the ACT Human Rights Commission, the Law Society, the Council on the Ageing, the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum and the LGBTIQ ministerial advisory council. I would like to formally thank the review advisory group for their invaluable contribution to the review and to the bill I am tabling today.

The purpose of the review was to see whether the act was operating effectively. Extensive public consultation was conducted for the review. Four public forums were held during the consultation period. Three forums were held at major ACT retirement villages, and JACS received 37 written submissions during the public consultation period.

Public consultation indicated that the act is generally operating well but identified some areas for improvement. Issues raised included dispute resolution processes, village budgets, replacement and maintenance of capital items, retirement village contracts, safety and security, departure fees, affordable models for retirement villages, resident input to decisions, contributions, recurrent charges and different retirement village models.

The bill proposes amendments to the Retirement Villages Act in response to the recommendations of the review. Public consultation during the review indicated that

there were some misconceptions in the community about the differences between independent retirement living and residential aged care. This has caused problems for prospective residents and their families, who need to be able to make an informed decision.

The bill proposes amendments to the act and to the Retirement Villages Regulation 2013 to make the distinction between retirement living and residential aged care clearer. The bill provides that it is an offence for the operator of a retirement village to make an express or implied representation, whether orally or in writing, that the village is an approved provider of residential aged care or that residents of the village have priority access to residential aged care by an approved provider.

The bill also recognises that there are some operators in the territory who are dual providers of independent retirement living and residential aged care. To remove all doubt, it is not an offence for an operator to merely give an explanation or make a statement about how the services of the retirement village differ from residential care services or to state the fact that a residential aged-care facility is associated with the village. The bill proposes amendments to the act and regulation to require the general inquiry document and disclosure statement to include information about the difference between retirement villages and aged-care facilities.

Amendments in the bill will also require the general inquiry document and disclosure statement to include additional information for residents and prospective residents about any departure fees provided for in the village contract and information about the operator's policy, if any, on access by residents to home care services. These amendments will mean that prospective residents and their families are better informed about retirement villages.

Feedback from operators and the property industry indicated a need to allow operators to enter into more binding deposit arrangements with prospective residents. This would ameliorate financial loss to operators and make the retirement village industry more consistent with other property industries. The act currently requires a holding deposit be held in trust until either the prospective resident enters into a residence contract with the operator or the operator receives written notice that the prospective resident does not intend to enter into a residence contract or has died. If the prospective resident enters into a residence contract with the operator, both parties may agree that the amount paid as a holding deposit may form part of the deposit under the contract. The bill proposes amendments to the act so that if contracts have been entered into but the prospective resident does not move into the premises, the operator is allowed to retain some of the holding deposit to cover reasonable costs incurred in leaving the premises empty, such as legal fees, marketing costs and recurrent charges.

Reasonable costs cannot exceed an amount specified by regulation or \$10,000. The operator would only be able to retain funds from the holding deposit if contracts have been entered into and the contract is rescinded after the seven day cooling-off period. This would provide a mechanism in the act equivalent to the exchange of contracts in the sale of residential property.

The bill proposes a new internal disputes committee to resolve disputes between residents and operators, similar to the process from the former Fair Trading (Retirement Villages Industry) Code of Practice 1999. The act currently provides for resolution of disputes by the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Submissions received during public consultation indicated a need for a less formal alternative to the ACAT process to resolve relatively minor issues. The disputes committee will consist of a member appointed by residents, a member appointed by the operator and an independent chair. This would be an optional process to provide another option to operators and residents. They would still be able to apply to ACAT for dispute resolution in the first instance or to arrange external mediation of the dispute.

The financial management of retirement villages was a significant issue in the review. In particular, a number of submissions raised issues of consent to village budget spending and the amendment of recurrent charges. While the act contains separate provisions for resident consent to proposed budget spending and increases in the recurrent charges that residents pay under their village contracts, there is some overlap in these provisions. Resident consent is not required for proposed budget spending or increases in recurrent charges if the charges are varied according to a fixed formula. If recurrent charges are not varied according to a fixed formula, resident consent is still not required if the increase does not exceed the consumer price index.

Public consultation on the review indicated a need to clarify the difference between consent to changes to recurrent charges and consent to proposed budget spending. Feedback from stakeholders representing residents and operators indicated that the use of CPI to measure increases in recurrent charges has been problematic.

The bill proposes amendments to the act to remove the CPI provisions. Resident consent will be required for all increases that are not made by fixed formula. The bill also requires residents to consent separately to proposed budget spending. These amendments give residents greater opportunity to provide input to amendments in their recurrent charges and to participate in the financial management of their village.

During the review, stakeholders raised practical concerns about the requirement for operators to provide residents with a copy of the proposed annual budget at least 60 days before the beginning of the financial year to which the budget relates. The bill proposes amendments to allow an operator and residents to agree to change the time frame for the village budget. The time frame cannot be shorter than 30 days.

The act provides that in the event of a surplus in the annual accounts of a village, the residents may consent to the operator distributing all or part of the surplus to the existing residents in equal shares. Consultation during the review suggested that this provision be amended for reasons of fairness, as residents often do not pay equal amounts of recurrent charges and sometimes recurrent charges may be paid by the operator. The bill proposes amendments to the act to provide that distribution is made to existing residents and the operator in the same proportion as their actual contribution to the surplus.

The management of capital items, including capital maintenance and replacement, was raised by multiple stakeholders during public consultation. Submissions received during public consultation suggested that the current definitions of “capital item”, “capital maintenance” and “capital replacement” lack clarity and may lead to tension between residents and operators about who is responsible for the item and the difference between maintenance and replacement. The bill proposes amendments to the regulation to clarify the meaning of capital maintenance.

This bill does not give effect to every recommendation made in the review report. The report identified a number of significant areas which require further development, and these will be progressed by the government at a later date.

Two retirement villages in the ACT are regulated by both the Retirement Villages Act and the Unit Titles (Management) Act 2011. Feedback received during public forums and in written submissions indicated a need for amendment to the act to address issues of administrative duplication and ambiguity. The report recommends that further consideration be given to amending the act and Unit Titles (Management) Act to remove this duplication. It has not been possible to prepare amendments to deal with this complex issue in time to include them in this bill. I have asked JACS to give further consideration to these issues as second stage reforms.

Some submissions received during the review raised the issue of affordability of retirement villages. It was suggested that the review consider amendment of the act to facilitate more affordable options for village accommodation. Some submissions suggested that renting units in retirement villages would be a more affordable option. Other submissions raised concern about rental arrangements in retirement villages adversely affecting the security of ingoing contributions. The report recommends that further consideration be given to developing amendments to the act to encourage operators to provide rental accommodation in retirement villages. Again, I have asked the JACS directorate to give further consideration to these issues as second stage reforms.

The review also recommends that a working group be formed to develop standard documents. The act provides for the preparation of a number of standardised documents, including the general inquiry document, standard condition report, proposed annual budget, village contract and safety inspection report. This is another matter to be progressed at a later stage.

This bill will make a number of very practical amendments to the Retirement Villages Act. It balances between various stakeholder interests and will achieve a better, smoother system for all involved. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2016

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

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (11.14): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I rise today to present the Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2016, which includes important amendments to the Workers Compensation Act 1951 and the Workers Compensation Regulation 2002. It has been a source of concern to this government that, although the ACT private sector workers compensation regulation includes asbestosis and mesothelioma as diseases related to employment, the Workers Compensation Act omits asbestos-caused diseases from the schedule in which compensation payable for permanent injuries is specified. This means that, although the regulation recognises these as work-related diseases, workers suffering from these diseases do not qualify for lump-sum compensation for permanent impairment.

Without access to the lump sum payment, the benefits available to workers suffering asbestos-related diseases are limited under the current statutory scheme to medical and income support. Given these limitations, affected individuals have tended to pursue common law action through the courts to seek compensation. This can be a protracted, expensive and uncertain process and is especially difficult for claimants suffering from a terminal illness.

The bill I introduce today will remedy this situation by providing no-fault statutory lump sum payments to ACT workers affected by asbestos-related disease contracted through work. The statutory lump sum amount for imminently fatal asbestos disease will be equal to 100 per cent of the single loss amount provided in section 49 of the Workers Compensation Act 1951 in recognition of the devastating impact of these diseases. The bill also addresses the difficulties faced by all parties involved in claims for long latency illnesses for former workers who may have only a short time to live.

In addition to the reforms put forward in this bill, the government has also been active in seeking administrative solutions to the historical problems of access to compensation for workers and former workers suffering from asbestos-related diseases. Prior to the 2012 election we committed to seek affiliation with the New South Wales Workers Compensation Dust Diseases Board to improve access to workers compensation for people with asbestos diseases.

Territory officials have worked with the New South Wales authority to identify services that could assist those affected in the ACT and which are transferrable to the ACT. These have included the introduction of fast-tracked claim determinations, a customised claim process, access to the experienced medical practitioners used in New South Wales, and the use of a centralised contact person to provide advice on making a claim.

The ACT government's uninsured employer component of the default insurance fund was established to provide safety net protection for injured workers where an employer does not have a workers compensation insurance policy, and cannot meet

the claim costs payable under the act. Asbestosis, mesothelioma, lung disease, lung cancer and asbestos-related diseases characteristically develop over a long period of time. The first symptoms may not appear until anywhere between 10 and 50 years after exposure. There are consequently many difficult issues facing workers suffering from asbestos-related diseases: the need to establish causation many years after exposure and the fact that workers may have been exposed to asbestos with more than one employer and often in the case of the ACT workers in more than one state.

Asbestos disease claims are often managed by the default insurance fund due to the fact that historically the terms of the ACT insurance policies provided coverage for injuries that occurred during a fixed period of time. With long latency claims such as asbestos-related diseases, the date of the injury is the date the worker first became aware of the injury and seeks medical treatment or passes away.

Asbestos-related diseases tend to manifest long after the time in which the exposure occurred and when the insurance policy may have been in place. This means that an insurance policy will only respond to injuries or diseases which manifest during the policy period, leaving injured workers suffering from an asbestos disease and their employers uninsured for workers compensation purposes. This is due to unintended historical legislative consequences that have risen over many years.

While the default insurance fund seeks to expedite claims for asbestos-related compensation claims when it is the primary party to litigation, the rules under which it operates have required workers or former workers to exhaust all other possible avenues of compensation before seeking compensation through the fund. While it is reasonable to expect claimants with non-fatal injuries to first apply for the compensation through existing compensation schemes, in the case of immediately fatal asbestos disease claims, other avenues of compensation may include stressful court-based processes that are often not finalised until it is too late.

Prompt and efficient decision-making is particularly important in cases of mesothelioma where, if decision-making is delayed, the affected worker is likely to reach the end of their life before the case is heard by the courts and compensation awarded. To address this, the bill I put forward today will modify the default insurance fund claimant arrangements so that liability for statutory workers compensation claims for imminently fatal asbestos diseases may be accepted and paid without first requiring a claimant to pursue other parties. An “imminently fatal asbestos-related disease” is one where the sufferer has a prognosis of less than two years of life expectancy. The expedited process for imminently fatal cases has been highly effective in other parts of Australia.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the default insurance fund will become the central point of contact and insurer for all workers wanting to submit a claim for an asbestos-related disease. The default insurance fund has processes and procedures in place, including a legal panel experienced in the management of these types of claims, which will assist in seeking contribution and recovery from the responsible employers, insurers and manufacturers where possible. These changes will ensure that claims for a worker with a short life expectancy are processed and paid as soon as possible.

The default insurance fund has faced another hurdle when assisting those with asbestos-related diseases contracted during the course of work. It has been unable to initiate legal action against another insurer or other tortfeasor or use another contribution for damages it receives to offset statutory claim costs paid to it. This means that, unlike other insurers, the default insurance fund would be unable to recover payments it makes from a manufacturer of an asbestos product. Recovery or a contribution from other parties responsible for the injury could only be obtained by pursuing a common law process. This bill will also overcome this deficiency.

Where there is a gap between recoveries made by the default insurance fund from former employers, insurers or manufacturers of asbestos products, payments for work-related asbestos disease made by the fund are financed through a levy on workers compensation premiums. The DIF levy is determined annually and is currently at 1.4 per cent of the gross written workers compensation premiums. Asbestos-related claims are projected to require an increase in the levy.

With mortality rates from asbestos-related diseases expected to peak between now and 2020, this bill will remove obstacles for workers and their families receiving timely, fair and adequate compensation. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Children and Young People Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

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

Title read by Clerk.

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) (11.24): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as Minister for Children and Young People, I am pleased to table the Children and Young People Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. In January 2015 the ACT government launched “A step-up for our kids: one step can make a lifetime of difference”, the new five-year strategy to reform out of home care in the ACT. The aim of the strategy is a simple one—to give our community’s most vulnerable children and young people better lives. This bill is the final amendment needed to give effect to important elements of this significant reform and follows on from the previous three amendments to the Children and Young People Act 2008 passed in 2015.

As is the case nationally, the ACT community is facing many challenges when it comes to providing out of home care services. Outcomes for young people who have been in care are generally poorer than for the broader community, whether socially, in

education or in employment. We know that young people who exit the care system are less likely to be employed and are at greater risk of mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Most concerning, though, is that adults who have experienced out of home care are more likely to have children who are subjected to abuse, trauma and neglect.

A step up for our kids is an additional \$16 million investment in the future of our community's most vulnerable children and young people and transforms the way we support them. It will create a therapeutic trauma-informed system of care, giving children in care more stable lives by enabling the organisations to provide a continuous system of care that stays with a child throughout their care experience.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a step up for our kids was developed over a two-year period in consultation with young people, foster and kinship carers, out of home care agencies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies, peak bodies, and non-government and government services. Research undertaken by the Parenting and Research Centre and the University of Melbourne provided rigorous analysis of evidence for out of home care interventions. This research and extensive consultation informed the development of a step up for our kids and its key domains and is reflected in the amendments sought by this bill and in the previous amendments to the Children and Young People Act 2008.

Through this bill we are supporting the overarching principles of a step up for our kids by promoting more timely decision-making for children and young people by those who know them best; easier access to protected information and personal items for young people; and streamlined and simplified administrative processes. The best outcomes for children and young people in care are achieved when those who have care of a child or young person have the responsibility to make the decisions that affect them.

I propose enabling the delegation of a number of functions from the Director-General of the Community Services Directorate to the responsible person for an approved kinship and foster care organisation. These include the delegation of parental responsibility and the delegation of the power to make decisions about placements.

This bill will allow the delegation of decision-making to those closest to a child or young person, distancing government from their lives and enabling a more authentic experience of family life. New services under a step up for our kids will have a greater share of responsibility for children and young people in care transferred to the responsible person of approved foster and kinship care organisations.

It is important to note that whilst certain powers can be delegated, the director-general retains ultimate responsibility for children in care. The delegation of further responsibilities will give these organisations greater autonomy in providing care, giving vulnerable children and young people the most stable, productive lives possible. This will also result in a reduction in the three-way relationship between Child and Youth Protection Services, out of home care providers and carers and provide more timely decision-making.

We recognise the importance of promoting the best interests of a child or young person in out of home care and ensuring the integrity of the care system. While these amendments will enable the delegation of decision-making for children and young people in care, I would like to highlight that this change will not be implemented for another 12 to 18 months. This will allow time for the sector to mature and expand and for an accountability framework to be established.

Under a step up for our kids we are putting in place additional safeguards to enhance oversight, accountability and transparency to ensure a high functioning care system. We are building a framework that supports a stronger, safer, more sustainable out of home care system to improve the outcomes for our community's most vulnerable children and young people.

To achieve this, we are undertaking work to develop the capacity and capability of the sector, both government and non-government, to protect the integrity of the service system and to ensure the sector can adequately support the increased level of responsibility held by approved kinship and foster care organisations. Some key elements of this work include improved regulation and oversight, new governance arrangements, performance-based contracting and incentives for service providers, and establishment of independent advocacy support services.

This bill also seeks to simplify processes and reduce red tape by allowing the delegation to prepare, consult on and review transition plans from the director-general to the responsible person for an approved kinship and foster care organisation or a residential care service. This amendment complements the delegation of annual review reports to the responsible person of an approved kinship and foster care organisation, which was enacted by the Children and Young People Amendment Bill 2015 (No 3).

Under a step up for our kids we are implementing a number of changes that provide better support for young people as they transition to adulthood. In support of this, I propose to enact changes to allow easier access for young people to protected information about themselves and access to personal items which may be held by an approved kinship or foster care organisation.

A small number of other minor and technical amendments are also included in this bill to improve the administration of the Children and Young People Act. These are detailed in the bill and in its accompanying explanatory statement. I propose that this bill will also enact minor policy amendments to the Adoption Act 1993, which will clarify the interpretation of the act, thereby supporting pathways to permanency. These amendments are minor and technical in nature and will improve the clarity of adoption applications being considered by the Family Court. This will prevent any delays in the adoption process relating to ambiguous language in the act.

Through a step up for our kids we are addressing the major challenges faced by out of home care services, creating a more sustainable system and, most importantly, helping children and young people take a step up for their lives. This Children and Young People Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will give effect to this significant reform, improving outcomes for our community's most vulnerable children and young people and giving them a better opportunity to live full, happy and productive lives.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are undertaking a major reform of the out of home care system to break the intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and improve long-term education, health and social outcomes for children and young people in care. I expect that we will begin to see significant evidence of change for children, young people and their families in the next few years, and I look forward to updating the Assembly on the progress of this.

We have listened to the voice of children and young people, and we are building a system where they are not in out of home care; children and young people will just be home.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Amendment Bill 2016

Debate resumed from 7 April 2016, on motion by **Mr Gentleman**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.33): Madam Deputy Speaker, the opposition will be opposing this bill today, simply because the government has not made the case. Also, those who are directly affected by the scheme, should it go ahead, have put forward some sensible suggestions which, it would seem, have been rejected by the government. Yet again, we have a government that says it does consultation, but the consultation is simply ignored because the government is rushing through its proposals.

In the last sitting week when the bill was tabled I sought to send the bill off to an inquiry. That was rebuffed by the Assembly, as is its will. But members in the discussion said, “We understand there’s some more consultation going on. We’ll see the outcome of that consultation, and, if necessary, we can send it off then.” The inevitable has happened. The consultation was done. There is no change. The advice that I proffered on that last sitting day, that we really should send it then, given the time constraints, has come to fruition. The problem is that we have a government that is determined to have its way. It has the numbers, aided and abetted by Mr Rattenbury, so the bill will get up.

The bill does a number of things. First and foremost, it modifies the definition of “construction industry” to include supervisors. It says that building and construction work means working in the industry, direct supervision of a worker carrying out work in the building and construction industry.

This is a change, and it is probably a significant change. It has been protecting the rights of workers, particularly in the construction industry, where I think we all understand that you can only work for so long in a job before the job is completed. But supervisors tend to stay with firms, and one would question the necessity to have this catch-all approach. It is simply to put a further impost on business.

The second significant change is with cleaning work. Cleaning work, in section 2.2(1), is now extended to “the collection or sorting of waste at, or for, an identified waste management facility”. I note that it is the minister who determines what an identified waste management facility is. I notice that the WCRA, the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association, have a number of concerns. They do not see that it is appropriate. I quote point 5 from their submission: “In particular, the WCRA submits that the extension of the scheme to the waste disposal sector presents a number of undesirable consequences for that sector as demonstrated in the CBC submission.” That is the Canberra Business Chamber submission. I will get to that when we talk about aged care.

So again there are concerns about what the government is attempting to do here, particularly that we now have the minister able to define it. It will only be a notifiable instrument; it will not be a disallowable instrument. So the minister can now determine that a facility is an identified waste management facility for section 2.2(1)(b); it will be at the whim of the minister. Again, that is probably not how we should do this.

The question is: what becomes an identified waste management facility? Is it just the tip? Is it the MRF, the recycling facility at the tip? Does it extend to small businesspeople who collect trash packs, for instance? Are their sites to be included in this now as well? The minister needs to make it quite clear what he will say is an identified waste facility. And you have to question why it is only a notifiable instrument.

That brings us to the aged-care sector, new clause 12, “What is the community sector industry?” They are going to insert “(ia) the industry of providing residential aged care services” and “(ib) the industry of providing community aged care services”. It just inserts a new definition. It was brought in to include residential aged care and community aged care with effect from 1 July 2016.

The Canberra Business Chamber has commented on behalf of the aged-care industry. Let us face it: aged care is a growing industry; we want people in that industry; we want people to stay in that industry. But you would have to ask: is aged care one of those industries where people are leaving in droves and, therefore, denied the claim of long service? The government could not tell us in the briefing. I thank the minister for the briefing. I said, “So what percentage?” All they have got is national percentages, and it seems that there is some 20 to 25 per cent turnover. I am told by the industry that it is not true in the ACT.

The basis of good aged care is that, particularly for those whose mental faculties decline, and that happens, familiarity is a very important part of the provision of good aged-care services. All of those firms are working to keep their workers. They are claiming that the turnover, particularly in the ACT, is nowhere near what the Productivity Commission said was the national average. So there are serious questions there.

The Business Chamber said that if you are actually going to have such a scheme, the aged-care sector would perhaps like to have its own portable scheme covering residential and home care. Yet this has now become a catch-all. It may have the inadvertent effect of perhaps having people leaving aged care and moving into other forms of community service and back again, and circulating around, whereas what the aged-care sector would prefer—and I think what the people living in the aged-care facilities would prefer—is certainty about who is looking after them. They get very attached to those who work for them and work with them, and it is very important, particularly for those who have some form of dementia, that they have that routine. Whether this will have a detrimental effect is unclear, but there are concerns there.

The Canberra Business Chamber sent a letter to Mr Gentleman on 6 April, and it lists a number of things. I will not go through them here because I get the sense that there will not be any changes from the government. I suspect Mr Rattenbury will just go along for the ride as is the normal case. But I think the issues that are there will come back to haunt us. I think that in time we may well find, as we have done so often with this government and their legislation, that we have to come back to clean it up. And I think that we need to be very careful about changing the way an industry operates, not necessarily for the better. If this has a detrimental impact on the provision of aged-care services, particularly for the residents in the facilities, that would be a very bad thing.

We will watch very closely to see what the effect of this will be. We would certainly ask the government to make sure that they keep a watching brief on whether or not the legislation has some of the detrimental effects that have been outlined in various submissions that they have been given, both in the waste and in the aged-care sectors. We will certainly be keeping an eye on it and keeping in touch with all the people who provide those services and ensuring that in the future we have the best aged-care sector that we can have, that the people of the ACT deserve.

With that, we do not believe this is appropriate at this time. We do not believe that there is any urgency to rush it through. There are questions for some organisations if this is passed today, which it will be. It will probably come into law by Friday; that is less than eight weeks until the commencement date of 1 July. If this was so urgent, perhaps the government should have got it into the Assembly earlier. From industry reps, I am told that there will be some leniency or understanding as people may have to rewrite or purchase new systems to be able to cope with these changes. But a guarantee of leniency or understanding does not necessarily mean that the government will allow that to continue for a period of time. And for some smaller organisations there may be a huge impost in purchasing a new software system that covers the management. If they are lucky, they might be able to buy a new module for the existing program. They may have to have it written in some cases. In some cases they may have to go and purchase new software. Again, there is additional expense for what is a very unclear gain to the industry as a whole.

That said, we will be opposing the bill today.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.42): The Greens are pleased to support this bill today, which will extend portable long service leave benefits to two additional workforce sectors in the ACT: the aged-care sector and the waste sector.

Portable long service leave is an excellent scheme. I am quite proud that here in the ACT we are the jurisdiction that is leading the way. I have spoken in support of it before, as have my Greens colleagues in previous Assemblies. We have four portable long service leave schemes already operating. They operate in the building and construction industry, the contract cleaning industry, the community sector and the security industry. They all appear to be operating very well. Workers are accruing their deserved leave, and the industries themselves continue to operate effectively. The updates I have received from the ACT's Long Service Leave Authority confirm that they are also operating well in an administrative sense.

Portable long service leave is of course intended to protect the entitlement of workers who work in industries characterised by high levels of mobility and brief employment. Someone working in Canberra's waste sectors, for example, might spend 20 years doing the same job but might have moved between different employers. A garbage truck driver might find that the company they work for changes but essentially they are doing the same job day to day.

When I was TAMS minister, for example, the government changed the contractor it used to operate the garbage collection service. The company changed, yet most of the actual employees remained the same and continued doing the same job. Through no action of their own, they were working for a different employer. This is exactly the sort of situation that this bill seeks to address.

Usually these changes would prevent that employee from being able to receive long service leave entitlements. Traditionally, long service leave only accrues to a person who is with the same employer. Portable long service leave recognises the reality in some industries that a person continues to do a similar job despite moving between employers, and it ensures they can still get long service leave after they have worked for a long time.

Long service leave, and perhaps portable long service leave in particular, is one of those issues that draw out some deep-rooted political differences in the Assembly. The Liberal Party, as we have heard today, do not support portable long service leave. That has been stated clearly on the record a number of times in this place now. They have voted against establishing the schemes. The Liberal Party's view is that these schemes are a pain to industry and a burden on employment. Also on the record is their view that the very notion of long service leave, portable or not, is antiquated.

The Greens do not share these views. Far from going along for the ride, as Mr Smyth suggested in the debate today, we actively believe that this is an important issue and one that the parliament should take action on. I think the truly antiquated view is the one that fails to recognise that workers need rest and balance in their lives, and long service leave helps provide that. It contributes to their health and wellbeing and it helps build a better and fairer society. And for those people who are perhaps more focused on products, profits and productivity, it is also the case that treating workers well and giving them proper breaks actually tends to improve productivity.

For a variety of complex reasons to do with the way our modern capitalist economy works, we have some industries where the workforce is relatively transient and people do not tend to receive long service leave. That does not mean they do not deserve long service leave if they continue working in the same sector of the workforce.

In fact, I think there is a real question about whether it is time for Australia's long service scheme to go through a more fundamental, modernising transformation. All long service leave could in fact be portable, recognising that in the modern age people change employers and industries fairly frequently. Today's working environment is just not the same as the days when someone might be a company employee for life.

The Senate, through a recent committee inquiry, has looked into the issue of a national portable long service leave system. I understand that some modelling has been done on the implications of such a scheme, and I will be very interested to see the results.

Returning to the issue before us today, the extension of portable long service leave to the waste and aged-care sectors here in the territory, employers in these industries might say that introducing a portable long service leave scheme will increase their costs. In fact, they have said that to me, as I have met with several representatives of the aged-care sector in recent weeks. Currently, by their nature, these industries have low costs when it comes to providing long service leave. This is because in their sector employees do move around at a high rate, either between employers or by virtue of the fact that their employer changes because a company changes.

Meeting with one aged-care company recently, I noted that they had amalgamated several other companies and their workers, an example where, because of the company structure changing, the employees could lose their entitlements. The costs to employers in these industries have stayed low because they are benefiting from the constant cycling of employees passing through. These employees provide the labour but do not get to accrue long service leave. So yes, costs may increase for employers, but they are increasing from what I believe is an unnaturally low base.

As I said, the bill will extend portable long service leave to two new industries, the aged-care sector and the waste sector. Aged care will be included in the existing community sector scheme and the waste sector will be included in the existing cleaning sector scheme. One of the benefits of including these sectors in existing schemes is that it will keep administrative costs low, thereby helping to keep the portable long service leave levy as low as practicable.

Think for a minute about the job that these employees are doing—the people who work in the aged-care sector and the waste sector. They are generally some of the lower paid occupations in our city. They do hard and necessary work, work that everyone in this city relies on. Everybody needs their garbage collected. We need our waste recycled. And we are all going to get old, and as we do we will need people to care for us. Or we have ageing parents and relatives who need care right now. Sometimes these can be tough and unpleasant jobs. On top of these difficulties, they are industries where it is very hard to accrue long service leave so that you can take a

rest, maintain your health, see your family, and live your life without it all being about work. People need this. We are not economic units existing to work until exhaustion and then be discarded.

I do recognise the other side to this debate. As I have said, I have met with the Canberra Business Chamber as well as several industry representatives. Yes, there are businesses and industries that have legitimate pressures. They need to manage their business, their finances and their employees. These are challenging tasks, and there are a lot of obligations that businesses need to meet. I understand and respect these difficulties. Portable long service leave is another obligation that they need to meet.

But even though a portable long service leave scheme will add an extra consideration for business, I believe it is still the right thing to do. It will introduce a significant benefit to people working in the industry, a benefit that they deserve. I hope that over time the scheme will benefit the industries themselves as there will be an additional incentive for workers to keep working in a particular sector.

Representatives of the aged-care sector, for example, said that it was quite a challenge to retain people in the job. The portable long service leave scheme is one way to keep people in a particular sector, as they will now be able to accrue long service leave despite changes to their employer within the community sector.

Despite the fact that I agree with introducing these new portable long service leave schemes, I have taken on board the concerns that industry representatives have raised with me. I have discussed them with Minister Gentleman. Some of the requests can be dealt with administratively. For example, the minister has made some commitments about consultation on changes to the levy.

I also want to note the way the portable long service leave scheme levy is calculated for each industry. It is based on an independent actuarial assessment, and it takes into account all of the relevant data to ensure the levy reflects the number of employees being paid long service leave under the scheme. It is adjusted from time to time to reflect changes in the industry.

I think this answers many of the fears raised by industry, who are concerned they would pay too much or would pay for employees who would then leave the sector. But these factors are reflected in the levy to ensure it is accurate, to ensure that there is no “overcharging”, as it might be described, occurring in the scheme. The levy may even reduce after some amount of time, as has occurred in other industries as the actuarial data matches the on-the-ground situation with numbers of employees and the like.

In conclusion, I reiterate my support for this bill. The portable long service leave scheme is a good scheme. It is consistent with Greens values that recognise and respect the needs and the rights of working people. I think the scheme is well balanced and it is appropriate that it is administered via a levy in the relevant industries so that employees who work for a long time can get that long service leave that they are entitled to and we ensure that we see a better work-life balance in this country.

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) (11.52): In my first speech in this place I spoke about how proud I was to be joining a government that understood the need to protect the rights of workers to long service leave. I had joined the Assembly after 17 years working alongside cleaners, security guards, hospitality workers and aged-care workers. With respect to workers in low paid industries which have high levels of contracting, casualisation and employer change, protecting their right to long service leave requires government action.

I am very happy to see this bill expanding the portable long service leave scheme to cover even more workers. Having worked alongside aged-care employees, I know they are no different to public service workers or professional private sector workers. Most of them just want job security, decent hours and fair conditions. They want the basic entitlements that let them get on with what they are dedicated to doing, that is, caring for older people in our community.

Mrs Dunne has spoken in this place about how unique long service leave is to Australia and New Zealand. She is right in saying that it was originally enacted to allow workers in former colonies to sail home to England. But it is now part of the belief that we see throughout Australian society that people are worth more than their jobs. Particularly when we reflect on workers in aged care, this is both a mentally and physically demanding job and it is also essential work in our community. It is 24-hour, seven days a week shiftwork on low wages. They are entitled to have some fairness that might help to retain workers in the sector. Introducing a portable long service leave scheme to give these benefits and this fairness to this workforce is the right thing for this government to do.

Long service leave is an opportunity for workers who have given consistently to our community to take some time for other parts of their lives. In our multicultural community, long service leave gives people the opportunity to head home and spend significant time with their family. For people in the middle of busy working lives, it gives them a break, often at about the same time as many parents I know are looking to reconnect and spend some quality time with their teenage children. For some it is an opportunity to undertake further training, to pursue a passion or to travel. For others it is the time when they need to finish some unfinished DIY. Whatever workers choose to do with it, long service leave is an important way of saying that people deserve to live big, interesting and happy lives and still be able to provide for their families.

I would like to say thank you: to Minister Gentleman for pursuing this change; to the great employers around Canberra who are committed to ensuring workers in their industries can access their entitlements; and to all of the aged-care workers who wrote to and petitioned me over the last three years. This is a long-deserved change, and I hope that you find many interesting things to do with your well-deserved leave.

MR HINDER (Ginninderra) (11.55): I rise to speak in favour of the amendment bill. I commend the minister for ensuring that aged-care and waste management workers

will now be eligible for portable long service leave. For too long, people with high levels of short-term employment in many industries have been disadvantaged in relation to their ability to access long service leave. They have not had the ability to work for just one employer and to accrue long service leave in accordance with the previous legislation. This legislation is a great advance for workers in the territory.

I understand from the minister that one in five workers in Australia have been with their current employer for less than one year and that three out of four will work for their current employer for less than the 10 years required to attain long service leave. As you would understand, Madam Deputy Speaker, this means that overall there is an erosion of leave entitlements for those workers.

The Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Amendment Bill will ensure that Canberrans employed in industries characterised by this type of short-term employment and contract work—and I note the high mobility of work for all of us these days, as well as the number of part-time and casual employees—will be recognised for their hard work and will be entitled to access some form of long service leave.

I understand from the minister that it is also about creating a fairer system, promoting workplace rights and facilitating sustainable career paths. Aged-care workers, as we have heard, earn \$43,000 on average, and the work is back-breaking and emotional. This legislation provides them with a hard-earned break every five years, as it does for long-term workers. This scheme will also benefit the general community by attracting workers to the aged-care industry. Given the ACT's ageing population, this is a great employment incentive.

I also admire the fact that the bill removes inequalities by extending the existing scheme covering the community and contract cleaning industries to the aged-care and waste management sector. Under the new rules, nearly 6,000 more Canberrans will be able to accrue long service leave. Many of them receive low average salaries. The bill makes provision for the Long Service Leave Authority governing board to make minor adjustments to employer levies, to meet the prevailing economic circumstances of the covered industries.

Ongoing engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken by the minister and his staff to ensure a smooth transition for employers and workers, no doubt with a formal consultation process with unions, employers and community groups and industrial associations, similar to what occurred prior to the introduction of the bill. I commend the bill to members.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (12.00), in reply: Long service leave, as we know, is a well-established employee entitlement in Australia, with origins in the 19th century. Since then, the entitlement has continuously evolved to extend benefits to a wide range of employees, reduce the qualifying and vesting periods and increase the amount of leave granted. This has occurred through state legislation, the award system and some collective agreements as well. Long service leave has become well established in Australia because of a high degree of community consensus on its benefits.

Traditionally, one of the primary rationales for long service leave has been to enable employees partway through their working life to recover their energies and return to work renewed, refreshed and reinvigorated. This means positive impacts on employees' health and wellbeing, and those impacts improve the effectiveness at work and, therefore, productivity.

This objective has become increasingly important in Australia because workers are spending longer proportions of their lifetimes in employment. A related trend is that growing numbers of workers are remaining in the workforce through to older ages, and the federal policy has sought to encourage this trend with policies in regard to superannuation, tax and aged pension eligibility.

This trend for longer lifetimes in employment means that it is becoming more important than ever before for employees to have sustained periods of recovery and renewal from work during their working lives. However, this trend is on a collision course with another major trend in the labour force—mobility. Australian workers are highly mobile between employers as a result of changing career patterns, rapidly shifting sectoral labour demand and the demand for workplace flexibility that has resulted in a significant increase in casual and part-time employment. Almost one in five workers have been employed by their current employer for less than one year.

Labour mobility also has major implications for access to long service leave because 10 years is the standard qualifying period for long service leave. Three in four workers remain with their employer for less than 10 years, including many who have been in the workforce for much longer. The low prevalence of long-term employment relationships limits access to long service leave entitlements to a fraction of the Australian workforce.

In response to this situation, portable long service leave schemes have emerged for a number of limited occupations. In the ACT the building and construction scheme came into effect in 1981, and an equivalent scheme exists in most states and territories. A contract cleaning scheme was introduced in the ACT in 2000, followed by the community sector scheme in 2010 and the security scheme in 2013.

Madam Speaker, waste workers fall within the electricity, gas, water and waste services division of the Australia and New Zealand standard industrial classification, commonly known as the ANZSIC. This is a high-need industry with 48 per cent of employees possessing more than 10 years experience in the industry but often not being eligible for traditional long service leave. This is usually because they have moved between employers and usually not voluntarily. The majority of waste vehicle drivers in a particular area stay on with their new employers after a change of contract, and under this legislation, this unfortunate situation will no longer occur.

We know a great deal about the characteristics of aged-care workers both in the ACT and nation-wide. The workforce is dominated by older women with a higher proportion holding post-school qualifications and a growing number born overseas. Both community and residential aged-care services employ direct care workers, including nurse practitioners, registered nurses, enrolled nurses, personal community care attendants, allied health professionals and allied health assistants.

The majority of the direct care employees are personal or community care attendants. The ACT currently accounts for one per cent of the total residential direct care workforce in Australia. The non-direct care staff includes ancillary workers such as cooks, cleaners, gardeners and maintenance workers who account for 70 per cent of the non-direct care workforce, and managers and administrators who account for another 30 per cent.

Since the introduction of portable long service leave schemes in the ACT, evidence suggests that the representatives of employers, employees and administrators involved in their management generally present positive views of these schemes. In particular, they generally see that the advantages of portable long service leave as outweighing the costs and that the levy system is an effective way of collecting funds without imposing an administrative burden on employers.

It is also worth while to note that of the 22 aged-care providers currently operating in the ACT 10—nearly half—are already registered as employers for portable long service leave purposes under the community sector scheme. They already lodge quarterly returns and have established a good relationship with the Long Service Leave Authority.

The benefits of portable long service leave are great. There is already a considerable body of research indicating the importance of leave generally for employee health, wellbeing and work-life balance. Long hours without significant leave periods have been associated with stress-related illness, which also represents a cost for employers through higher levels of claims for workplace accidents, illness and mental health issues. Regular leave has also been associated with greater employee motivation and productivity.

European experience suggests that the tourism and hospitality sectors may benefit from extended leave provisions. The commonwealth government and taxpayers would avoid a substantial and growing financial outlay for the long service leave component of the fair entitlements guarantee in the case of business insolvencies in the ACT.

On a more technical point, the bill will allow the board of the authority to make timely adjustments to the levy based on a set rationale that is linked to returns. Any changes approved by the governing board would be made in light of advice from the authority's appointed independent actuary and in consultation with relevant parties. Additionally, the levy may only be varied by notifiable instrument and after providing formal advice to the minister. I am pleased that the technical issue of the clarification of the scope of the building and construction industry scheme is also resolved by this bill.

I have already addressed a number of the aged-care providers' concerns when presenting the bill. In addition, I wrote to the Canberra Business Chamber just recently in response to a number of concerns raised by them in a letter co-signed by Aged and Community Services NSW & ACT, BUPA, Aged Care Guild and Leading Age Services Australia, New South Wales and ACT. I again thank them for their input into this process, and I would like to briefly address a couple of their comments and their requests as well.

The first is that the aged-care sector must have its own portable scheme covering residential and home care and that the aged sector scheme not be subsumed into the current community services sector portable long service leave scheme. I note that Mr Smyth also raised this issue in a speech in April. Should this occur, it would mean a separate scheme would not be able to access the economies of scale already presented in the community sector arrangements. This would add extra administrative costs to the stand-alone scheme, as scheme administration costs are currently apportioned across all four portable long service leave schemes. Additionally, this would limit people with overlapping skill sets—for example disability carers—from transferring their skills between aged care and disability care, even when working for the same company, which may provide both of those services.

Another request was that pro rata access to long service leave should be granted to employees after seven years service as per existing legislation, and not after five as per the current portable schemes. The existing community sector scheme arrangements allow for employees to access pro rata long service leave entitlements after five years of service. The other schemes vary. To ensure consistency in entitlement arrangements within the community sector scheme, these provisions will also apply to the aged-care sector. Several other issues were raised for which explanation was given, but I do not have time to go into the detail of those at the moment.

I have gone over the technical aspects of the bill and what it will achieve. I am now going to speak about why achieving these outcomes is so important. Aged-care and waste workers work hard. Aged-care workers take care of some of our most vulnerable citizens, and a lot of this work involves, as we have heard, heavy lifting, cleaning and unsociable and long hours, not to mention the emotional impact of working with people who are sick or in pain with whom a relationship is also formed. In addition, aged-care workers make on average \$43,000 per year for this difficult and tiring work.

Having a good work-life balance can be challenging for many people, and this is one of the key factors which impact on health and quality of life. Providing an extended break from this work once every five years is really important. I want the workforce in the ACT to be happy and healthy, and this bill helps to move towards that goal.

In regards to aged-care work, this is an industry which is not seen as a particularly desirable career path for many people in our community. I can understand why this might be the case: the low pay, the hard physical work, the often emotional work and the undesirable hours worked. Indeed, many employers and industry groups have expressed the difficulty experienced in attracting people to work in the field. At a time when our population is ageing at a very fast pace, this industry needs to be able to build its employee numbers more than ever.

The provision of portable long service leave will provide an additional incentive for people to enter the industry with the promise of a paid four-week break for every five years worked. As Mr Smyth put it in April, Madam Speaker, aged care is a big issue and the workforce demands on aged care will grow. Indeed they will, and this measure will help to incentivise growth in the workforce.

There are far more women working in this sector than men. It is well known that women are more likely than men throughout their lifetimes to take a break from employment in their industry. Women on average are paid less, have less super, and are likely to change employer after breaks from employment. As I noted in my presentation speech, women are far more likely to lose their long service leave entitlements than men. Providing portable long service leave to an industry which has a higher proportion of its workforce made up of women reduces the number of women forced to forgo their long service leave entitlements.

The federal Senate inquiry into the aged-care sector workforce has recently concluded. The three recommendations are essentially that states, territories and the commonwealth should work together to consider developing a national portable long service leave scheme; the Australian Bureau of Statistics should consider developing an insecure work indicator; and the federal government should do detailed modelling on the possibility of a national portable long service leave scheme.

Several industry groups have tried to use this report and its recommendations to claim that the ACT should not proceed with these reforms. But nothing in these recommendations precludes the ACT government from extending existing schemes to targeted sections of the workforce with high transience and churn.

Mr Smyth stated in his speech in April:

... there was a Senate inquiry that said a whole lot more work needs to be done on the portability of long service leave.

The statement should have been that the Senate inquiry said a whole lot of work needs to be done on the portability of long service leave on a national cross-industry and all-encompassing scale. The idea of creating a national portable long service leave scheme which captures every worker from every industry in every state and territory and which puts the levies into the same fund and allows for the same amount of leave to be accrued and claimed for every industry is very different to a targeted scheme aimed at insecure workers. Nothing in those recommendations impacts on the feasibility of the reform we are discussing today.

I will go to a couple of comments raised in debate in regard to waste workers and small businesses. Under this legislation I am advised it will only be those who are under contracts with the territory that will be covered, so it should not affect small businesses. On the transience of the ACT workforce, we know that one of the largest suppliers of aged care in the territory has its own statistics on long service leave that already points to them only paying half of those entitlements. What is more, the industry in its submission to the Senate inquiry put forward its own details and evidence that 25 per cent is the rate of transience. If you were to look at that over a four-year period, you would see that all those employees may well change in that four-year period. I also understand that no new software will need to be purchased. *(Time expired.)*

Question put:

That the bill be agreed to in principle.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Dr Bourke
Ms Burch
Mr Corbell

Ms Fitzharris
Mr Gentleman
Mr Hinder
Mr Rattenbury

Mr Coe
Mr Doszpot
Mrs Dunne
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones

Ms Lawder
Mr Smyth
Mr Wall

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.19 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Planning—Brumbies lease variation

MR HANSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. On 6 January 2012 you signed the instrument to consider the application for approval of a lease variation for the old Brumbies site at Griffith. On 2 April 2013 the Labor government called in variation 307 to the territory plan and later you waived the lease variation for this development worth \$7.5 million. The purpose of waiving the lease variation was supposedly to provide a windfall for the Brumbies and for local rugby for community purposes. Minister, who is in receipt of the \$7.5 million of benefit that was intended for the Brumbies and local rugby?

MR BARR: The Brumbies and local rugby.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what safeguards did you put in place when you waived the LVC to make sure that the full \$7.5 million has benefited the Brumbies and local rugby, and not a third party?

MR BARR: The government partnered with the Brumbies and the University of Canberra to deliver a new facility, a headquarters for the Brumbies, at the University of Canberra. That facility is complete and operational and the Brumbies are based there.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, what conversations and meetings did you have with Mr David Lamont or his companies regarding this deal both before and after the LVC transactions occurred?

MR BARR: I had conversations with the Brumbies, through their then chief executive, Andrew Fagan, and their board chair, Sean Hammond, and the University of Canberra through their chancellor and vice-chancellor.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, what involvement did Mr Lamont or his companies have regarding the transaction and the \$7.5 million benefit?

MR BARR: In relation to the ACT government, none. In relation to the University of Canberra and/or the Brumbies, that is a matter you will need to raise with them.

Minister for Transport and Municipal Services—Manuka Oval redevelopment

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the minister for transport and education. Minister, before being briefed by your husband on the redevelopment proposal at Manuka Oval on 8 February, what specific steps did you take to ensure that you did not have a conflict of interest during the briefing?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. As has been put on the public record, as an MLA and now as a minister I have adhered to both the code of conduct for members of this place and now to the ministerial code of conduct. I sought advice upon my appointment to the Assembly and also to the ministry from the ACT Legislative Assembly Ethics and Integrity Adviser.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, who arranged the briefing?

MS FITZHARRIS: The briefing was offered from the consortium bringing forward the unsolicited proposal. It was arranged with my office.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why was a TAMS staff member involved in this briefing?

MS FITZHARRIS: It is routine for directorate officials to attend briefings with ministers.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, have you received any other briefings at which your husband was present about any other matters relating to territory developments?

MS FITZHARRIS: No, not in my ministerial capacity.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: I would like to acknowledge the presence in the chamber this afternoon of the Tuggeranong Probus Club. Welcome to your Assembly.

Questions without notice

Planning—Molonglo Valley

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, on 9 March in response to a notice of motion that I tabled regarding congestion problems at the Weston group centre, you indicated that “a planned commercial centre for the Molonglo Valley will contain a mixture of community, retail, commercial, office and residential uses of different densities”. Minister, given that the local centre site in Coombs sold over a year ago, when will a shopping centre serving residents of the Molonglo Valley finally open?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mrs Jones for her question. It is exciting to see the town grow, especially these new suburbs of Molonglo, Coombs and Wright. We do want to ensure that we provide the best opportunities for the people moving out to that area. In regard to the timing specifically on when that shopping centre site will go ahead, I will have to talk to my colleagues in LDA.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, have problems with the approval process for the development application for the Coombs local centre site exacerbated delays in the opening of such a centre?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have not been briefed on any details in regard to a DA for that particular site or any hold-up there, but I am happy to take the details of the question on notice and see if I can find out for you.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, pending the opening of a shopping centre in the Molonglo Valley, what has been done to alleviate the congestion pressures on nearby centres such as Cooleman Court at Weston Creek?

MR GENTLEMAN: Quite a bit actually. If you look at some of the work the government has done recently in Weston—Cooleman Court—there is much more parking available now, there are through roads now through to John Gorton Drive, to make sure we have more traffic flow and easier traffic flow from that area into the city. We will continue to do that. As you are aware, the government announced that we would do the Cotter Road extension as well which will, of course, alleviate traffic flow problems.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what action are you taking personally to resolve the issues with traffic congestion and parking capacity throughout Weston Creek?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have taken some direct actions in relation to that. We have expanded parking operations in Weston and we are looking at planning opportunities for developing the whole new Molonglo area to ensure that we have services for future residents of that area, which will ease, of course, the pressures on the Weston group centre as well.

Federal government—budget

MR HINDER: My question is for the Chief Minister in his capacity as Treasurer. Can the Chief Minister outline how recent federal Liberal government budgets have affected Canberra? And how has the ACT government responded?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Hinder for the question. It is pertinent on the day of the commonwealth budget to reflect on recent federal Liberal budgets and their impact on the territory.

Let us start with Tony Abbott's and Joe Hockey's infamous 2014 budget—

MADAM SPEAKER: Sit down, Mr Barr. Mr Barr, I have constantly reminded members, and you in particular, in this place, when referring to members of parliament, to refer to them by their titles—'the former Prime Minister', 'the former Treasurer', 'Mr Abbott' or 'Mr Hockey', but not 'Tony Abbott' and not 'Joe Hockey'. Mr Barr on the question.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker: the former Prime Minister and former Treasurer, both of whom have gone inside a parliamentary term because of their infamous 2014 budget. The federal Liberals have been nothing but bad news for Canberra and for Australia as a whole.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: Here we go. The peanut gallery, the muppets—there they are. There they are, Madam Speaker.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! I call the opposition to order. Mr Barr has the floor.

MR BARR: An in-depth analysis by the ABC showed the losers from that 2014 budget being, in no particular order, recipients of foreign aid, families, senior citizens, school kids, anyone who needed a doctor or a hospital, the public service, the unemployed, young people, university students, people with a disability, low income earners, Indigenous people, public broadcasting and the environment. That is some list of targets.

Here in Canberra the impact was significant. The cuts to staffing and the consolidation of agencies hit not only workers themselves and their households, but also the economy as a whole, affecting confidence and growth here in Canberra. In addition, commonwealth payments to the states were significantly reduced, and in some cases ceased altogether, further hindering economic growth. This neglected the rising pressures on state and territory governments due to population growth and ageing.

In light of this significant economic shock, the territory government stepped up its support for economic growth, to support jobs here in Canberra and to support businesses. Doing so was a sign of my government's values. We had a choice, Madam Speaker. We could have sat back and done nothing—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Hanson.

MR BARR: or just been a serial interjecting pest like the Leader of the Opposition. We could have done nothing. We could have been like Mr Hanson: we could have done nothing. But instead we stepped in and we acted.

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MR BARR: We could have left Canberrans to the mercy of the fiscal and social Darwinism that is promoted by Mrs Jones and her colleagues in the Liberal Party. We could have let people suffer. We could have let unemployment rise even more. We could have cut health funding—like the mantra of the Liberal Party. But we took the opposite path. We supported jobs. We kept people in work. We kept businesses ticking over. And we filled the gap left by cuts from the federal Liberals to our city's health system.

This policy approach has worked. Our economy is rebounding. Growth and confidence are on the up, as evidenced by our ranking in this week's state of the state —(*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hinder.

MR HINDER: Chief Minister, why has it been important for the ACT government to actively support the ACT economy in response to recent commonwealth budgets?

MR BARR: The commonwealth's cuts to the public service were, and remain, a significant economic shock to the territory. More than 3,000 jobs were directly cut by the Abbott government and that is a big blow to economic activity and confidence here in the local economy.

Not surprisingly, there was nothing in the way of a support or transition package from the federal Liberal Party, in acknowledgement of or recompense for the economic havoc they have been wreaking on our territory. Nobody suggested that there would be \$50 billion submarine contracts here, at great expense, or a steel sector bailout. As

such, the territory has had to make its own way. The federal Liberals made it very clear that we would be on our own. The Canberra Liberals stood should to shoulder with their federal colleagues

Meanwhile, on this side of the chamber, we accepted the challenge to boost growth and support our economy, and we are doing so to ensure that Canberra continues to grow and prosper and that we put people first, we put jobs first and we put this city first.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: Treasurer, what has been the direct impact on jobs in the territory as a result of the recent commonwealth budget and how has the ACT government responded?

MR BARR: The impact on jobs in the territory was significant. In the 2014-15 financial year more than 3½ thousand jobs were shed from the Australian public service here in Canberra. At the time of the 2014-15 budget the unemployment rate in Canberra was 3.9 per cent. After all of those cuts it rose to 5.1 per cent. As I have noted, our economy is now on the rebound and the unemployment rate has fallen back to 4.3 per cent, which is the lowest rate in the country.

My government's approach of jobs first, encouraging economic growth and supporting jobs growth in the territory is working, and it will always be this government's highest priority. That is why we responded to the commonwealth's cuts to jobs by continuing our significant infrastructure program, by helping local businesses to grow, to diversify and to create jobs through our comprehensive business development strategy and particularly supporting our higher education sector which is a key driver of employment and economic activity in the territory, as the shadow treasurer heard in spades last night at the farewell event for Steven Parker, the outgoing Vice Chancellor of the University of Canberra, who has left that institution, with the support of the territory government, in a very strong position and poised for significant growth in the future. This is a sector of our economy that employs nearly 17,000 Canberrans and contributes \$2.7 billion annually to our economy. Due to the enabling work of this government in recent times, the University of Canberra will go from strength to strength.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: Treasurer, what has been the direct impact on health funding in the territory as a result of recent commonwealth budgets? How again has the ACT government responded?

MR BARR: The impact of health funding cuts in recent Liberal budgets is one of the clearer signs of the contempt in which that party holds the public health system. In 2014 the commonwealth budget cut \$57 billion from health systems around the country. It was there in black and white as a savings measure that was trumpeted in the 2014 budget. The \$57 billion that was cut from health was part of the \$80 billion in cuts to schools and hospitals that the former prime minister and former treasurer presided over in that disastrous 2014 budget.

These cuts in the ACT led to a \$250 million shortfall in health funding over four years and more than \$600 million in the longer term. To add further to the injury here in the ACT, the ACT was the only jurisdiction to have a cut in health funding—an absolute cut in health funding—from the commonwealth between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

But, again, this government stepped up to ensure that funding was provided and that our hospitals did not descend into chaos. We met the funding gap to ensure that sick Canberrans did not suffer at a time when they needed the most care. What we have is a very clear contrast between the two parties on health, on education, on jobs and on the environment. On this federal budget day we will know very clearly where the two parties stand on issues that matter to Canberrans and to Australians.

The social Darwinism of those opposite, the hardline conservative positions of the Canberra Liberals, will once again come to the fore.

Trade unions—memorandum of understanding

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, were the tenderers for stage 1 of capital metro vetted by UnionsACT or an affiliated union under the memorandum of understanding?

MR CORBELL: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what part did Labor powerbrokers such as Dean Hall or Alex White play in the tender process for stage one of the capital metro project?

MR CORBELL: None.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what role did Unions ACT or any of their member unions have in this tender process?

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

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Were the tenderers, the two final tenderers, provided with the MOU and told that they would have to comply with any components of it?

MR CORBELL: I will take the question on notice.

Canberra Hospital—oxygen supply

MADAM SPEAKER: Questions without notice. Ms Lawder.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Questions without notice.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear Ms Lawder's question, Mr Hanson

MS LAWDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, on Sunday, 1 May 2016 were patients turned away from Canberra Hospital due to a lack of access to reticulated oxygen?

MR CORBELL: No, no patients were turned away for that reason.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, have incidents such as a lack of oxygen or other basic supplies occurred in the past six months?

MR CORBELL: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: What are you doing to make sure that basic supplies, including oxygen, are always available at the Canberra Hospital?

MR CORBELL: They are.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, can you check your records and come back to this place to confirm that no oxygen has been found in short supply that has led to patients either not being admitted or being turned away?

MR CORBELL: Yes.

Lake Burley Griffin—foreshore development

MR SMYTH: My question is to the minister for tourism and economic development. Minister, I refer to a report in the *Canberra Times* of 15 April this year that you had held meetings with major hotel developers in Hong Kong regarding sites on the Kingston Foreshore and the city to the lake precinct. Minister, what issues were raised with developers during these meetings and what commitments did you give at these meetings?

MR BARR: There may have been an error in that report in that those meetings took place in China and Singapore and these are sites that will be publicly available for auction sale through the Land Development Agency in coming months.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, did you hold discussions with Aquis about relocating the Canberra Casino to a site nearer to Lake Burley Griffin and with poker machines?

MR BARR: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what will you do to ensure that we have an open process for both the Kingston Foreshore and the city to the lake site?

MR BARR: Undertake the land release either through public auction or through an expression of interest process.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what actions will you take to avoid potential conflicts of interest regarding these sites?

MR BARR: Land release is undertaken by the Land Development Agency at arm's length from ministers.

Transport—light rail

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Municipal Services. Minister, the government has publically discussed the possibility for a Russell extension to capital metro. Recently the government announced that the ACT government would seek a mandate before committing to the city to Russell extension of capital metro. Minister, will you reveal the estimated construction cost of the city to Russell line before the next election, and also the operational cost of the project?

MR CORBELL: I will take the question as the Minister for Capital Metro. Madam Speaker, no.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, is it true that the reason stage 2 is not going ahead is because the commonwealth has not given approval or you have not come to an agreement with the commonwealth?

MR CORBELL: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, will you reveal the estimated financing costs of the Russell extension before the next election?

MR CORBELL: As the government is not proceeding with the project, no.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, why did it take you over a year to announce that you were seeking a mandate? Did you actively consider committing to the Russell extension before the election?

MR CORBELL: I think those opposite need a little history lesson. The government is not seeking a mandate for the Russell extension. The government will be proceeding to this election as we proceeded to the last election, which is with a proposal for stage 2 of light rail in Canberra. That will be for a project that the government determines as a result of the light rail network master planning work that my colleague Mr Gentleman is undertaking.

We will do exactly what we did at the last election. At the last election we went to the people of Canberra and we said, “We are committing to the development of stage one of light rail in Canberra from Gungahlin to the city, with construction to commence in 2016.” That was what we said at the last election, and we will adopt exactly the same approach at the next election.

Mr Wall interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, sit down. Mr Wall, withdraw.

Mr Wall: I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: Have you finished, Mr Corbell?

MR CORBELL: I have concluded my answer, Madam Speaker.

Roads—Majura Parkway

MS BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Municipal Services. Minister, last week the ACT and federal governments officially opened the Majura Parkway. Can you describe the benefits for the Canberra community that will come with the completion of this major work?

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank Ms Burch for the question.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Coe! I want to be able to hear Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: It certainly was wonderful to celebrate the official opening of the Majura Parkway, a great Labor infrastructure project that was made possible because federal and ACT Labor made a commitment to improve our city’s major transport and freight route.

While the Majura Parkway has been gradually opened in stages for use by the public since May 2015, the completion of the project and the final opening on 22 April 2016

means that the full benefits of this project can now be realised. In a national context, the Majura Parkway is now part of the national highway network and is an important freight route linking the Federal, Barton and Monaro highways.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you for interrupting, Mr Coe. Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Improved productivity for freight traffic is important—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, I warn you.

MS FITZHARRIS: for the national economy and by 2030 the Majura Parkway is forecast to carry around 40,000 vehicles a day, including up to 6,000 trucks. These trucks will now be able to take a direct pathway through Canberra.

In an ACT capital region context, the Majura Parkway provides improved access to the Canberra Airport and the developing transport hub. Locally, the Majura Parkway adds valuable additional capacity to the arterial road network in the vicinity of the airport precinct, as well as for residents in Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and everywhere in between.

Initially, when the first stage was opened in May 2015, some 20,000 vehicles used the road, enabling the existing Majura Road to operate as a service road for the airport precinct. Perhaps one of the most impressive benefits for the community is having travel times for all traffic using the Majura Parkway slashed by up to 20 minutes when compared to the previous routes via Majura Road. Delays at the busy intersections along Morshead Drive and Fairbairn Avenue will also be reduced, thanks to the grade separation of these roads and the Majura Parkway.

Cyclists will also benefit by having access to new on-road cycle lanes included as part of the Majura Parkway, as well as access to the new off-road shared path, which will also be used by pedestrians and by equestrians who agist horses in paddocks off Fairbairn Avenue. I was very pleased that the ACT government could commit an additional \$10 million for the off-road shared user path and a further \$7 million from the roads to recovery program for additional Federal Highway interchange works. These improvements mean more active travel options along this route running parallel to the Majura Parkway from the Federal Highway to Morshead Drive.

The Royal Military College No 1 Oval, one of the oldest ovals in Canberra, has also been upgraded as a result of the project. The oval had fallen into a state of disrepair in recent years, and during the construction phase of the parkway project had been used as a stockpile site. With the completion of the parkway, the oval has been restored to its former glory as a cricket ground. The scope of this restoration included building a new pavilion, levelling and laying a new field and wicket, provision of an irrigation system for future management of the oval, provision of a new white picket fence, and lighting, parking and associated landscaping.

The Majura Pines recreational area was impacted by the construction of the parkway and it has benefited from an upgrade, together with better and safer access and parking arrangements. The upgrade included constructed bike trails, a watering post, signage, informal rest areas and small jumps for horse riders.

Majura Parkway and the improved accessibility to the Majura valley and the airport will in itself attract new commercial and tourist opportunities. The opening of the international IKEA store in November last year is an example of a commercial decision being taken based on good road infrastructure being in place. Tourist destinations in the Majura valley, such as the Mount Majura winery and the Truffle Farm, are also experiencing improved access thanks to the parkway.

Finally, the improved capacity that the parkway provides to the local arterial road network will also result in fewer vehicles using residential streets in north Canberra. It is very pleasing to see the Majura Parkway opened for use by the public. *(Time expired.)*

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Burch.

MS BURCH: Minister, can you please outline the additional economic benefits created by the completion of this project and its vicinity to the airport and the recent announcement of international flights in and out of Canberra?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Burch for her supplementary. It is great, of course, to see those on this side of the chamber understand the synergies between investing in important infrastructure projects and opening up our economy.

While the Majura Parkway will improve access for the ACT and New South Wales region to the Canberra Airport, the Chief Minister's work in securing new international flights directly to Canberra from Singapore and Wellington provides improved opportunities for our local businesses to access these markets.

Produce from the region can now be transported to the airport more quickly through the improved road access and then flown directly to new overseas markets within a few hours. I know this is particularly welcomed by local producers, who can now access the lucrative Asian markets much more directly without the need to battle congestion around Sydney Airport and the curfew there that can cause delays.

This really does show that Canberra is a regional hub and that there is growing confidence in our local economy. We understand that infrastructure projects boost jobs and diversify our economy. We have had success in attracting international brands like QantasLink, IKEA, Singapore Airlines and Costco to Canberra. We continue to have success attracting international students to our higher education city.

The construction of better road access and direct international connections to new markets can only benefit the Canberra and capital region's economy.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, is it true that the BCR for Majura Parkway is four in contrast to 1.2 for light rail?

MS FITZHARRIS: I will come back to the Assembly with the BCR for the Majura Parkway.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Hinder.

MR HINDER: Minister, during the opening ceremony I noted that the Chief Minister mentioned the project had been completed ahead of schedule. Can you update the Assembly on the finalisation of the project?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Hinder for the supplementary. Yes, indeed, this successful project has been delivered ahead of schedule. When the ACT and federal governments first announced the shared funding for the \$288 million Majura Parkway project in July 2011, the completion date announced was June 2016.

The section of the Majura Parkway north of Fairbairn Avenue was opened early to the public in May 2015, and on 22 April 2016 the balance of the project was completed and opened to the public, two months ahead of the initial schedule. The southern section of the parkway was constructed in close proximity to busy roads and every effort was made to limit the impact of this while ensuring that the project was delivered ahead of time.

Over the three-year construction period, over one million hours of work was undertaken without any lost time due to injury. I am pleased that not only has the single largest investment in public roads in Canberra been completed and opened to the public but also that it was delivered ahead of the scheduled date of June 2016.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice Trade unions—memorandum of understanding

MR CORBELL: In question time today Mr Coe asked me a question about whether or not the MOU between the ACT government and UnionsACT was supplied to short-listed bidders for the capital metro project. I can advise Mr Coe that capital metro provided copies of the MOU to both short-listed bidders on 25 May last year. Further, capital metro explicitly advised bidders on 29 July last year that adherence to ACT government prequalification and certification arrangements, notably the ACT IRE strategy and work health and safety active certification policy, including the provision of an ethical suppliers declaration, would by themselves meet the ACT government's expectations, and no further or separate undertakings would be required. Further, at no stage—at no stage—were unions involved in any way in determining the procurement of this project.

Mr Hanson: It is intimidation. Intimidation and coercion; that is what it is.

Mr Barr: You know a lot about that. That's your core business.

MADAM SPEAKER: Withdraw, Mr Barr.

Mr Barr: I am sorry?

MADAM SPEAKER: Withdraw. Withdraw the assertion.

Mr Barr: I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

Answers to questions on notice

MR COE: Under 118A(a) I request an explanation regarding unanswered questions, of which there are numerous on the notice paper.

MADAM SPEAKER: You need the numbers.

MR COE: No 684 was a question to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. No 698 was to the Minister for Transport and Municipal Services, and there are numerous others. Another was from Ms Lawder, 699.

MADAM SPEAKER: You cannot ask about that.

MR COE: No 702 was to the Minister for Capital Metro.

Question No 684

MADAM SPEAKER: In relation to question on notice No 684, does the Minister for Planning and Land Management have an explanation for Mr Coe as to its lateness?

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, I understand that it is on the way. I will check the timing for it and report back to Mr Coe.

MADAM SPEAKER: I have to say that the standing order does not allow for "it's on its way" as an explanation for lateness. If you do not have an answer, say you do not have an answer.

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, the reason that it is late, in answer to Mr Coe, is that we are looking for the complete details on his question to ensure that the answer is full and answers his particular needs.

Question No 702

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Corbell, the Minister for Capital Metro, in relation to question 702 from Mr Coe.

MR CORBELL: I am advised that the answer to question on notice 702 is currently in my office. I regret the delay in responding to it. The reason is that I was attending a

meeting of attorneys-general in New Zealand last week and I have not been able to process the answer. However, I will ensure that it is provided to Mr Coe as soon as possible.

Question No 698

MR COE: Madam Speaker, I note that there are also a couple outstanding from the Minister for Transport and Municipal Services, of which one is from me, and that is No 698.

MADAM SPEAKER: I cannot ask the minister because she is not present.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General's Reports Nos.—

1/2016—Calvary Public Hospital Financial and Performance Reporting and Management, dated 8 April 2016.

2/2016—Maintenance of Public Housing, dated 14 April 2016.

Standing order 191—Amendments to the Workplace Privacy Amendment Bill 2016, dated 11 April 2016.

Executive contracts

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:

Andrew Taylor, dated 31 March 2016.

Bernadette Mitcherson, dated 23 March 2016.

Bernard Sheville, dated 11 April 2016.

Deborah Efthymiades, dated 31 March 2016.

Jodie Robinson, dated 12 April 2016.

Katrina Bracher, dated 22 March 2016.

Megan Brighton, dated 23 March 2016.

Short-term contracts:

Anna McKenzie, dated 1 and 4 April 2016.

Bernadette Mitcherson, dated 22 and 23 March 2016.

Calvin Robinson, dated 4 and 8 April 2016.

Conrad Barr, dated 22 March 2016.

David Matthews, dated 21 and 22 March 2016.

Donald Taylor, dated 23 March 2016.
Elizabeth Beattie, dated 23 March 2016.
Geoffrey Rutledge, dated 17 and 22 March 2016.
Joel Madden, dated 24 and 29 March 2016.
Kaye Yen, dated 31 March and 1 April 2016.
Louise Gilding, dated 23 March 2016.
Mark Kalleske, dated 29 and 30 March 2016.
Paul Rushton, dated 22 and 23 March 2016.
Samuel Engele, dated 21 and 22 March 2016.
Sophie Gray, dated 21 and 22 March 2016.
Therese Goodman, dated 12 April 2016.
Tracey Allen, dated 24 and 27 March 2016.
Yu-Lan Chan, dated 24 March 2016.

Contract variations:

Austin Kenney, dated 18 and 22 March 2016.
Craig Simmons, dated 18 and 22 March 2016.
David Matthews, dated 8 and 12 April 2016.
Joanne Garrisson, dated 31 March and 4 April 2016.
Meredith Whitten, dated 24 March 2016.
Philip Canham, dated 5 and 6 April 2016.
Rex O'Rourke, dated 24 and 29 March 2016.
Richard Baumgart, dated 24 and 29 March 2016.
Tracy Stewart, dated 5 and 6 April 2016.
Virginia Hayward, dated 18 and 22 March 2016.

Papers

Mr Barr presented the following papers:

Remuneration Tribunal Act, pursuant to subsection 12(2)—Determinations, together with statements for:

ACT Supreme Court Judicial Positions—Determination 5 of 2016, dated April 2016.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly—Determination 2 of 2016, dated April 2016.

Full-Time Statutory Office Holders—Determination 4 of 2016, dated April 2016.

Head of Service, Directors-General and Executives—Determination 3 of 2016, dated April 2016.

Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly—Determination 1 of 2016, dated April 2016.

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

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 21—*Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 5 of 2014: Capital Works Reporting*—Government response.

Auditor-General's Report No 5—Capital Works Reporting—Implementation Update on the recommendations, dated May 2016.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 22—*Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 1 of 2015: Debt Management*—Government response.

Memorandum of Understanding on Procurement of Works and Services by the ACT Government—Government response, including associated documents, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 6 April 2016.

Mr Gentleman presented the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 242(2)—Schedule—Leases granted for the period 1 January to 31 March 2016.

Public housing Paper and statement by minister

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): I present the following paper:

Affordable Housing Working Group—ACT Government submission, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 17 February 2016 concerning public housing.

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

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: I am pleased today to table the ACT government's submission to the commonwealth Affordable Housing Working Group. The government undertook to develop this submission in response to a resolution of the Assembly of 17 February 2016. We have since submitted this paper to the commonwealth and we welcome the national public debate that is now occurring around this issue.

Affordable housing is a challenge which is faced by all jurisdictions across Australia, and the need for a coordinated national response with government policies pulling in the same direction is clear. Our submission highlights the ACT government's extensive program of work to improve the supply of affordable housing and emphasises the importance and effectiveness of our social housing system in comparison to other jurisdictions.

Successive phases of the affordable housing action plan, first initiated in 2007, have accelerated the land release program and introduced 98 initiatives aimed at improving housing affordability for all Canberrans. The ACT government has been a leader in taxation and planning reform, particularly in phasing out stamp duty and reducing property taxes on properties at the lower end of the market, and has established affordable housing targets for all greenfield developments. The current third phase of the plan continues to improve rental affordability, focusing on households in the lowest two income quintiles.

I have spoken at length about the importance of the ACT's social housing system, which effectively prevents housing stress for many lower income households. I have also stressed the need for a clear and consistent commonwealth response, particularly their policies on affordability and funding intentions for housing and homelessness services. From the recent national meeting of housing and homelessness ministers, it is clear that this view is held across the state and territory governments.

The submission I have tabled today notes that the ACT government has recently established a senior officials group to lead housing policy development from a whole-of-government perspective. It will build on the good work that has been done so far, and further focus our efforts on improving the supply of affordable rental accommodation.

The ACT government is committed to addressing issues of housing affordability and is eager to explore new and innovative approaches to tackle this challenge. Our submission also encourages the commonwealth to engage further with options around key policy levers such as negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts, although I note the Prime Minister has since ruled these out if the coalition is re-elected.

In advocating a national response, we know that the prospects of achieving effective reform are better through coordinated and collaborative action. I again welcome the prominence of this issue in the national conversation at present, and I assure the Assembly that the ACT government will continue to work where we can to respond to the challenge of housing affordability. I commend the ACT government's submission to the Assembly and I am pleased to have tabled it today.

Paper

Mr Gentleman presented the following paper:

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act—Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Appointment 2016 (No. 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-34 (LR, 29 April 2016), together with its explanatory statement.

Ministerial code of conduct

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM SPEAKER: I have received letters from Ms Burch, Mr Hanson, Mrs Jones, 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 Wall be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of adhering to the ministerial code of conduct.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3.17): I am pleased to bring this matter of public importance to the Assembly today. The ministerial code of conduct underpins the integrity of each and every minister in this place who, in turn, represents the overall virtue of our parliament and our democracy. The integrity of ACT government ministers is being eroded on a daily basis through bad headline after bad headline, despite the Chief Minister's insistence that this is a renewed government.

Mr Barr is now struggling, struggling to paint a picture of an engaged, energised and renewed ACT Labor in the wake of instances and reminders of a tired old Labor government that has become incredibly arrogant. It is increasingly apparent that these are the hallmarks of a government that has hung on to power for too long.

As we read through the ministerial code of conduct, it is clear. The code of conduct clearly articulates its intent and states that ministers must apply the power and privileges of their offices solely in pursuit of the best interests of the people of the ACT. As we look at this in detail, point 3 of the code of conduct outlines the ethical principles required of ministers. These principles include virtues such as integrity, honesty, diligence, transparency, accountability, fairness, respect, responsibility and respect for the law and the administration of justice.

Each one of these virtues has been arguably compromised by ministers of this tired old Labor government. If we look at integrity, the code has outlined it as follows:

Ministers must not use their position or information gained in the performance of their duties to gain a direct or indirect advantage for themselves or their families or acquaintances that would not be available to the general public.

How does the memorandum of understanding between the ACT Labor government and UnionsACT not constitute a direct contradiction to this principle? In stark contrast, the MOU actually poses a direct disadvantage for many in the general public. In fact, anyone who is not approved or endorsed by the union movement is effectively locked out of any procurement contracts in this town.

To add insult to injury, this has been the case for over 12 years, all under a cloak of secrecy. We can also argue that the integrity of the Labor ministers opposite is compromised by the advantage gained by their known acquaintances by the existence of this MOU. These known acquaintances, namely, the union movement and most particularly the CFMEU, are quite literally an extended arm of the ACT Labor Party and the Labor government.

This flies in the face of not only the ministerial code of conduct but the expectation of Canberrans across the board, both private citizens and those within the business community. Small and medium family businesses owned in the ACT have been sold a pup. They have been led to believe that the processes that they see at the front end of procurement are actually what they get.

It must be pointed out that the virtue of honesty is also significantly compromised by the existence of an MOU between ACT Labor and the union movement. Peter Strong, the chairman of the Council of Small Business Australia, has written recently on the existence of this document and the government's failure to be transparent about its existence as being both dishonest and deceitful. In fact, the virtues of transparency, accountability, fairness, respect, responsibility and respect for the law and administration of justice can also be argued as having been disregarded by the Barr Labor government in light of the existence of this agreement.

Fairness is a key ethical principle and one that has been completely disregarded by ACT Labor throughout their time in government and their time in this place. Whether it is seen through the prism of ever-increasing rates, fees and charges on the average Canberra taxpayer and small business or the lack of fairness applied in the decision to build a tram, this principle has all but been ignored.

To illustrate, Madam Speaker, the tram project will only ever serve one very small percentage of the Canberra population, all the while expecting the rest of Canberra to pay for the privilege. We also see a lack of fairness in the neglect of Tuggeranong, my home electorate, in the lack of attention to the general amenity of Tuggeranong and the lack open investment in shopping centres, roads, playgrounds and general municipal services.

If we look at respect, another ethical principle required by ministers through the ministerial code of conduct, it is another virtue distinctly lacking when it comes to Canberra's ageing population. Instead, it seems disrespect is the order of the day according to the Chief Minister. During the recent state of the territory address Mr Barr failed to mention Canberra's senior population. Despite this address being heralded as a key statement about Canberra's future ambition and vision, older Canberrans did not rate a mention. From his attitude, it seems that senior Canberrans pose more of a hindrance to his grand vision than to being a help.

When it comes to the ethical principles of responsibility, many would argue that entering into a deal with the ACT Greens to form government was not a responsible course of action. In fact, this deal has compromised the people of Canberra as the government has wildly pursued the ideological whims of the lone Green in this place, disregarding the overwhelming view of voters at the last election.

There are many examples of a disregard for the ministerial code of conduct as it stands currently. In point 5(f) in relation to staff, ministers must abide by their moral and legal obligations as an employer when dealing with their staff. Ministers must make their staff aware of their ethical and administrative obligations. The question remains: was this applied in the case of Ms Burch's office and the provision of information garnered in the minister's office in relation to the CFMEU resulting in the resignation of a staff member also compromising others?

Point 5(g) notes that ministers must handle lobbying by businesses and other parties carefully to ensure their personal interests do not clash with or override their public duties. How has this principle been applied by Minister Fitzharris during her dealings

on the Manuka Oval bid, a bid that is being led by her husband as one of the senior lobbyists? To make matters worse, her involvement in this may well have started in her time as chief of staff in Mr Barr's office. How can anyone trust a minister who fails to identify that receiving a briefing from her husband in his role as a senior lobbyist is not a significant conflict of interest? This is a demonstration of a significant lack of judgement.

The important issue here is what kind of government will Mr Barr scrape together should the people of Canberra make the mistake of returning him to power again in October? The people of Canberra should not make this mistake. The Labor government Mr Barr leads is likely to be underpinned by the same old arrogance and the same old disregard for the ministerial code of conduct. The words may have changed, the faces may well change, but the way ACT Labor will operate, if given the opportunity to continue for another four years, will be the same.

The only way to see true renewal is a change of government. That renewal will occur only when the people of Canberra vote out a tired old government and instil their trust in the Canberra Liberals—a stark alternative to represent the views and the aspirations of all Canberrans, one that leaves no-one behind. We will be a government that appoints ministers who respect the responsibilities they have been given and a government that I earnestly hope will be able to lead Canberra come the October election. I hope to be part of it. It is the only way to well and truly overhaul the way government is operated in this city.

MR BARR (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Tourism and Events and Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.25): I am pleased to talk in this place this afternoon about good government, transparency and accountability, about governing in the public interest, because all of these things are at the heart of every Labor government. Our government has always taken ministerial responsibility and conduct with the seriousness that it deserves. It stands in contrast to those opposite who never, ever put such standards into practice.

The only time they seem to care about them is when they think that they can grubby someone up. We know this because it fell to this government to introduce a code of conduct that meant something. Those opposite liked the idea as window-dressing, but they never respected it enough to act like it meant anything to them. No wonder they indulged in some of the most mysterious uses of public funds and came up with the sweetest of sweetheart arrangements for their fellow travellers. It was this side of the chamber that took up the heavy task of restoring public trust in government decision-making from where those opposite had left it, weighed down under the crushing spread of appalling abuses of office by those opposite.

On this side of the chamber, we take the code seriously. I know those opposite think it is only important because they can use it to make unsubstantiated insinuations. On this side of the chamber, we know it is fundamental to making sure every decision we make is fair and equitable, that all commercial decisions represent best value for money for the territory and, just as importantly, Madam Speaker, the public knows that is how we make our decisions.

The code does not require inhuman perfection. What it does require of ministers is that if there a mistake made, they correct the public record at the earliest opportunity. That is what comes with the responsibility of decision-making. It is a responsibility everyone in my ministry takes seriously and is proud to do so. Correcting the record is not a breach of the code. It is in fact the code in action doing its job just as the ministers do theirs.

It has been this side of the chamber over the history of self-government that has worked hardest to improve public confidence in this place. It was under this government that the first Commissioner for Standards was appointed. The commissioner investigates complaints made against MLAs by members of the public, members of the public service and other MLAs. The commissioner acts independently of government and helps ACT citizens be comfortable that we, members in this place, are conducting their activities ethically.

It was under this government that the Ethics and Integrity Adviser was introduced to make sure that members can receive independent advice about ethical issues that they face in their job. I think everyone in this place recognises the difficulties that can occur. I think the adviser is especially useful for new members who may be adjusting to being in a role with public responsibility for the first time.

It was this government that extended the code of conduct to members' staff. By virtue of the trust we hold in them, and the nature of working in politics, it is important that staff understand their responsibility to the public, the proper handling of information, and their accountability to us, members of the Assembly, who are their employers.

Finally, it was this government that introduced the lobbyists register and code of conduct during this Assembly. These measures are living and changing ones. While they are fit for purpose today, they will adapt and change with the times to make sure that we keep the public's trust in the decisions of this place.

Accountability, transparency and good government are as central to Labor governments as they are anathema to those opposite. They have been at the heart of my government's decision-making and will be for every single day that I am the Chief Minister of the territory.

It is of course only the white shoe brigade, the party who promised to give their donors a tax break, that wants us go back to the bad old days of dodgy deals and taxpayer spending heaped on those in the know. I am sure the people of Canberra would be saddened, but certainly not surprised, to see those opposite yet again living down to everyone's expectation of them.

Being in government is about standing up for Canberra. It is about making serious decisions for our city's future and doing so in a way that is clear and transparent. It is a place for grown-ups, this place, Madam Speaker—not for dilettantes, not for people who think it is just another university debating club.

Today, a day when their colleagues will bring down a budget that confirms the gutting of education funding in this city, you would think they might finally have broken their deafening silence and had the courage to speak out, but no. Today, a day when their colleagues will bring down a budget confirming the gutting of health funding in this city, you would think they might finally have broken their deafening silence and had the courage to speak out. But, again, no.

Instead, they have decided yet again to insult the intelligence and memory of Canberrans. They have decided it is a good idea to come into this place and pretend that none of the ministerial disgraces of their time in government ever happened. They have decided that they can wash themselves clean of the stain of the grubbiest government in this country's history since Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

They seem to think that like small children who think they can turn invisible by clapping their hands and spinning around, all the grown-ups will just play along with their games of pretend. They all think that we will forget the times that they breached the Financial Management Act, the overnight loans, that we will all pretend that they never fled the scene of accidents before police arrived or that they moved amendments on private members' day that would benefit shareholdings owned in their own family.

Madam Speaker, the problem with behaving like that, like painting the grass green and assuming no-one would notice, is that it is not a funny game. It is not something that people forget. And they do not forget the history of the previous Liberal government in this place.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (3.33): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Mr Wall for bringing this matter of public importance before the Assembly today. Given the behaviour of this government, it is prudent to remind those opposite of their responsibilities under the ministerial code of conduct. The extraordinary speech that we all just heard from the Chief Minister goes directly to one of those points in the ministerial code of conduct about respect and not recklessly attacking the reputation of other people, even under parliamentary privilege, which he has just done.

Mr Rattenbury is laughing, because he thinks it is a big joke. He is laughing.

Mr Rattenbury: I am laughing at the hypocrisy, Mr Hanson, your absolute hypocrisy on this sort of topic.

MR HANSON: He is saying, "absolute hypocrisy". I think that that may be counter to the—

MADAM SPEAKER: It is not; do not worry. Move on.

MR HANSON: It is not? It is typical of Mr Rattenbury, though, to sit there and snidely interject and giggle away. It is a shame that he does not take this issue more seriously. The impact of his conduct, his behaviour and his ministerial conduct on the people of the ACT is no laughing matter.

We just heard a weird speech from the Chief Minister. To be frank, that is probably the best way to describe it. He was talking about university debating clubs, dilettantes, children clapping hands and people disappearing. It was a very odd speech. I am not sure who the staff member on training wheels is that wrote that in his office.

When people picture dilettantes, I think it is more Andrew Barr that they see rather than me or any of my members. Mr Barr is renowned for being stuck in his university days at ANU Young Labor debating the issues of the day rather than having grown up and taken on the mantle of Chief Minister. This is the problem when we have an individual who has done nothing with his life bar being a hack. He has been a factional hack, somebody who has gone to the university and spent his time in the ANU Young Labor club, come into the Assembly as an adviser and come straight in as a minister, without having the benefit of life experience, as, for example, Mr Wall has; he has run a small business. You end up with the sorts of speeches and behaviour that we have seen from Mr Barr.

There are a number of matters raised in the ministerial code of conduct that it is worth us reminding those opposite of. The first and foremost is integrity. I remind you, Madam Speaker, and those opposite, of the fact that these ministers who sit in this place spouting their integrity are the same people who receive millions of dollars into their coffers in the Labor Party from pokies. When this lot spout integrity, they are funded by, in some cases, the misery of others. They take their money from families. And that is money that is meant for the community. That is meant for the community.

What lack of integrity. Where, outside some tin-pot African dictatorship, would you see the dominant political party, the party of government, owning, regulating and then supporting their political activities by controlling the gambling assets in a town? Not only do they have their own gambling empire, but they are funded, as is Mr Rattenbury, by the proceeds of pokies that flow into the CFMEU. Mr Rattenbury, who spouts integrity as a minister, is the same person who leads a party that takes tens of thousands of dollars from the CFMEU that is funded by pokies. So there is integrity, I remind you, members.

In terms of transparency, we saw a recent example when we tried to get to the bottom of what happened in Ms Burch's office. We had the issue in Ms Burch's office that led to her demise as a minister. It became simply untenable. Her office got discovered passing information on to the CFMEU, the very same CFMEU that funds these people, the very same CFMEU that funds Labor and the Greens. Ms Burch was, through her office, funnelling information to them about police investigations. When we tried to find out what was going on, when we tried to uncover what were, in the words of Mr Corbell, serious issues and unprecedented issues that went beyond the police investigation, what did we see? It was shut down. There was no transparency. So in the matter of transparency, when it comes to covering their own tracks, we see a government and a minister from the Greens only too willing to be complicit.

I go to the issue of responsibility in the ministerial code of conduct, about using office responsibly and in the interest of the people of the ACT. There are two fundamental issues here. One is that of light rail and the other is the CFMEU and UnionsACT MOU.

In terms of light rail, it is fundamentally clear that this is not a project that stacks up in any sense—not as a transport project, not economically, and not in terms of providing benefit for our city in terms of the shape of our town centres. It is an unholy deal to try to keep the Greens in the tent. This is part of the stitch-up. Because this government was prepared to sign away hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, we now have a situation where the Greens minister is entirely complicit when it comes to matters such as the leaking of information to the CFMEU bearing all the details that should be provided to the community.

I know that Mr Wall has spoken at some length on this, but the MOU is not the end of our litigation of this issue. But what an extraordinary situation: people wanting to do business in this town have to deal with the unions and their demands if they want to do business. This has been well litigated, and it is an absolute outrage. Those opposite maybe cannot see it; maybe they just cannot see it. Maybe, after 15 years, they have been in government too long. Maybe they are too infected by the unions, as Jon Stanhope asserts. Or maybe they are just willing to go along with it because they know that is where they get their power and their money from—funded to them by the CFMEU.

When it comes to lobbying, again we have a situation where, through people in the Labor right faction, through various land deals in this town, or through people in the left faction, through the CFMEU, it increasingly seems as though, if you want to do business in this town, if you want to do business with the government, it is best to have some Labor mates in tow. You either call on the mates from the union or you call on the mates who are lobbyists. Mr Barr was talking about the white shoe brigade. The people he should look more closely at are the people that he associates with and who members of his cabinet associate with who are in the middle of many of the land deals in this town that have got this community outraged.

If we look at some of the deals that are being currently investigated, that are being looked at very closely by the community—if you look at the heart of a lot of these deals, look at who is getting the money, look at who is the beneficiary of a lot of government decisions—we know who we will find in the middle of them. We will find your Labor right faction mates or your CFMEU left faction mates. That is the way that this government is operating.

When it comes to ethical government, when it comes to the ministerial code of conduct, what I say is this—and it is not just me; let me tell you that it is not just the Liberals; read the comments in the paper; read the letters; talk to people in the community; it is not just the Canberra Liberals saying this—what people in this town see is a government that has been around too long, a government that is too complicit with its mates, a government that is starting to smell.

If you think that New South Wales Labor 2011 was bad, I would say: start to look at ACT Labor circa 2016; you see the same rot.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Education, Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs and Minister for Road Safety) (3.42): I am

pleased to have this opportunity to talk about the importance of adhering to the ministerial code of conduct. Of course, that code of conduct seeks that members and those who become ministers demonstrate the highest standards of personal and professional standards and behaviour, and that they act only in the interests of the people of the ACT and they act lawfully, with integrity, with probity, and with respect for others. They are the sort of standards you would expect to see in such a code of conduct. The code of conduct covers areas such as declaring personal and pecuniary interest, cabinet conventions, post-ministerial employment and conflicts of interest—again, the sort of content you would expect to see in that.

It is not dissimilar to the members code of conduct that covers all members in this place, including those who have not become ministers. The original 2005 version was refreshed in 2013 after a review by Stephen Skehill, who is the Assembly's ethics and integrity adviser. It now sets out a statement of the values and integrity that the members of this place should uphold. Again, I am sure all members have read them. I think that they are pretty clear. But it is very advantageous that we have the ethics and integrity adviser, because some issues arise where it is valuable to seek another opinion—an outside opinion, a very informed opinion. That is something that our ethics and integrity adviser brings—a dispassionate view and one of wisdom. It is something I know a good handful of members avail themselves of each year, and when we receive at least eight or nine new members next year, I would encourage those new members particularly to avail themselves of it. I think all of us, should we return in this place, would encourage the new members to make sure that they are aware of it, because it is a very good service to avail yourself of if you have any uncertainty.

We all have an expectation on us from the community that we are operating to the highest standards. There have been many examples over jurisdictions and countries where ministers and members have not behaved appropriately. That, unfortunately, tends to give politicians, in the broad sense of that word, a bad name. That is a shame, because many members do operate to the highest standards, but, unfortunately, there are those who, at times, let the broader cause of politics down in not maintaining those highest possible standards.

To enforce the code of conduct, we have brought forward the Commissioner for Standards. That has been a positive development in this Assembly. Previous to that, we have seen a circumstance where too often the politics has been the driver of how various instances have been judged. Having a Commissioner for Standards in place is a very good development. In this Assembly now, we have a pretty comprehensive framework of mechanisms to enable members to ensure that they get advice in the first instance and, where there is dispute over a member's conduct, look at it from a place that is considered to be relatively objective.

I hope that this gives the community assurance that there are a range of mechanisms in place here in the ACT to provide both advice in advance and the opportunity to follow matters up afterwards.

That said, certainly there is scope for further improvement. My colleagues nationally are pushing for a national independent commission against corruption; I think that is

something that would be very beneficial and would be a much better approach than the very politicised approach we are seeing to try to re-establish the Australian building and construction commission, a clearly politically motivated mechanism and something like an independent commission against corruption. It is actually about tackling corruption in all its forms, not just the politically motivated version that one political party might think is out there.

Mr Hanson, as he is wont to do, is sitting on that side of the chamber making the sorts of noises you would hear in a school classroom. But it is actually, if you are truly honest with yourself, the sort of approach, if you are honest and fair dinkum about this, that you would get behind, supporting that. It is a truly objective approach to dealing with the sorts of issues that unfortunately we see allegations of from time to time in this country.

I urge colleagues in this chamber to support their colleagues in the chamber up on the hill and support that initiative from the Greens. It is something that would benefit this country; that would take the politics out of some of those sorts of disputes and enable a fair assessment of them.

Certainly there are other mechanisms. As members know, I am currently working on revised freedom of information legislation. Again, that is designed to provide the sorts of mechanisms that can provide a level of scrutiny and a level of openness that allow members in this place to scrutinise others and also allow members of the public and members of the press to provide an enhanced level of scrutiny. There is always scope for trying to do these things better; I think we all learn as we go that there are ways to improve scrutiny in this place.

I am sure this will be a continued point of debate, but I welcome the opportunity to discuss these mechanisms today. I think that all of us might reflect at different times on how things can be done better. I am always open to discussions with members in this place as to how we might improve the current mechanisms that we have in place where we think that there are shortcomings.

Discussion concluded.

Planning, Building and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Debate resumed from 7 April 2016, on motion by **Mr Gentleman**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (3.49): This bill forms an important part of maintaining and enhancing the standard of ACT building, environment and planning law. It enables legislative amendments and repeals to be made that would generally not be of sufficient importance to justify separate legislation. This is the 10th planning, building and environment legislation amendment bill, and this bill proposes a raft of minor policy, technical and editorial amendments to a range of legislation. I propose to touch on a few of the ones I think are the more substantive policy issues to discuss in the chamber today.

The first are amendments to the Environment Protection Act and the Environment Protection Regulation. The Environment Protection Act contains provisions that regulate the sale of solid fuel-burning equipment such as wood and coal heaters. In December 2015 new Australian standards relating to emissions and efficiency ratings for new wood heaters were endorsed by commonwealth, state and territory environment ministers. This endorsement through the national clean air agreement paved the way for the national adoption of measures to reduce air pollution, including the adoption of new emissions and efficiency standards for new wood heaters. The amendments now require compliance with national standards which set out maximum emissions and minimum efficiency limits, testing requirements and rules for marking of information on equipment.

I applaud the finalisation of the wood heater standards into legislation in the ACT. Wood smoke has been a concern to many Canberra residents for decades. In the colder months the ACT is affected by pollution from wood heaters largely because of our climate and our topography, with the Tuggeranong valley particularly impacted. Particulate matter from wood heaters is one of our worst local air pollutants. It can dramatically reduce our air quality and severely affect people with respiratory issues. The ACT Greens have sought to resolve this issue through increased wood heater standards, and that is why we included it in the 2012 parliamentary agreement, calling for improved emissions and efficiency standards for wood heaters in order to improve local health and air quality.

We now finally have legislation in place in the ACT which installs a strong, mandatory efficiency standard for wood heaters. The emission standard refers to how much pollution is put into the air from the wood heater; the efficiency standard refers to how much fuel you need to operate your wood heater. The two standards work together to reduce air pollution emitted from wood heaters and allow users to better understand the bigger picture in terms of both their consumption of fuel and the impact on the environment. Of course, that wood fuel comes from a range of sources, and there are certainly documented issues where it is being removed from areas of nature reserve, areas where the timber lying on the ground provides an important habitat for insects in various forms. So it is not just the smoke pollution that is a problem.

Overall, for my mind, though—and not to diminish the many other worthy amendments in this legislation—this is the one that I think that is of most significance to our community, particularly for those who suffer from respiratory conditions. I have been approached by many people over the years who have expressed to me both their concern and their frustration about this issue, and I think this is a great outcome. It certainly represents an achievement of another item in the parliamentary agreement but, most importantly, it will benefit the members of our community who are vulnerable to the inversion effect we get here in Canberra in winter. We share that particular feature with places like Tamworth and Launceston, and I am pleased that this has gone through at a national level as well because people in those communities will also benefit. I am particularly pleased about this element of the bill.

Turning to some other elements, the Environment Protection Regulation is also being amended relating to agvet chemical products. The Environment Protection Regulation defines “agvet chemical products” as either an agricultural or veterinary chemical product under the agvet code of the ACT. An amendment is included in relation to storing and using agvet chemical products authorised by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, or the APVMA.

The amendment introduces an exception to allow for the use of agvet chemicals in a responsible manner by a veterinary surgeon in a way that is not specifically authorised by the authority. This practice is sometimes referred to as an off-label use. Off-label use of agvet chemical products is a common and widely accepted practice in the veterinary profession. As the provision was previously worded, vets who used an agvet chemical product in an off-label manner without the specific authorisation of the authority were inadvertently committing an offence.

This amendment establishes an exception to the offence provision. No offence is committed if the person is a vet or another person following instructions issued by a vet and used the product in the course of treating an animal under the vet’s care. The practice of veterinary surgeons continues to be governed by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 2015, the Veterinary Surgeons Regulation 2015 and other legislation. The Veterinary Surgeons Regulation establishes the required standard of practice for veterinary surgeons.

This amendment has been developed in consultation with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. I think we can see this exception is framed in a way that is overseen by the national regulator and that vets continue to operate within quite a significant framework of oversight. This is quite an appropriate amendment in that context.

There are some minor policy amendments to the Heritage Act. The Heritage Act, of course, contains heritage significance criteria. There is a specific criterion in relation to places or objects that have the potential to contribute to an understanding of the ACT’s cultural or natural history. In contrast to all of the other criteria, this criterion does not contain a threshold indicator. This means that places or objects considered for registration under this criterion are assessed against a much lower threshold compared with other criteria.

This amendment provides a threshold indicator so that only places or objects of territory level significance or higher are registered on the ACT Heritage Register. This is in line with the other criteria and ensures a consistent approach to the threshold for heritage significance in the territory.

Minor policy amendments are also made which detail the process for making an urgent provisional registration application. The Heritage Act provides no substantive grounds on which the council can assess whether the application must be accepted. These amendments require the applicant to explain the circumstances that require an urgent provisional registration decision to be made. This means the council will not be required to accept an urgent application unless it is satisfied that an urgent provisional

registration decision is required because it is likely that heritage significance will be diminished if a decision is not made. However, the council may accept an urgent application if it believes that the application is reasonable.

There are also minor policy amendments to the Nature Conservation Act in this bill. The act allows the minister to declare a native species to be a controlled native species if satisfied that it is having an unacceptable impact on an environmental, economic or social asset. As it is often difficult to define social or economic impacts in terms of assets, an amendment removes the word “asset” and instead requires consideration of environmental, economic or social “impacts”. This obviously allows for a broader consideration of environmental, economic or social impacts rather than being limited simply to assessing impacts on assets.

Another amendment allows a declaration to be made where a species is likely to have an unacceptable impact. As the provision is currently drafted, a declaration can only be made where unacceptable impact has occurred. Management measures are therefore reacting to damage caused, restricting the ability to make a declaration where a species is likely to have an impact but where damage has not yet occurred. This is clearly unsatisfactory and limits preventive management measures from being taken. Again, that is a welcome amendment to the act.

There are also a number of minor technical and editorial amendments to the act that I will not go into in detail. Members, no doubt, read the explanatory statement and are aware of those. Overall, in light of those comments, the Greens will be supporting this bill today as I believe it continues to make improvements to a number of important acts in the territory.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (3.58): The opposition will be supporting the Planning, Building and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The bill makes minor amendments to planning, building and environment legislation. Many of the amendments fix unintended consequences of the current legislation or clarify uncertain provisions.

The bill amends the Architects Act 2004 to allow the architects board to delegate power to renew or refuse to renew a person’s registration. The registrar of the architects board will be able to complete the renewal process where it is straightforward. In all other cases, the board will still have to make a decision.

The bill amends the Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009 to allow the minister to cancel, suspend or withdraw an authorisation for a nominating activity. The act currently contemplates an authorisation being cancelled, suspended or withdrawn but does not actually provide the power to do so.

The bill includes several amendments to the Environment Protection Act 1997 and the Environment Protection Regulation 2005. The bill updates the emission and efficiency standards for wood heaters. The new standards bring the ACT requirements into line with the standards in the 2015 national clean air agreement. The limits will be made stricter under provisions that will come into force on 1 September 2019. At this point I note that the opposition supports the removal of dirty wood heaters but we oppose

any restrictions on allowing home owners to install this more efficient form of heating. Well-maintained and ventilated wood heaters can provide highly efficient heating and we should not be seeking to make it harder to install them.

The bill also amends the Environment Protection Regulation 2005 to allow off-label use of agvet chemicals by a vet or another person following the vet's instructions to treat an animal under the vet's care.

The bill includes a number of amendments to the Heritage Act 2004, which are the result of the 12-month review of amendments made in 2014. The bill amends the heritage significance criteria to include the word "important". The inclusion of "important" means there is a clear threshold for registering places or objects with the potential to yield information. Places or objects—mainly archaeological sites—must have the potential to yield important information. This will ensure that only places or objects of territory level significance or higher are registered on the ACT Heritage Register.

The bill inserts criteria for the council to assess whether an application for urgent provisional registration should be accepted. The criteria include the council being satisfied that the significance of a place or object is likely to be diminished or damaged. If the council determines that an application should not be considered urgently, then the application will continue through the usual process.

The bill sets out information to be included in a notice of decision to not provisionally register a heritage place or object. It also expands access to restricted information about heritage places or objects and allows the Heritage Council to give a heritage direction to the custodian of an object and not just the owner. Giving a direction to the custodian of an object increases the protection for objects, given that protected objects are not always in the possession of their owners.

The bill allows the Heritage Council to extend the consultation period for a heritage registration decision. The current legislation provides a four-week period of public consultation with no power to extend this consultation period. The amendments will allow the Heritage Council to extend the consultation by giving public notice.

The bill clarifies the consultation requirements to ensure that all comments are received in writing. This makes it clear that oral comments are not taken to be comments for the sake of the Heritage Act. Apparently there have been cases where people have made oral comments during the consultation period and expected those comments to be included as official submissions. This could lead to problems because people who make submissions must be notified of decisions and also receive review rights. If they are not deemed to have made a submission, they are not given these rights.

The bill amends the Nature Conservation Act 2014 and the Environment Protection Regulation 2005 in relation to controlled native species. The bill allows the minister to declare a native species to be a controlled native species if the species is having an unacceptable environmental, economic or social impact. The minister may also make a declaration in the case where the species is likely to have an unacceptable impact.

The bill also amends the consultation requirements for a draft controlled native species management plan to only require consultation with lessees who are directly affected by the management plan. The current provisions in the act require consultation with all parties affected by the management plan. In the case where a management plan covers the whole of the territory, under the current rules the Conservator of Flora and Fauna would be required to consult with every lessee in the territory. The intention of the consultation is to consult with parties that will be obliged to do or not do something under the plan. Other individuals can still take part in the consultation.

The bill also amends the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014 to include criteria for granting an operating certificate to an unlicensed regulated utility.

In conclusion, the opposition supports this bill today. We also note the significant amount of work that has obviously gone into this bill by directorate officials. We believe it makes straightforward changes that will improve the operation of planning, building and environment legislation in the territory.

MR HINDER (Ginninderra) (4.04): I rise to speak in support of the Planning, Building and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I will leave it to Minister Gentleman to talk about the principal amendments in the bill. I would like to discuss some of the policy and technical amendments made by this bill. The amendments I will speak about involve changes to the Architects Act 2004, the Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009 and the Heritage Act 2004.

The amendment to the Architects Act is a minor policy change that inserts a new section 69A. The amendment in clause 5 of the bill empowers the architects board to delegate to the registrar the power to renew or refuse registrations. This power is only able to be delegated for decisions to renew registrations where the renewal is straightforward. For example, the registrar can make a decision to renew a registration where no complaints have been received and no disciplinary action has been taken against the applicant. The Architects Act will continue to require an appropriate assessment of registration applications, but will allow for the efficient processing of straightforward applications.

The bill also makes a minor policy amendment to the Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act, specifically provisions relating to authorising a nominating authority. Under the act an authorised nominating authority is responsible for appointing an adjudicator to hear disputes about construction account payments. Under section 32 of the act the minister must have regard to whether an applicant to become an authorised nominating authority has, in the preceding 12 months, had an authorisation cancelled, suspended or withdrawn, in deciding whether an applicant is suitable.

However, the act does not currently contain a provision for an authorisation to actually be cancelled, suspended or withdrawn. Clause 6 of the bill inserts a new section 33A that gives the minister the power to suspend, cancel or withdraw a

nominating authority's authorisation. New section 33A also sets out the grounds on which the minister may cancel or suspend, and the relevant matters that must be considered.

I would also like to discuss some of the amendments to the Heritage Act contained in the bill. Various sections of the Heritage Act refer to members of the public making comments to the Heritage Council during public consultation periods. The council is required to consider those comments. As currently drafted, the provisions potentially allow for comments from the public to be in both written and oral form. Receiving oral comments presents issues in accurately recording the content of the comments and having proof of them being made.

A person who has made formal comments during a public consultation process may also become an interested person for the purposes of the Heritage Act. This means that they may be required to be notified of decisions and may have certain ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal merits review rights.

The amendments in clauses 45 and 46 of the bill will require all comments made to the council during public consultations to be in writing. Reports on the outcome of public consultation processes will need to identify, and respond to, issues raised in the written comments. These amendments will clarify any ambiguity as to the form that consultation comments need to be in and is consistent with the approach to receiving comments during public consultations under the Planning and Development Act. This change is not anticipated to disadvantage any person engaging through the public consultation process, and the Heritage Council will assist those who are unable to make a comment in writing by, for example, taking a statement from that person.

A final technical amendment to the Heritage Act that I would like to discuss is made by clause 41 of the bill. Clause 41 inserts a new section 118B into the Heritage Act. This new section will allow the Heritage Council to request contact information for lessees from the commissioner for revenue. Under various sections of the Heritage Act, the council is required to notify particular persons, for example, of decisions made by the council. In the case of a heritage precinct, this can often involve a large number of people. The council is subject to strict statutory time frames in which it must notify relevant persons and therefore needs readily available and up-to-date contact information for all lessees.

New section 118B is an equivalent provision to section 395B of the Planning and Development Act. This ensures consistency in the process of requesting information and minimises the administrative burden placed on the commissioner for revenue. The new section will allow the council to request and obtain contact information from the commissioner relating to all leases in the ACT once every three months. The council must not use any information provided by the commissioner about a lessee, other than for giving notice to the lessee or taking action which affects the lessee. Further, as a public sector agency, the Heritage Council is bound by the Information Privacy Act 2014 in relation to the use and disclosure of any personal information that the council receives.

In summary, the bill proposes a number of minor policy, technical and editorial amendments to acts and regulations, as an omnibus bill should. I suggest to members that the amendments make good practical sense. This bill demonstrates the government's commitment to effective and responsible use of the omnibus bill process to ensure that ACT legislation is agile and responsive to changed circumstances. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (4.11), in reply: I thank members for their contributions and their support for this important bill. The bill is a prime example of the ACT government's commitment to ensuring that its legislation remains up to date, agile and adaptive to change in societal trends and best practice administration.

The PABELAB process provides an efficient avenue to make a number of necessary minor amendments to environmental and planning legislation in a single bill. The bill makes minor policy, technical and editorial amendments to acts in the Planning and Land Management portfolio, as well as the Environment and Climate Change portfolio.

In the planning portfolio the bill amends the Architects Act 2004, the Building and Construction Industry (Security of Payment) Act 2009, the Electricity Safety Act 1971, the Heritage Act 2004, the Planning and Development Act 2007 and the Planning and Development Regulation.

In the Environment and Climate Change portfolio, the bill amends the Environment Protection Act 1997, the Environment Protection Regulation 2005, the Nature Conservation Act 2014, the Utilities Act 2000, the Utilities (Electricity Transmission) Regulation 2006—which will be repealed—and the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014. The bill also amends the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011.

While the bill contains only minor amendments, I propose to discuss a number of the more significant amendments contained in the bill. When I introduced the bill into the Assembly in April, I spoke about a number of important amendments relating to environmental protection, nature conservation and heritage. Today I would like to recap some of those, and also talk about some of the other important elements in the bill.

When introducing the bill, I spoke in detail about clause 22, which amends section 55 of the Environment Protection Regulation, controlling the use of agvet chemicals. The amendment provides an exception to an offence against this section where the person is a vet, or acting on instructions from a vet, and acts in the course of treating an animal under the vet's care. The amendment is necessary to allow vets and their customers to treat animals in a safe way and according to accepted industry practice.

I also spoke in detail about changes to the Nature Conservation Act concerning the power of the minister to declare a controlled native species, and the consultation process on a subsequent draft controlled native species management plan. The

amendments in clauses 49 and 50 of the bill will allow for a species to be declared a controlled native species where it is likely to have an unacceptable environmental, social or economic impact. This will allow for preventive measures to occur under a management plan, rather than having to be in response to damage already suffered, as was previously the case. The amendment also removes the reference to damage to assets, as it is difficult to assess environmental, social and economic impacts in terms of assets.

I would also like to recap the significant suite of amendments in the bill aimed at improving the territory's air quality by adopting updated Australian standards for new solid fuel-burning equipment, such as wood heaters, in territory legislation. The ACT government's efforts to improve the territory's air quality are furthered by this bill, with the adoption of new Australian standards into territory law. Specifically, the Environment Protection Act and the Environment Protection Regulation are amended to ensure that new wood heaters sold in the ACT meet Australian standards for energy efficiency and emissions.

The amendments in clauses 9 to 21 give effect to the national clean air agreement, endorsed by national environment ministers on 15 December last year. The current regulations only impose limits on emissions from wood heaters but do not include requirements for energy efficiency.

The amendments in this bill adopt new energy efficiency requirements into territory law and also impose emissions limits in line with Australian standards. The new efficiency limits, which commence with this act, will require all new wood heaters sold in the ACT to have an energy efficiency of not less than 55 per cent. This limit will be further amended on 1 September 2019 to require greater efficiency, of not less than 60 per cent.

The emissions limits also commence with the act and prescribe the maximum particulate emission factor for an appliance, which replicates the current Australian standard that has previously been adopted in ACT law. These limits will be amended on 1 September 2019 to require reduced maximum emissions from wood heaters. Supporting amendments are also made to ensure that new wood heaters for sale in the ACT are appropriately marked, that they do in fact comply with the relevant Australian standards and that false statements or tampering with information marked on the equipment is prohibited.

These amendments are an important measure to improve the ACT's air quality and improve environmental outcomes. Also, they only apply to the sale of new wood heaters, so that owners of existing heaters are not affected by these changes.

I would now like to discuss some important changes to the Heritage Act that improve the operation of the act and provide the council with more flexibility in their registration and consultation processes. Clauses 26, 27, 32 and 33 amend public consultation processes under the Heritage Act. Specifically, these amendments introduce a new power for the Heritage Council to extend a public consultation period under the act. Currently, sections 26, 37 and 46 of the Heritage Act require public consultation for the making of heritage guidelines, the registration of a place or object and proposals to cancel a registration.

The amendments I have just mentioned introduce a simple process for the council to extend the consultation period if they feel it is necessary. It is envisioned that the council would use this power where a consultation process is likely to generate major public interest and the standard four-week process is not considered long enough, or where a number of interested parties have been identified late in the process, and an extension is considered necessary to allow them the opportunity to comment.

The council is required to directly notify interested persons of decisions made under the Heritage Act relating to the making of heritage guidelines and registration decisions. This notice must include an invitation to make comments during the relevant public consultation period. The council can now extend the consultation period by giving public notice of the extension on an ACT government website and by directly contacting key stakeholders where that is feasible and notifying the extension notice on the ACT legislation register. In practice, the initial invitation to make comment will include a statement that the council has the power to extend the consultation period and that information on an extension can be found on the ACT government's public notices website. This will ensure that the process is transparent and the public is made well aware of any extension to the consultation period.

Another important amendment to the Heritage Act is a necessary expansion of the Heritage Council's ability to give a heritage direction. The amendment in clause 39 of the bill relates to the council's ability to issue a heritage direction to do, or not do, something to conserve an object. As section 62 of the Heritage Act is currently drafted, a direction can only be given to the owner of an object. As heritage objects are often lent by the owner to another person or group, they are often in the custody or responsibility of someone other than the owner. The amendment will allow for a direction to be given to the custodian of the object, as well as the existing power to give a direction to the owner, to ensure that the person who has possession of the object is taking necessary measures to ensure the conservation of the heritage object. The amendment is consistent with how heritage directions for places can be issued, with a direction able to be given to the owner, or occupier, of the place.

The final amendment to the Heritage Act that I would like to discuss is the process for applying for an urgent provisional registration decision. Clauses 28 and 29 of the bill amend section 30 of the Heritage Act. These amendments introduce a requirement for the applicant to explain the circumstances that require an urgent provisional registration to be made. The council is then given discretion to accept or reject the application based on whether it determines that the application is urgent. The council must consider whether the place or object is likely to have heritage significance and whether there is a risk to that heritage significance if a decision is not made.

This amendment will allow the council to make urgent decisions as the need arises, and not to be forced to consider a non-urgent application if the need does not arise. This gives the council more control over its workload to be able to better plan its assessment process and set out its own priorities. An application for an urgent provisional registration decision that is rejected will be assessed in the normal course of events.

I have highlighted a number of the key amendments in this bill by way of example. There are a number of other amendments of a minor policy nature which my colleagues have outlined. In summary, I think it is apparent that this bill has fulfilled its purpose in ensuring that ACT legislation remains agile, responsive to changing circumstances and up to date. 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.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Project independence Ricky Stuart Foundation

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (4.22): I rise briefly to speak on this government's commitment to disability inclusion. On 20 April this year I had the great privilege of attending the planting day for project independence. Project independence is a unique and innovative program that provides independence and home ownership to young people with intellectual disability. The mission statement for project independence is:

To provide a place of safety for residents to grow their independence both financially and socially with guidance and support whilst living within a sustainable, safe and caring community.

When I was Minister for Disability, I worked closely through the inception and the delivery of this project, and I am looking forward to seeing the first residents move into their homes in Harrison and Latham.

The project independence planting day at Harrison brought project independence closer to the day when the first residents will move in. I met there teams from Bunnings who transformed those newly constructed houses by planting trees, shrubs and plants around the properties, and I was fortunate enough to meet some of the remarkable young people who will be moving in there.

I have been very pleased to have introduced the national disability insurance scheme to the ACT, and project independence builds upon this government's commitment to and record of delivering the NDIS policy outcomes as well as building upon achievements that have been delivered under future directions towards challenge 2014.

Canberra is a city full of opportunities, yet we see that many people with a disability do not enjoy the full benefits that this city has to offer, especially when it comes to accessing affordable housing and home ownership. We know that there are points of evidence outlined in the Productivity Commission's inquiry into disability care and support that show unacceptable inequality for those with a disability. That is something that I cannot accept or tolerate and I will do all I can to change it. It is something that this government does not stand for or accept, and we will continue to work with our community to improve outcomes for people with a disability.

I have been involved in project independence since its beginning. It will strive to address housing issues through campaigns designed to change attitudes towards those with a disability and provide equity for those people, allowing them to live independently with the support of the community.

I would like to put on record and extend my gratitude to the ACT Australian of the Year, Mr Glenn Keys, and the project independence board for their contribution in making this possible for Canberra.

I would also like to make note of another fantastic initiative in Canberra, the Ricky Stuart Foundation, and the building of the Ricky Stuart respite home. Again, it is a project that I was fortunate enough to be involved in from its very beginning. The Ricky Stuart house caters for young children with a disability, including autism. The first Ricky Stuart house at Chifley is the first of many planned respite centres across Canberra built by the Ricky Stuart Foundation.

The centre at Chifley is a state-of-the-art facility that comprises six bedrooms with two wheelchair access and modified bathrooms to help young children with physical disability. There is a kitchen, a dining room, a sensory room and absolutely fabulous playrooms. If people in this place have not visited, I encourage you to go along and see what the Ricky Stuart Foundation has put there.

The respite centres aim to provide a caring and comfortable environment where carers are allowed to enjoy a short-term break to recharge. They also provide a great environment for the children, allowing them to spend time with other children and to socialise in a wonderful new environment. This is a great initiative, and I would like to extend my gratitude to Ricky Stuart, his family, his daughter Emma, and the Ricky Stuart Foundation supporters for what they have done in this community for children with a disability, their families and their carers.

Support for these initiatives is an example of the government's commitment to disability inclusion, and I will continue to emphasise this commitment for the ACT as we move through to the future. There is much more work to do, but those two great initiatives—the Ricky Stuart house and project independence—are grand additions to our society.

Dr John Kaye

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.26): It is with great sadness that I rise today on behalf of all ACT Greens to mark the overnight death of my New South Wales Greens

colleague Dr John Kaye. Very sadly, Dr Kaye was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer in only February this year.

Before his career in politics, John taught and researched electrical engineering at the University of New South Wales, where he specialised in sustainable energy and greenhouse issues. John was elected to the New South Wales upper house in March 2007, where his portfolios included education, energy, consumer affairs, water, and racing and gaming. During this nine-year period as an MLC, he worked with all parties to secure the best possible outcomes for a fairer New South Wales.

John Kaye was known within the Greens for being a tireless champion of public education, leading the national debate on education funding with an unflinching commitment to TAFE and public schools.

John's achievements in the New South Wales parliament include securing a ban on political donations from the alcohol, tobacco and gambling industries and securing a cap on donations to individual parties and candidates, making the New South Wales campaign funding laws the most comprehensive in the country.

Even while battling cancer, John was campaigning hard to save the steel industry of New South Wales, working closely with unions to save the blast furnace at Port Kembla and to save over 4,000 jobs in the Illawarra region. His passion for saving the Australian steel industry was well known and respected by all sides.

John was a passionate anti-cruelty campaigner and one of the loudest voices against greyhound racing in New South Wales. He was also a key agitator on egg labelling issues, working hard behind the scenes on the issue of national hen stocking density labelling for eggs.

One of John's proudest moments was defeating the environmentally damaging and expensive Tillegra dam proposal, which would have destroyed vast tracts of prime agricultural land in the Hunter Valley. The Tillegra dam fight brought together John's core interests of water sustainability, the environment and economic fairness. He was a formidable campaigner and advocate on these issues, as well as taking action to prevent damaging climate change, a cause to which he devoted so much of his life.

I would like to briefly quote from John's maiden speech from 2007. He said:

... politics is much more than just parliament; it is about how people think of themselves and their community and the possibilities for making life much better. Creating a real democracy is about engaging everyone in determining the future. It is about making sure that wealth and cultural resources do not buy power over those who have much less of each.

I think there is a lesson in these words for each of us. John was always focused on his passions, even when falling ill. He refused to feel sorry for himself. When he was hospitalised recently, Premier Mike Baird rang John to ask if he could assist in any way, to which John reportedly replied, "Yeah, mate. You can stop gutting TAFE."

I have heard stories from our campaign manager, Maiy Azize, who worked with him on the Greens TAFE campaign. I was blown away by his commitment to TAFE. He could tell stories for hours about laid-off workers who turned to TAFE to re-skill, retrain and find a second chance. His despair at what was happening to TAFE and public education in Australia was genuine and obvious to everyone who heard him speak about it.

It cannot be denied that his personal style grated with some, but even his opponents respected his prodigious work ethic, his attention to policy detail, his sincerity and his passion for the things he cared about. Possibly one of the best examples of that was during the filibuster against public sector wage reforms in the New South Wales parliament. He spoke for over five hours about the economic priorities of the major parties and the impact of government policy on working people.

John always championed outsiders: laid-off workers, disadvantaged students, and Aboriginal people. He was politically radical to the core. He loved to call himself the “last remaining” social democrat. I particularly loved Bob Brown’s words about him this morning. Bob said he was a “champion of public education, pursuer of the corrupt, friend of the poor and dispossessed”.

John will be sorely missed by all sides of politics in New South Wales and across the country. He was a hero of the Australian Greens and an inspiration to many. My thoughts are with John’s partner, Lynne; his sister, Dina; his brothers, Andrew and Stephen; and their families. And my thoughts are also with my New South Wales Greens colleagues, who will sorely miss John and his great contribution to New South Wales politics.

Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services—English language program

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) (4.31): Madam Deputy Speaker, it was a great pleasure for me to attend the 20-year anniversary celebration of the English language program run by Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services, MARSS, last week. This is a free English class which has helped thousands of migrants and refugees to gain skills that give them the opportunity to connect with Australians and assist them to find work and education opportunities.

In addition to this, MARSS runs the ACT home tutor program for those who are unable to attend English classes. I was pleased to announce that the ACT government will continue to provide \$15,000 to expand on this program. Volunteer tutors provide one-on-one English tuition in the client’s home which is tailored to their individual needs to help them to overcome learning barriers. On meeting one of the participants at the program, it was clear to me that this program was more than just about learning the English language: this was a real opportunity for these people to be able to find different ways to be more included in our community, whether it was finding the local shops, getting on the bus, getting their kids to school or sport, or connecting up with different community organisations to support them.

This was evident by the tutors who attended the celebration, who are important social contacts for the migrants and refugees and connect them with the community in all these different ways, helping them with the different things that we all take for granted that are part of our culture but that are a very new culture for refugees and migrants in our community.

One of the participants in the program whom I met was Ayan, who had been a refugee from Sudan who had experienced some pretty tough times coming to Australia and calling Australia her home. What was particularly pleasing was that later that evening, after I had the privilege of introducing Gillian Triggs to a packed and overflowing audience at the ANU at Llewellyn Hall, Ayan was there with her teenage son to meet Gillian Triggs and to be part of the real Canberra that was there listening to Gillian Triggs's story after she had spoken out about her treatment by the federal government earlier that week in the *Saturday Paper*. It was a massive audience, and it was certainly heart-warming to see so many Canberrans who are ready to welcome refugees and migrants into our community.

Philippine-Australian Association Ms Perlita Swinbank

MR COE (Ginninderra) (4.34): I rise today to talk about the trivia night organised by Gawad Kalinga Australia and the Philippine-Australian Association of the ACT and Monaro Region, held last month at the Canberra Bridge Club in Deakin. I had the honour of being the quiz master for the event.

Translated into English, "gawad kalinga" means to give care. A Philippine-based movement, Gawad Kalinga aims to end poverty by first restoring the dignity of the poor. GK began with a simple desire to give care and leave no-one behind, and its mission is to end poverty for five million families by 2024.

The Canberra branch of Gawad Kalinga is working to support two programs: Kusina ng Kalinga, a program for feeding disadvantaged children in the public schools across the Philippines, and the SipaG football program, a program that seeks to promote values formation and youth empowerment through physical activity, games and sports such as soccer.

Attended by over 100 very enthusiastic people at 17 tables, the entertaining night raised \$2,500 for the programs I have just mentioned. It was a great night with a serious purpose, and I congratulate all those who participated, particularly those on the winning tables.

Australia's relationship with the Philippines is one of our longest standing bilateral relationships. We have shared interests and values, supported by strong people-to-people links, for many years. Australia is home to over 250,000 people of Filipino heritage, with over 10,000 Filipino students enrolled in Australian universities and vocational institutions. Two-way trade was almost \$4 billion as of 2015 and has the potential to grow to benefit both countries.

This year, total Australian official development assistance to the Philippines will be an estimated \$83 million, representing about 0.3 per cent of the Philippines government's annual revenue of over \$US42.5 billion and overseas remittances of \$US28.5 billion. According to the website of DFAT, Australia's economic partnership with the Philippines will focus on all elements of our trade, investment and aid initiatives—working together to promote growth.

However, local events such as the one held recently also play a vital part in building and sustaining our relationship with the Philippines. I would once again like to thank all those who attended last weekend's event to support this very important work and the great work done by GK and PAA. In particular, I would like to extend my thanks to Sally Barber, Chris Mills and George Lemon. I wish them all the best in their continuing efforts to support those in need, to raise awareness in Australia and to foster Australia's ongoing bilateral relationship with the Philippines.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would also like to inform the Assembly of the very sad passing of Perlita Swinbank, a former president of the Filipino Community Council of the ACT. She passed away late last week, and I will have more to say about her wonderful contribution to Australia and to Canberra, and about her family, at a later date.

PhotoAccess

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.37): I would like to take this opportunity today to acknowledge the work of PhotoAccess at the Manuka Arts Centre. It recently had an exhibition that was a sensory experience by award-winning Sydney-based artist Kate Disher-Quill. The exhibition was called "Right hear, right now." It provided an insight into what it is like to be deaf or to live with a hearing loss. The artist's work comes from personal experience as she was first diagnosed with hearing loss at three years of age. She realised only at the age of 10 after getting her first pair of hearing aids that she in fact felt different. She denied the idea and for years refused to wear her hearing aids and hated the idea that she had a disability.

She has become a gifted artist. This exhibition was a rare insight into people that Kate has met who experience deafness in a multitude of ways. They shared their perspectives and provided a rare view into their own experiences, breaking down the barriers around perceptions of deafness.

Kate Disher-Quill spent a year on this project. She interviewed a range of people whose portraits and biographies make up the exhibition. Some of the photos are in black and white; some are in colour. There are varying sizes. What they do is examine the individual experience of deafness and how the subjects interact with their world and vice versa.

I would like to congratulate the board of PhotoAccess for putting on this great exhibition, including Mr Mark Blumer, the chair; Mr Adam Luckhurst; Mr Brian Rope, deputy chair; Mr Don McLeod; Glenn Pure, the secretary; Ms Kate Murphy; Ms Margaret O'Shea, the treasurer; Ms Anne O'Hehir; advisers Mr Gilbert Herrada,

Ms Honor Luckhurst, Mr Paul Livingston and Ms Helen McFadden; and the staff, director Mrs Janice Falsone; program manager Mrs Thea McGrath; administrator Kate Luke; and education officer Mr Robert Agostino.

I also congratulate the tutors at PhotoAccess: Mr Robert Agostino, Ms Laila Kazak, Mr Andrew Burke, Mr Andrew Morgan, Mr Joe Cali, Mr Bill Moseley, Mr Stephen Corey, Ms Belinda Pratten, Mr Sean Davey, Mr James Shapowloff, Ms Jane Duong, Det Voges, Mr Miguel Gallagher, Dr Les Walkling and their intern Emily Ianno.

Finally, it was also great to catch up on the night of the opening with Drisana Levitzke-Gray and reflect on her achievements. Many of you would know that Drisana was the Young Australian of the Year in 2015 and is continuing to make great inroads with her work in advocating for the human rights of deaf people, raising awareness about Auslan and the rights of deaf children in Australia to access Auslan from birth.

Drisana is the fifth generation in her family to be born deaf. She became the first deaf Auslan user to fulfil her civic duty as a juror. Drisana continues to encourage others to accept diversity and inspires the deaf community through her promotion and positive image of deafness, which says loudly and proudly that it is okay to be deaf.

There are many advocates here in the ACT deaf community as well. I would like to thank them for their ongoing tireless advocacy for greater communication access for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and, as community advocates, encouraging people to understand what it is like to be deaf or to work with deaf people. Thank you, once again, to Kate Disher-Quill for her exhibition and to PhotoAccess.

John James Village

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (4.41): I rise to speak about the John James Village, which is now under construction at Garran. I met with Phil Greenwood the chief executive officer and Andrew Blencowe late last week to find out where it was at. They have kindly provided an update, which I said I would provide to the Assembly.

Members, you are going to get another bit of paper in your in trays. The John James Foundation has provided 17 sets of documents containing a complete update of the whole project. It is worth having because what they are doing is a great thing. I will read these words about John James village.

I am pleased to provide an update on progress with an outstanding development in Canberra that will be of great benefit to many Canberrans and those from surrounding districts as they face a very tough time in their lives. The Leukaemia Foundation Australia has long provided a valuable service to people undergoing treatment for leukaemia and other blood disorders. They currently operate out of a rented house in Isaacs, with the staff using the garage as an office.

Due to increases in service demand, the Leukaemia Foundation needed more short-term accommodation for people undergoing treatment and their carers and families. They faced a long period of fundraising to get a new facility underway. The

John James Foundation stepped in and has fully funded the building of John James Village on a land parcel in Garran provided by the ACT government through the direct sales process.

This purpose-built facility with six fully self-contained apartments, a recreation building and an administration building will be home for people undergoing treatment, and their family and carers, for as long as they need support during their treatment at no cost to the patient or their family.

The John James Foundation is a not-for-profit—or more correctly we should say a profit for purpose—independent medical charity that provides a range of programs, funding and assistance to the people of Canberra and beyond. The John James Foundation supports medical education and volunteer medical services in remote localities, amongst other charitable programs.

The foundation's work is made possible by the generous support provided by the 150 specialist medical practitioners who are the foundation's members. John James Village is being built on land donated by the ACT government in Garran. Thank you ACT government. Work is now underway on the \$7 million project due for completion in August this year—not that far away. The John James Foundation made a commitment to ensure all trades and services were locally sourced, as the facility is designed by local people for local people.

It is worth reading a list of the major sponsors—as they are called, our valued contributors—at the time of publication. Jackson Architecture, of course, did the architecture. Project Coordination is running the project. Lifecycle, Point Project Management, ACT Land Development Agency, Wilde and Woollard, J J Richards and Sons, HDM Metal, Caroma, Billi, ATF Services, AustBrokers Canberra, Dellow Excavations, Certified Building Solutions, RBA, Clarke & Di Pauli Surveyors, Hanson Heidelberg Cement Group, Harris Hobbs Landscapes, Harvey Norman Commercial Division, Steve Patrick Electrical, Clayton Utz and Moraschi Roofing. As you can see, they are notable local firms in the main who are, again, contributing to their community.

The foundation is delighted to have appointed the construction management expertise of Project Coordination Australia, Darryl Jackson Alastair Swayn Architects and RPS Project Management to construct the village. Project Coordination managing director, Mr Paul Murphy, has enthusiastically garnered the support of local trades and services to contribute in excess of \$250,000 towards the project, an incredible effort indeed. Well done, Paul! All stakeholders involved in the project have been inspired to deliver their highest quality work to ensure that their legacy is etched into such an innovative, purpose built, community-based project.

While the John James Foundation has fully funded the building project, support is being sought for sponsorship of various parts of the village, its fittings, furnishing and landscaping. Differing levels of sponsorship will be formally recognised in signage on a recognition wall within the administration facility and throughout the village grounds.

I commend the John James Foundation for their initiative and encourage my colleagues to view progress at the village website jjvillage.org.au or to ask the John James Foundation for more details about this inspirational project now nearing completion.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.46pm.