



Debates

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Thursday, 14 September 2017

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Thursday, 14 September 2017

The Assembly met at 10 am.

(Quorum formed.)

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms Burch) took the chair and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Paper

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.03), by leave: I present the following paper:

Petition—out of order

Petition which does not conform with the standing orders—Pill testing—
Mr Rattenbury (540 signatures).

I am pleased to table in the Assembly today a petition from a total of 1,034 Canberrans who are calling for a government-supported pill testing trial in the ACT and seek leave to make a few comments in relation to the petition.

Leave granted.

MR RATTENBURY: As I just noted, the petition calls for an evidence-based approach to drug law reform by supporting a government-supported pill testing trial here in the ACT. With more than 1,000 Canberrans signing it, I think this is a significant contribution to this public debate.

Public health organisations and experts have long told us that there is overwhelming evidence to support pill testing as an effective harm minimisation measure which can keep young people safe. I acknowledge that this is a complex issue, but with evidence from experts and the health and law enforcement sectors on side there is no reason to delay this important harm minimisation approach.

The reality is that most drug takers are unaware of the origin and chemical make-up of what they put into their body. For example, the MDMA content in an ecstasy tablet can vary widely. Even more concerning is that many pills contain a range of substances from tranquilisers to amphetamines, meaning that many users are effectively playing Russian roulette every time they take something.

Pill testing is already routine at festivals in several countries, with successful results. In Austria two-thirds of drug users who are informed by a government-funded pill testing service of potential toxic harms decided not to consume their drugs and told their friends not to either. In Australia 76 per cent of participants in a hypothetical study reported they would not take a pill with unknown substances in it.

Pill testing also provides public data for public health or law enforcement purposes, as well as an opportunity to reach a population of users that would otherwise be unlikely to engage support services. At the moment, health and law enforcement authorities in Canberra know little or nothing about the presence of harmful drugs available at any particular time in the ACT. We do not have a coherent, real-time, early warning system about what drugs are circulating in the community, but the data collected through a pill testing trial could help fill this gap.

This is an issue the Greens have consistently advocated for over recent years, in the face of significant opposition, but we will always advocate for policies supported by the evidence. This is an area where we must listen to those experts who have been on the front line and are calling for a different approach. This is best articulated in the Canberra declaration on illicit drugs, which was released last year. It says:

We call personal illicit drug use what it is, a health issue, not a criminal issue. Regardless of what we may think about this issue, some Australians, mostly younger Australians, take drugs.

Whether in the pursuit of a good time, as a result of peer pressure, or to ease pain and hardship, drug use will continue in our communities.

The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre reported that Australian governments spent approximately \$1.6 billion in 2009-10 on illicit drugs. Of this spending, \$1 billion or 64 per cent went on law enforcement, 22 per cent on treatment, 10 per cent on prevention, and two per cent on harm reduction.

Despite the overwhelming bias in funding towards law enforcement, or perhaps because of it, we continue to see deaths, overdoses, accidents, illness and addiction in our communities.

A new approach is needed.

That Canberra declaration was signed by a range of eminent experts, community organisations and academics from around Australia, but in particular the Canberra declaration recognises that pill testing presents as a potentially valuable option for reducing harm at public events and calls on governments to enable trials to be implemented as a matter of priority. It is clear that a pill testing trial has strong support from health and drug addiction experts.

I understand that over recent months Minister Fitzharris has been engaging with stakeholders in ACT Health, ACT Policing and across the community to consider regulatory, legislative and other issues associated with a pill testing trial, and I thank her for undertaking that work. We know that the law and order approach to drug use is not working, and people are getting sick and dying because of it. Already this year we know of at least three young people who have died in Melbourne from drug overdoses and 20 who have been hospitalised. We need to act to make sure that we do everything we can to prevent these harms occurring here in the ACT.

The Greens are strongly committed to an evidence-based and health-focused approach to drug law reform, ensuring that Canberra's young people can make informed

choices and stay safe. The Greens support the introduction of a pill testing trial in the ACT because it is the best way to put the health and safety of young people in our community first. As is clear in the petition I am tabling today, there is significant support for a pill testing trial across the Canberra community. The ACT has a strong track record of underpinning drug policy with evidence, and as a progressive jurisdiction we have an opportunity to lead the way on pill testing and influence other states and territories to follow suit.

I thank and congratulate all those people who have signed this petition. It is important that Canberrans who feel passionately about this issue can take action to have their voices heard and ensure that this Assembly knows that there is strong community support for a pill testing trial in the ACT.

Multicultural framework 2015-2020—implementation and outcomes

Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (10.09): I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide the Assembly with an update on actions implemented and outcomes achieved under the ACT multicultural framework 2015-2020 for the previous 12 months.

The ACT multicultural framework sets out the three key objectives in relation to Canberra's multicultural communities. They are: (1) accessible and responsive services; (2) citizenship, participation and cohesion; and (3) capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity.

The core premise of the framework is building and strengthening social participation and community connection. The ACT is currently home to more than 400,000 people. More than half of us have at least one parent born overseas, and almost a quarter live in a household where a non-English language is spoken at home. Multiculturalism is an integral component of our vibrant community life. It is who we are.

Against this backdrop the previous government established the multicultural framework, with concrete actions to deliver on its objectives. In 2016-17 directorates continued to pursue these actions to ensure that people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities are able to fully participate in the opportunities our city has to offer.

Under the first objective of the multicultural framework—ensuring accessible and responsive services—the government is delivering programs to ensure that communities who face access and equity challenges can effectively access government services to enable their full participation in the life of our city.

An example of this is the ACT government's election commitment to establish an online venue booking system to enable community groups, including those from the

multicultural community, to utilise existing government facilities across the ACT for community events. Funding has been made available by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and, while it has taken somewhat longer than originally envisaged, the system is scheduled to be completed in late 2017.

Related to this, the Community Services Directorate has been working with the Education Directorate and Active Canberra to identify opportunities to improve access to ACT government schools outside school hours. Many sporting and community groups will benefit from structural and security upgrades to facilitate increased access.

For many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, accessing government services can be difficult. At the same time, the same people may be most in need of support due to the impact of issues such as forced displacement, language barriers, poverty and discrimination. The ACT government is working hard to ensure that information and advice about essential services and programs is readily accessible for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. This includes supporting the translation of information into a range of languages.

In 2016-17 the government funded the ACT Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services—MARSS—to translate a domestic violence referral brochure into five community languages. At the same time the ACT Health Directorate reprinted the plain English guide “Using Health Services in the ACT” and translated health service fact sheets on breast screening, cervical cancer screening, public health advice and the dangers of death cap mushrooms in the ACT into nine languages.

To further achieve the multicultural framework’s first objective—accessible and responsive services—Access Canberra is being actively promoted as the one-stop shop for members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities to access information on government services and opportunities. Through Access Canberra, the ACT government has promoted information on a range of programs supporting women, youth, people with disability and people experiencing mental illness. We are now looking at ways to make Access Canberra’s website more accessible in languages other than English.

Under the second objective—enhancing citizenship, participation and cohesion—the ACT government continues to work to build a connected community where everyone is respected, valued and included. Community sports engagement programs are a particularly popular engagement mechanism for newly arrived communities. In 2016-17 CSD supported Active Canberra to host the annual Global Cricket Challenge. A total of 154 children participated, with a support crowd of 400 people at the Reid oval. The majority of participants were from Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi backgrounds.

In June I was pleased to attend the National Caneball Championships and the Refugee World Cup soccer event, both hosted by Multicultural Youth Services ACT—MYS. At both events, MYS sought to increase opportunities for women to participate, highlighting the important role of the community in promoting engagement through sport. Additionally, through the annual multicultural grants program, community

groups can apply for grants to support sporting events aimed at fostering community engagement and participation.

As proposed in the framework, ACT government directorates have been developing detailed plans to address the unique needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. While this work is ongoing, an important example is the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's work to review community infrastructure in the context of urban renewal. A core component of this work is to ensure that community facilities are accessible and appropriate to the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The government appreciates the opportunity to work collaboratively with multicultural community leaders, supporting and encouraging them to disseminate information to their communities. To facilitate this, in 2016 CSD worked with the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate to develop the online multicultural directory. The directory is now firmly established and operating on the CSD website.

The directory helps multicultural community organisations to connect with other organisations with complementary goals, to build stronger working relationships and, importantly, to serve as a virtual conduit to inform other Canberrans of what is happening across the ACT in terms of events, activities and other initiatives. To date, over 123 community organisations have registered and established their online presence using the online multicultural directory. CSD also facilitates the distribution of a weekly multicultural e-news bulletin to the Canberra community. Multicultural community leaders provide information on cultural events and programs for inclusion in the bulletin, which is delivered to over 6,000 people.

Under the third objective—capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity—the ACT government actively promotes and supports cultural diversity by celebrating and commemorating a range of significant multicultural events. In recent months we celebrated Ramadan in the City, enjoyed the World Curry Festival and marked World Refugee Week, to name a few. In February we held one of Canberra's most iconic events, the National Multicultural Festival, and prior to that we celebrated Diwali and the Lunar New Year. I am sure that all members of this place are aware just how full the multicultural calendar is, demonstrating the breadth of diversity in our city and the enthusiasm of so many communities for sharing their culture.

Cultural diversity brings with it many benefits and opportunities. To ensure that we are a city of opportunity for all, we also need to address the unique needs of people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Poor English language skills and limited employment opportunities are key drivers for social exclusion. We need to ensure that new arrivals to Canberra are supported to become job ready by assisting them to improve their English language proficiency and access workplace training and employment placements.

This year the ACT government is commencing delivery of an election commitment to provide \$1.4 million over four years to support new migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to improve their English language skills and to provide workforce

participation support through a new job brokering service. This commitment builds on existing initiatives and previous pilots.

In particular, the ACT government's ongoing work experience support program—WESP—is worth celebrating. In 2016-17 it enabled 30 people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to improve their workplace skills and undertake work experience in an ACT government directorate. On completion of their work experience, participants receive a nationally recognised certificate II in business from the Canberra Institute of Technology.

The achievements made so far against the multicultural framework are significant. While we have progressed well, there are three actions under the 2015-16 action plan that are still in progress and will be completed over the coming months.

The online register for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds interested in serving on ACT boards and committees will be combined with the ACT women's register to become a single online diversity register by the end of 2017. The ACT languages policy is currently being revised to reflect good policy and practice regarding the use of interpreters, multilingual staff and translated material from other states and territories and to ensure consistency across jurisdictions. The updated policy is expected by the end of 2017.

Finally, while the online multicultural directory is operational, the development of an online calendar has required further consultation across government to assess the feasibility of including government facilities and school halls that may be available for use by multicultural community groups. Funding has been committed for the online calendar, with development commencing by the end of 2017, once the online venue booking system I mentioned earlier has been established.

In addition to sharing the progress made under the ACT multicultural framework, I would like to share with members an update on two related initiatives that further enhance and strengthen the ACT government's engagement with the multicultural community. It gave me great pleasure yesterday to announce the appointment of multicultural community and representative members to the new ACT Multicultural Advisory Council, a commitment from the parliamentary agreement.

The 15-member council has been appointed for a period of three years from 1 September 2017 and consists of 10 community members and five representative members. The members will ensure that the voices and aspirations of different sectors of the multicultural community are heard. The council will provide members of Canberra's culturally and linguistically diverse communities with the opportunity to take a leading role in consultation and advocacy efforts on issues that affect their communities.

The council will assist with the implementation of the ACT multicultural framework and convene a multicultural summit in 2018, delivering on another parliamentary agreement commitment. The summit will inform the ongoing commitment by the ACT government to multiculturalism.

The second initiative is the establishment of a cross-government multicultural framework implementation group. The implementation group has met four times to plan and discuss the progress of actions under the framework. The collective work undertaken by this implementation group is showing positive results, with collaborative work across directorates on a number of projects and initiatives to more effectively meet the needs of Canberrans from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Cultural diversity is indeed a highly valued aspect of our life in the nation's capital. The ACT multicultural framework 2015-2020 serves to build, strengthen and enhance multiculturalism in the ACT community. There is a lot happening in our multicultural city and I look forward to updating the Assembly on further outcomes achieved under the ACT multicultural framework in the future. I present the following paper:

ACT Multicultural Framework 2015-2020—Implementation and outcomes (First Action Plan 2015-2018)—Second update—Ministerial statement, 14 September 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Firearms and Prohibited Weapons Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

Mr Gentleman, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.22): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The bill makes several significant amendments to legislation related to firearms and weapons. This bill has been developed following recommendations made by several stakeholders, including the Firearms Consultative Committee, ACT Policing, the Rural Landholders Association and firearms manufacturers located in the ACT. Like me, these stakeholders share a strong interest in ensuring that the operation of firearms and prohibited weapons legislation remains relevant and workable. And, like me, these stakeholders share an interest in ensuring that firearms and prohibited weapons legislation upholds the underlying principle that firearms possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety.

Our firearms legislation strikes a balance between respecting the principle of ensuring public safety and the interests of licensed and legitimate firearms users. The government acknowledges that the overwhelming majority of firearms users are law-abiding citizens. There are many valid uses of firearms in the community, including target shooting, pest animal management and primary production. These activities allow shooters to make a valuable contribution to the community and the economy.

The amendments in this bill reinforce the underlying principle of community safety from firearms crime in several important ways, while allowing for better administration of the legislation and greater access to firearms for legitimate users under specified circumstances.

Some of the amendments in the bill that contribute to the overarching aim for public safety include: greater storage requirements for firearms for category A and B licence holders who possess more than 10 firearms—these licensees will now be required to store their weapons in a metal, brick or concrete safe; a prohibition on the possession of credit card knives or other bladed weapons that are disguised to look like innocuous items—credit card knives have already been banned in other Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales; a prohibition on centre-fire rifle magazines with a capacity of more than 10 rounds; and greater protection of criminal intelligence or security sensitive information used by the Firearms Registrar to inform decisions about licences. This will protect information that could prejudice a criminal investigation, identify a confidential source of information or endanger a person's life or physical safety.

The bill also aims to provide more clarity for firearms users. The amendments make it clear to firearms owners what their responsibilities are in the ACT for possessing and storing firearms. The bill also allows greater access to firearms and prohibited articles in two instances: firstly, by firearms instructors to ensure that they can better demonstrate the proper and safe use of firearms to their students. Currently, the Firearms Act 1996 only authorises an instructor to possess and use firearms which are licensed by them or their employing club. The bill will allow an instructor to temporarily possess and use a firearm belonging to another person to demonstrate the use of the firearm to the student.

Secondly, the bill authorises the possession and use of suppressors, also called silencers, under strict circumstances. These include for conservation officers and veterinary surgeons to euthanise injured fauna such as native animals or livestock that have been hit by a car. The use of suppressors in these instances is important for environmental reasons as suppressors reduce the noise emitted from the firing of a firearm, causing less distress to an animal population and less noise pollution. Both these examples of greater access to firearms and otherwise prohibited articles have strict controls in place to ensure that they will not be misused.

The bill also contains provisions to make it easier for ACT firearms licensees to store their weapons in New South Wales, if that is where they work. The Firearms Act 1996 currently provides that a licensee must store each registered firearm held under the

licence at the registered premises in the ACT. Some ACT licensees request to store their firearms at a New South Wales address. This includes, for example, ACT residents who are employed on a rural property in New South Wales and who currently have to transport their firearm over the border each day. The Firearms Registrar currently has no power to approve an application to store a firearm at an interstate place of work.

The bill amends the Firearms Act 1996 to give the registrar the ability to allow people to store their firearms in New South Wales, making storage and transport requirements easier for these Canberra residents. The Firearms Act 1996 of New South Wales already has a mechanism to allow ACT licence holders to possess and use firearms in New South Wales under its mutual recognition provisions. These provisions include giving the New South Wales Police Force the power to inspect and to prosecute breaches of firearms storage requirements.

The bill also makes several minor and technical amendments to the wording in the Firearms Act 1996 and regulation and the Prohibited Weapons Act 1996 to ensure consistency across the ACT statute book. Firearms reform should be an inclusive process and one that fosters sharing, understanding and respect for the interests of licensed firearms owners, while still maintaining the public's confidence in strictly controlling access to firearms.

It is for this reason that I asked the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to undertake targeted consultation during the development of this bill. As well as the stakeholders who advanced their ideas for the bill, the ACT government has consulted widely on the amendments with other members of the firearms community such as licensed shooting range operators, martial arts clubs and justice stakeholders, including the Director of Public Prosecutions, the ACT Bar Association and the ACT Law Society. I thank all stakeholders who contributed to the development of the bill and who provided comments on it.

As I have previously said, the amendments in this bill reinforce the underlying principle that supports Australia's regulation of firearms, and that is: firearms possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety. This government is committed to building safer communities in Canberra and the amendments in this bill greatly contribute to this commitment. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mrs Jones**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Nature Conservation (Minor Public Works) Amendment Bill 2017

Mr Gentleman, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.31): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Nature Conservation (Minor Public Works) Amendment Bill 2017 to the Assembly. This bill amends the Nature Conservation Act 2014, the Planning and Development Act 2007 and the Planning and Development Regulation 2008. The purpose of the bill is to streamline the development assessment process for minor public works undertaken by the territory in the ACT's reserves. The bill is a red-tape reduction measure that removes regulatory barriers for efficient work practices. While administrative benefits will be gained from the new process, the bill ensures that important environmental safeguards are maintained and significant environmental impacts are prevented.

The key element of this bill is the introduction of the power for the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to approve a code of practice for undertaking minor public works in reserves. Where minor public works in reserves comply with the code of practice, they will be removed from the impact track development assessment process and will be exempt from requiring development approval under the Planning and Development Act. The introduction of the code of practice and the incorporation of it into the Planning and Development Act processes will reduce the administration costs in undertaking these works while maintaining appropriate environmental oversight.

It is important to note that this bill is a change to processes rather than a change to assessing environmental impacts. Rather than having the conservator assessing every minor works proposal on a case-by-case basis, the code will allow the conservator to pre-determine certain standards, practices and conditions that can be met to ensure that works will not have significant environmental impact and therefore do not require development approval.

I would first like to give some background to the current practices and legislative requirements that have given rise to the amendments proposed in the bill. I will then go into some detail on the key elements of the bill that give effect to the new, streamlined process for undertaking works in reserves.

The parks and conservation service is the land custodian of wilderness areas, national parks and nature reserves in the ACT. This role includes maintaining the infrastructure and facilities required in these areas, such as access roads, car parks and fire trails. The parks and conservation service also undertakes minor installation works such as park furniture, fencing and signage.

Currently, to comply with the development assessment process in the Planning and Development Act, the parks and conservation service must submit a development application to the planning and land authority whenever it wants to do minor works in reserves. These works nominally fall into the impact assessment track and require an environmental impact statement or an environmental significance opinion, known as

an ESO. An ESO is an alternative to having to provide a full environmental impact statement and can be issued by the conservator where a proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact.

After assessing the project and, if appropriate, the conservator will prepare an ESO which may include conditions on how the works are to be undertaken. The ESO has the effect of moving the proposal from being assessed in the impact track to the merit track. At this point, some exemptions from requiring development approval may apply. For example, public works undertaken by the territory are a form of development that does not require development approval in certain circumstances.

It has become apparent that this process of requiring a development application and an ESO for minor works undertaken by the parks and conservation service is a barrier to efficient administrative operations. The parks and conservation service often need to go through this process to obtain approval for everyday works that form part of their core business. This work is often minor and is regularly issued with an ESO stating that it is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact.

The current process is therefore unnecessarily lengthy and costly in comparison to the scope of works usually involved. The delay and expense of the development approval process is not justified for the minor nature of the works that are to be carried out and the low likelihood of having a significant environmental impact. The amendments in the bill set up a streamlined process to assess environmental impacts up front and to provide certainty and transparency around standards, practices and conditions that must be met when undertaking works in reserves.

Now I would like to refer to the clauses of the bill in some detail and provide a road map for members of this place on how the new processes put forward in the bill will work. Specifically, clause 5 of the bill amends the Nature Conservation Act to insert the ability for the conservator to approve a minor public works code. This clause sets out what the code must provide for, including the standards and practices that must be followed, the circumstances of which works can be undertaken and any conditions on those activities. The requirements of the code are aimed at ensuring that all minor public works undertaken in reserves in accordance with the code are not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact.

The code is a disallowable instrument made by the conservator and is therefore subject to Assembly scrutiny. Further, the code must be reviewed every five years to ensure that it is up to date and still having its intended effect. Corresponding amendments are made to the Planning and Development Act and the Planning and Development Regulation to support the introduction of the power to make the code.

Clause 1.1 of schedule 1 of the bill inserts a new definition of minor public works for the purposes of the code. This sets a threshold of works that may be completed under the code and these works reflect the core business of the parks and conservation service. The inclusion of these activities in the definition of minor public works means that these works, by their very nature, represent a low likelihood of causing a significant adverse environmental impact.

Clause 1.2 of schedule 1 of the bill amends schedule 4 of the Planning and Development Act. Schedule 4 of the Planning and Development Act contains types of development proposals that are assessable in the impact track and require either an environmental impact statement or an ESO. The bill amends this requirement by inserting a provision that a proposal is not assessable in the impact track if the works are undertaken in accordance with the code. In this way a code could be thought of as a standing ESO for all minor public works that fall under its scope.

Clause 1.4 of schedule 1 of the bill makes works that fall under the code exempt from requiring development approval. Section 133 of the Planning and Development Act defines exempt development as development that is exempt from requiring approval under a regulation. This clause amends schedule 1 of the Planning and Development Regulation so that works in accordance with the minor public works code are exempt development. This means that if works comply with the code then development approval will not be required.

The effect of these three clauses that I have discussed in detail is that the requirement to get a development approval and an ESO is replaced by the requirement to comply with the minor public works code. Where works comply with the code they will benefit from a streamlined development assessment process and will not need development approval.

The bill also contains a number of other amendments that are necessary to support these changes. Clause 4 of the bill inserts an exception to offences in reserves as set out in chapter 9 of the Nature Conservation Act. This amendment ensures that works that comply with a code are not captured under the offences related to reserves. There are also amendments to the definition of terms used in the amendments to ensure that they are used consistently across the legislation and in a manner that supports these provisions.

These changes only apply to minor public works carried out by the territory in reserves that comply with the code. Works that are not minor, works that do not comply with the code and works that are not undertaken by the territory will be assessable under the normal planning framework and will require development approval.

In summary, these amendments will make it easier for the parks and conservation service to undertake their core daily duties in managing the ACT's reserves. The amendments will streamline processes and remove administrative barriers. The parks and conservation service can get on with the job of managing and protecting the ACT's reserves and, while the amendments do introduce a new process for assessing works in reserves, they do not reduce the scrutiny of environmental impacts or lessen the role of the conservator. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2017

Ms Berry, on behalf of **Mr Ramsay**, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (10.42): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2017. This bill provides for the regulation of alternatives for bond under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and makes necessary changes for the implementation of an online bond system.

Most lessors and tenants choose to have a bond in place when they enter into a residential tenancy agreement. These bonds are lodged with the territory via the office of rental bonds. This is a well-established practice and is familiar to most Canberrans. A similar process for bonds is followed around Australia. The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 does not actually require a bond to be lodged. It allows lessors to accept an alternative to a bond in certain circumstances. It is these alternatives that this bill seeks to regulate.

The government is aware of at least one company taking applications for a new rental guarantee product in the ACT. Any new ideas or commercial products aimed at improving housing affordability need to be well thought out. We need to make sure that these products do not run the risk of leaving people in a worse position and making the goal of secure housing harder to reach.

The government is regulating these new alternatives to a bond in two stages. The first phase will prevent lessors from accepting a commercial guarantee as an alternative to a bond. A commercial guarantee is a three-way contract between a lessor, a tenant and a third party. In this type of contract the third party undertakes to pay for damages caused by the tenant, like actual damage to property or unpaid rent. A commercial guarantee can replace the bond entirely or be a supplement to the bond. These changes are set out in schedule 1 of the bill. If the bill is agreed to by the Assembly, schedule 1 will be taken to have commenced today.

In the second phase lessors will be able to accept commercial guarantees but only if the standard guarantee contract has been registered with the Commissioner for Fair Trading. A standard guarantee contract is all the terms the provider of the commercial guarantee is going to put into the contract they offer to lessors and tenants. If a commercial guarantee is not registered it will not be able to be accepted by a lessor as an alternative to a bond. These changes are set out in schedule 2.

Schedule 2 also sets out the process for applying for the registration of a standard guarantee contract. The commissioner will have 30 days to consider an application and decide if it should be registered. If the commissioner approves a standard guarantee contract, the approval will go into a publicly available register. If the

provider of a commercial guarantee puts a term into a contract that is not consistent with the registered standard guarantee contract, that term will not have any effect.

The minister is able to make regulations for registration. Regulation-making powers include regulations that set out the grounds for registering or applying a condition to a standard guarantee contract, a matter that must be included in or excluded from a commercial guarantee; record-keeping requirements; any information that must be given to a person before they enter into a standard guarantee contract; and amending, renewing, ending or suspending the registration of a standard guarantee contract. If a regulation requires a commercial guarantee to include a term, that term is taken to be included in the commercial guarantee contract. If a regulation requires a commercial guarantee to exclude a term, that term cannot be included in a commercial guarantee contract.

Schedule 2 will commence on a date set by the minister. This allows the regulations to be developed before applications for registrations can be made. The government will be talking to the industry and the community during this process to make sure that this important area is covered in a way that meets the needs of the community. The restriction on commercial guarantees and the new registration requirement will not impact on informal arrangements between friends and families. Requiring registration of these contracts allows the government to assist both tenants and lessors to understand the benefits and risks of entering into this type of arrangement. By acting now the government can make assessments of schemes before tenants and lessors have entered into contracts.

Schedule 3 of the bill makes changes to the lodgement of bonds. The ACT Revenue Office is developing a new self-service rental bonds management system. At the moment the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 requires signatures on rental bond lodgement forms and that the forms are lodged manually. Manual lodgement and handling cheques is inefficient and expensive.

Other jurisdictions have introduced online self-service for the administration of rental bonds, such as the rental bonds online service in New South Wales. The amendments update the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to support the electronic lodgement of rental bonds and remove the requirement for signatures. Measures will be put in place to ensure that there are alternative options for those who cannot use electronic lodgement. Schedule 3 will commence on a date fixed by the minister.

While the government welcomes innovation, our duty of care is to make sure that consumers understand what they are signing up to. We want to ensure that individuals in search of a home have laws that ensure that their interests are protected. In developing these amendments, the government has sought the expertise of key stakeholders in the rental housing sector. We are also taking the opportunity to review our support for people who might struggle in the rental market.

Low and middle income earners who are able to sustain a tenancy in the private rental market but cannot afford a bond may be eligible for the ACT government's rental bond loan scheme. The scheme offers up to 90 per cent of the rental bond amount under their tenancy agreement. The bond loans are interest-free and are paid back to

the ACT government over 20 months, starting no later than three months from the date of the loan. The bond loan is paid directly from the ACT government to the office of rental bonds and the balance of the bond must be paid by the tenant to the lessor. People who qualify for a bond also receive a grant of \$100 to assist them to sustain their tenancy.

From the tenant's perspective, the tenant will be required to pay back the loan to the government in full but without interest and in a way which is affordable. From the lessor's perspective, if the tenant has failed to perform the tenant's obligations under the tenancy, the lessor can claim on the bond in the same way that the lessor would have if the tenant had paid the bond in full. This applies whether or not the loan has been fully paid back to the government. The ACT government is in the process of improving its public awareness strategy around the rental bond loan scheme to address its low uptake and accessibility for eligible applicants, including the online lodgement of applications. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

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

Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill 2017

Mr Rattenbury, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (10.50): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

In 2012 the ACT government embarked on a bold strategy to lead the nation in renewable electricity and greenhouse gas emission reduction. In that year the government began the first of its highly successful reverse auctions of feed-in tariff entitlements. The auctions went on to provide 20-year income certainty to three solar farms and five wind farms that will collectively provide around three-quarters of the renewable electricity the territory needs to achieve its 100 per cent by 2020 renewable electricity target. This will drive nearly all of the emission reductions needed for the ACT to reach its 40 per cent by 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target.

The act that the auctions were conducted under, the Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act 2011, was passed by the Assembly in December 2011. It needs updating with respect to the possible surrender of feed-in tariff entitlements and government oversight of the expenses that are passed through by the ACT electricity distributor to the territory's electricity consumers for the cost of the large feed-in tariff support payments that it administers.

The changes to the act address these two issues. First, it creates a new regulation that specifies matters the minister must consider when confirming the date on which a requested feed-in tariff entitlement takes effect. Second, it requires the electricity distributor to apply, each year, for a determination of reasonable feed-in tariff support payment costs which will set the maximum annual amount it can pass on to ACT electricity retailers for large feed-in tariff costs.

I am pleased to present the Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill, which contains these changes. The amendment bill will update the act and will reinforce the ACT government's responsible management of the nation-leading renewable energy reverse auction scheme.

When the act was passed, the ACT government was ploughing fresh ground. No state or territory had used feed-in tariff reverse auctions before in Australia and the government was keen to ensure that the renewable energy industry had confidence in the novel process. Confidence building measures included creating an independent auction advisory panel that would advise the minister on winning projects in each auction and the insertion of section 14 into the act, which says that the holder of a feed-in tariff entitlement may surrender the entitlement by giving written notice to the minister. The section also says that, upon receipt of the surrender notice, the minister must confirm the surrender by written notice to the feed-in tariff entitlement holder and that the surrender takes effect on the day and the time stated in the minister's written notice.

The aim of the surrender section was to give feed-in tariff supported generators choice. It signalled that the ACT government was willing to provide income certainty to the generator through its 20-year feed-in tariff support payments but that the arrangement could be reviewed if, because of unforeseen circumstances, maintaining the feed-in tariff was not desirable for both parties.

The amendment bill retains the generator's freedom of choice with respect to the potential surrender of feed-in tariff entitlements. However, if the generator does give notice of a surrender, a new regulation made under the act that is part of the amendment bill requires the minister to consider various matters when issuing an entitlement surrender notice. These matters include how long it would take the territory to obtain another, equivalent source of renewable electricity. This means the minister must consider what period of time it would take the government to secure replacement renewable electricity either through conducting another auction, through a direct grant of a feed-in tariff entitlement or, potentially, through a purchase of renewable energy certificates on the open market.

The new regulation is designed to preserve the integrity of the ACT's 100 per cent by 2020 renewable electricity target. It will ensure that we are not caught short by a feed-in tariff entitlement surrender. Having done the hard yards required to source around 2.3 million megawatt hours per year of clean, renewable electricity, the government wants to preserve the integrity of the renewable electricity target, which, in turn, will preserve the integrity of the ambitious greenhouse gas reduction it delivers.

These provisions will have effect from today, the date of introduction of this bill, as there is a small risk that an FiT entitlement holder may seek to surrender its entitlement before the amendment bill is passed. This is a precautionary measure. This will ensure that all surrenders will be treated equally and operate under the new regulation that prescribes matters the minister must consider when fixing the day and time that the surrender of a feed-in tariff entitlement takes effect. The provisions relating to possible surrender in this bill are reasonable and justified, and I refer members to the detailed discussion in the explanatory statement.

A vital part of the large feed-in tariff scheme is the administration of its feed-in tariff support payments. Section 18 of the act made the ACT electricity distributor, currently ActewAGL Distribution, responsible for paying the support payments. The cost of the support payments is passed on to the territory's electricity consumers via the network charge that the electricity distributor levies for the use of its local network.

The government's original estimates were that these payments would cost an ACT household with average electricity consumption \$5.50 per week, or less, in 2020. The actual cost of the payments is currently on track to fall well within this amount. The \$5.50 per week amount is also well within a \$12.67 per week amount that ACT households said they were prepared to contribute, on average, in polling that the government undertook in 2016. So it is clear that the government is taking the community with it on the journey to 100 per cent renewable electricity.

Such transparency is especially important in light of the large wholesale electricity price movements we have seen in recent months. The government expects that this will flow through to savings in the FiT costs that are passed through to ACT electricity consumers. However, greater oversight will ensure that the savings are passed on in full.

Continuing community support for the scheme will benefit from ongoing thorough and transparent oversight of scheme costs. To date, this oversight has consisted of regular meetings with ActewAGL Distribution about its forecast support payments as well as the publication on the website of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate of quarterly feed-in tariff payment summaries provided by the electricity distributor.

The amendments will require the ACT electricity distributor to formally apply to the minister for a reasonable estimate of its large feed-in tariff costs for each forthcoming financial year. Upon receipt of the application, the minister must make his or her own determination of the reasonable cost of feed-in tariff support payments, based on the information supplied by the ACT electricity distributor. The determination will be made each year as a notifiable instrument. The determination of reasonable cost will be included in the annual network pricing application that the electricity distributor submits to the Australian Energy Regulator.

The amendments also allow the minister to require an audit of the information supplied by the electricity distributor and permit the electricity distributor to include the cost of administering the scheme in the cost it passes on. The mandate that the

electricity distributor had to include these administration costs has been unclear, so the amendment bill gives the electricity distributor certainty on this point.

In summary, the reverse auction journey that the government has been on for the past six years has seen continual improvement. The reverse auction program was courageous and daring and went where no other Australian jurisdictions had gone before. Now, many state governments, including those of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, are catching up with the ACT in their use of reverse auctions.

In July this year, the uniqueness and inherent innovation that went into the reverse auction process was recognised in an innovation award given to the scheme by the Institute of Public Administration Australia, for which the government justifiably received extensive praise.

Part of the ongoing improvement of the auction process has been the refinement of the feed-in tariff surrender process as well as enhanced oversight of the support costs that are ultimately passed through to ACT electricity consumers. This amendment bill will enhance the integrity and good standing of the government's reverse auction process. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Legislative Assembly Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

Ms Burch, pursuant to notice, presented the bill and its explanatory statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (11.00): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I present the Legislative Assembly Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. The bill seeks to remedy a number of anomalies that currently exist in several territory laws. Some amendments in the bill are best described as being directed towards legislative housekeeping, while others are more substantive and directed towards ensuring that there is appropriate separation between the executive and the legislative branches of government. I have consulted on the preparation of the final version of this bill, including with the Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Greens, relevant committee chairs and various officers of the Legislative Assembly.

There are five key elements to this bill. Firstly, the bill seeks to clarify the role of relevant Assembly committees in appointing a person as Clerk or an officer of the Legislative Assembly; that is, the Auditor-General, members of the Electoral Commission and the Ombudsman. Under the existing provisions, an appointment is made by the Speaker on the advice of the relevant Assembly committee—variously the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts or the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. The intention of the original “on the advice” provision was to require that the Speaker

and the relevant committee agree to the appointment of a given person before the appointment could be made.

Notwithstanding the intent behind the existing provisions, I am advised that an interpretation of the existing provisions is available to suggest that the Speaker might be in a position to ignore the advice of a committee in making such an appointment. Clauses 5, 9, 13, and 20 seek to put beyond doubt that the committee and the Speaker agree to the appointment of a person to one of those positions mentioned above before the Speaker makes such an appointment.

Secondly, the bill seeks to address a matter that was raised during the Eighth Assembly relating to the inadvertent removal of the provisions in the Auditor-General Act 1996 arising from the passage of the Officers of the Assembly Legislation Amendment Act 2013 which provided for a seven-year non-renewable term of appointment for the Auditor-General. The bill before us reintroduces that provision.

Thirdly, the bill that I have presented here today seeks to provide a statutory basis for the Speaker to seek administrative support and advice from the Office of the Legislative Assembly in relation to the exercise of the Speaker's functions under the Auditor-General Act, the Electoral Act and the Ombudsman Act. This is a matter that was first raised by the Speaker in the Eighth Assembly, following the commencement of the legislation establishing the officers of the Legislative Assembly, and was the subject of a recommendation of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure of the Eighth Assembly. These provisions will enable the Speaker to receive administrative support and advice from the office and from any other entity that is able to provide impartial administrative support and advice.

That committee—that is, the admin and procedure committee of the Eighth Assembly—noted that there is a governance imperative for the Speaker to be able to access professional advice and support on the operation of broader public sector management issues that might be engaged by the exercise of relevant powers, and these proposed amendments address that imperative.

There are occasions, particularly in relation to the appointment or suspension or dismissal of an officer of the Legislative Assembly, where the Speaker will require external advice and support. However, it is also the case that the officers themselves will continue to provide administrative support and advice to the Speaker on routine matters relating to the performance of their functions.

Fourthly, the bill seeks to dis-apply section 31(2)(c) of the Financial Management Act. Section 31(2)(c) introduces a requirement that directors-general must manage directorates in a way that is not inconsistent with the policies of the government. Through equivalency provisions elsewhere in the act, the Clerk and officers of the Assembly are considered directors-general for the purposes of section 31 and are therefore currently captured by that requirement. While such a provision is perfectly appropriate for heads of agencies that serve the government of the day, it is another matter entirely for such a requirement to apply to officers that serve the territory's legislative branch. The amendment in clause 11 rectifies this anomaly.

The fifth and last point is that this bill seeks to amend the Precincts Act in two key ways: firstly, clauses 15 and 16 remove references to the members' entrance canopy, which is no longer a physical structure within the precincts, having been inadvertently damaged and later removed over 10 years ago.

Secondly, through clauses 17 and 18, the bill seeks to amend the Speaker's capacity to delegate certain powers and functions to a broader class of the staff within the Office of the Legislative Assembly. Under the current act, only the Speaker may approve licences to use the Assembly's precincts and, to facilitate greater administrative efficiency in the arrangements for licensing the use of the Assembly's facilities, an amendment enables the Speaker to delegate those Speaker's functions to the Clerk, a member of staff of the office who has the employment classification of senior officer grade C or above, or a member of staff of the Office of the Legislative Assembly who is responsible for the security of the Assembly.

An amendment is also proposed to enable the Speaker to delegate the power to remove people from the precincts to a broader class of staff within the office. Under the current arrangements, the Speaker may only delegate these powers to the Serjeant-at-Arms or to the principal attendant. The proposed amendment recognises changes to the organisational structure of the office and that there are legitimate operational imperatives for the exercise of these powers by staff other than the two officers that I have just mentioned. In the event that the Assembly passes this amendment, I would expect that an instrument would be tabled in the near future delegating this power to the Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms, the general manager, committee secretaries and the manager, security and building services. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (11.075): Due to the complexities of this bill and not understanding whether Max will get a promotion, unpaid or not, I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MS ORR (Yerrabi): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services. At a private meeting on 6 September 2017 the committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the lower Cotter catchment reserve management plan 2017. The plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of chapter 8 of the ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014.

Section 181 of the act requires the Minister for the Environment and Heritage to refer the plan, and a report on public consultation, to the relevant committee, being in this case the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services, for consideration. The act requires the committee's consideration of the plan within six months. The committee has discretion whether to refer the plan for an inquiry, which it has chosen to do. The committee will present its report to the Assembly in the first sitting week of 2018.

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal relating to petition No 6-17. The petition was received by the Assembly on 21 March 2017 and was referred to the committee under standing order 99A. This petition requested that the Assembly stop the proposed development of a KFC drive-through at Gold Creek Village, raising concerns about the potential impact of the development on the heritage-listed buildings as well as on the existing character and ambience of the village.

The committee notes that the minister's response to the petition under standing order 100 indicates that the development application in question, currently under assessment, has attracted several representations raising similar concerns to that contained in the petition. The committee also notes that the decision on the development application is expected shortly and that the minister has clearly indicated in his response that the government will not be stepping in to determine the DA. Following consideration of the petition and the minister's response, the committee has determined that it will not be holding an inquiry into the matter at this time.

Executive business—precedence

Ordered that executive business be called on.

Holidays (Reconciliation Day) Amendment Bill 2017

Debate resumed from 17 August 2017, on motion by **Ms Stephen-Smith**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (11.11): I rise today to give my and the Greens' support to the Holidays (Reconciliation Day) Amendment Bill. Reconciliation Day is an important symbol of our shared commitment to advancing reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. At a time when Australians are presented with proposals to incorporate an Indigenous voice into our constitution, Reconciliation Day will be a day for Canberrans to actively contribute to the conversation about reconciliation, constitutional change and our collective sense of nationhood.

I want to thank Minister Stephen-Smith for bringing this proposal to the Assembly and would also like to acknowledge the work of the former minister, Chris Bourke, in progressing this idea. The ACT is a progressive jurisdiction, and the Greens welcome the ACT government's commitment to advancing reconciliation through the establishment of this symbolic public holiday. As a nation and as a community we have come a long way in acknowledging the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures as part of our national story. And while there is still a long way to go, the introduction of Reconciliation Day is another step on this journey.

The reconciliation movement has its roots in the 1967 referendum, and this holiday will mark 27 May as a significant date in our history. On this date in 1967, more than 90 per cent of Australian voters chose "yes" to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the census and give the Australian government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It paved the way for a number of significant developments to address systemic disadvantage and provided Indigenous Australians with a symbol of recognition.

That is why 27 May marks the start of National Reconciliation Week, with the week ending on 3 June, on the anniversary of the historic Mabo decision. These are two crucial milestones in Australia's reconciliation journey and an important reminder of how far we have come. The addition of a Reconciliation Day public holiday on 27 May will be an opportunity for the Canberra community to come together to mark this important moment.

This date was chosen for its historical and cultural significance, and because on this day it is appropriate to celebrate the diverse cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is not a date linked to historical grievance or injustice, and while those days, such as Sorry Day, remain extremely important, they serve a different purpose. As a respondent to the public consultation said:

Having a Reconciliation Day public holiday would be a sign of the maturity of our community, to celebrate and to acknowledge the respect we want to achieve both now and into the future. It would give us time to reflect on what has been, acknowledge the history and find unity in moving forward.

It is also an opportunity to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to understand how we can take the next steps in the reconciliation process. Reconciliation Australia has identified five dimensions for measuring reconciliation, which form the basis of the state of reconciliation report. The five dimensions are: firstly, race relations, where positive two-way relationships built on trust and respect exist between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians throughout society; secondly, equality and equity, where Indigenous Australians participate equally and equitably in all areas of life, and the distinctive rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and respected; thirdly, institutional integrity, where our political, business and community institutions actively support all dimensions of reconciliation; fourth, unity, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights are a valued and

recognised part of a shared national identity; and, fifthly, historical acceptance, where there is widespread acceptance of our nation's history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated.

These dimensions are important to help us develop a vision and shared language for what reconciliation could look like in the future. There are some strong foundations to build on, with 86 per cent of Australians believing that the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is important, and 64 per cent agreeing that cultural diversity makes us stronger. Most Australians also believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are important to Australia's national identity and agree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold a unique place as the first Australians.

At the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still experience high levels of racial prejudice and discrimination, are more likely to consider their living conditions worse than other people's and are more likely to see barriers to employment and education. And then there are some areas with mixed results. Reconciliation Australia found that only around 30 per cent of Australians are knowledgeable about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, but 83 per cent of people believe it is important to know more and strongly support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories being a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

While 44 per cent of Australians want to support reconciliation, most do not know how to. Yet we know that when people participate in reconciliation activities their knowledge improves and their views on the relationship change significantly. This is where the introduction of Reconciliation Day can make a practical difference to the reconciliation process. By providing a dedicated time and space for Canberrans to participate in reconciliation activities and engage in conversations, we will, hopefully, see improved understanding, stronger relationships and a more unified community.

It is for these reasons that the Greens are pleased to support a Reconciliation Day public holiday. But to make sure that this can be a meaningful and unifying day, we need to invest in activities to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture so that it does not just become another public holiday. With Canberra's abundance of art galleries, museums and libraries, and the many talented artists, musicians and story tellers across our community, there is no reason why this cannot be a day to bring people together.

The day also needs to be accompanied by a public education campaign supporting Reconciliation Day, to promote activities and give people practical ways of engaging with the concept of reconciliation on the public holiday. In keeping with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement 2015-18, the ACT government should work with local Indigenous community leaders to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people take the lead roles in designing programs, events and activities.

I would now like to speak briefly about the community response to this announcement. While overall it seems that it has been well received, I do acknowledge the feedback

from some people that the removal of Family and Community Day means that most of our public holidays are now concentrated in the first half of the year. This is not an ideal situation, especially for parents looking after children over the school holidays. While the feedback from the consultations was that replacing Family and Community Day was the preferred option, I do hope that there will be opportunities in the future to rebalance the spread of public holidays across the calendar year.

As a card-carrying republican, I would have chosen to remove the Queen's Birthday public holiday, rather than Family and Community Day, to make way for Reconciliation Day. However, I recognise that this is not an opinion everyone would agree with, and there is more discussion to be had on that particular topic. I imagine that will happen over the coming years. Another change that the Greens have been supporting is the change the date campaign in relation to Australia Day. As part of our journey towards reconciliation, the Greens believe that all Australians should feel that they can participate and celebrate on days of national celebration, including Australia Day.

On 26 January 1788, the First Fleet arrived at Port Jackson, and Arthur Phillip raised the Union Jack on the land of the Eora nation. This was an invasion that had catastrophic and tragic consequences for all the peoples and nations who had lived here for tens of thousands of years, and for their descendants. In marking a day of colonisation, the Greens take the view that 26 January is an inappropriate date to celebrate our national day. As a nation, we are capable of a mature and sensible discussion on the issues that go to the heart of our national story. I hope that through the introduction of this legislation we will provide an opportunity to continue this conversation as part of the broader reconciliation process.

Finally, I would like to share with the Assembly words from the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation back in 2000. They said:

... all Australians can take heart from the positive outcomes so far. Nevertheless, a decade was a short time to address the legacies of 200 years of history, and much remains to be done...

Reconciliation is hard work—it's a long, winding and corrugated road, not a broad, paved highway. Determination and effort at all levels of government and in all sections of the community will be essential to make reconciliation a reality.

With those words and reflections, the Greens are pleased to support this bill today, and we hope that it will contribute to progressing our journey of reconciliation.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (11.21): I will begin by confirming that the opposition will be supporting the bill before us today. I acknowledge that the changes to the act come largely as a legacy of a discussion started by Dr Chris Bourke in his time in this Assembly, and at the heart of this legislation is the desire to acknowledge some significant milestones in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history in this country and to celebrate and build on relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

Significant parliamentary events such as the 1967 referendum, which was championed by the Liberal government of the day, should be recognised and celebrated appropriately. The referendum made two significant amendments to our constitution which recognised the First Peoples of this land. The amendments were overwhelmingly endorsed, winning 90.77 per cent of votes cast and carrying in all six states.

When the discussion first took place late last year, my Liberal colleagues and I made it very clear that we were supportive of the intention to create a Reconciliation Day public holiday but not to simply create another public holiday: that it would need to be done in exchange for one of the existing holidays. Replacing an existing holiday seems to be a sensible course of action, and I note that that is how Reconciliation Day has come about, by replacing Family and Community Day.

I acknowledge that a great deal of work and effort went into the consultation for the Reconciliation Day public holiday, largely led by Dr Bourke in his time as the minister. The consultation at the time indicated that there were mixed views in the community on the change, but a majority were supportive. Ninety-four submissions were received as part of this consultation; 70 were in support and 14 against, with 10 sitting on the fence, undecided.

I will also echo the comments made by Mr Rattenbury on the positioning of public holidays here in the ACT and also touch briefly on consistency. Currently, in the first half of the year we have New Year's Day, being the first public holiday to kick the year off, Australia Day, Canberra Day, Anzac Day, and Good Friday, as well as Easter Sunday and Monday, being recognised in the ACT as public holidays. The addition of Reconciliation Day on 27 May or the first Monday after that date places it in quite close proximity to what is the Queen's Birthday long weekend. I recognise that moving Family and Community Day and replacing it with Reconciliation Day avoids what was, particularly in the business community, quite a frustrating period where Family and Community Day was preceded by, in the week before, the October long weekend, often creating a great deal of difficulty for local business.

What we have here is that in most years, it is my understanding, there will be a fortnight between the Reconciliation Day holiday and what is the Queen's Birthday holiday. But there are some years where that will be a much closer time frame. Some of the complexity of trying to address a better string of public holidays is which ones we can move. New Year's Day and Australia Day are obviously fixed days and national holidays. Likewise, Anzac Day and the three holidays around Easter are fixed. It really leaves the option of reassessing Canberra Day or the Queen's Birthday holiday. Whilst other states celebrate the Queen's Birthday on a different weekend from the one we do in the ACT, we have some consistency with New South Wales.

I think that any move to tinker with public holidays needs to be done with broader consideration of what impact it has for residents who live in New South Wales but work in the ACT and maybe have kids going to school there and vice versa. There is obviously a difficulty where a parent may have kids home from school because they attend an ACT school but they are employed in New South Wales and are expected to

work on that day. That can unnecessarily add a great challenge and a difficulty to families in differentiating the timing of public holidays across the border.

I would also like to reflect on one of the many conversations I had during my term as the shadow minister for Indigenous affairs last term. One in particular was with Kim Davison from Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, who said to me, “We are a community in crisis. We do not need discussion about public holidays, and how will a renamed public holiday help my people, who are, at the moment, in crisis?” The lack of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT can be seen quite clearly. I do not believe there is anything to be celebrated. Whilst the merit of the public holiday is understood, the question remains: how will a public holiday help address Indigenous disadvantage in our community?

I remain of the firm view that things must change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. As I have said previously, if we cannot get things right here in the ACT, what hope does the whole country have? I know that my colleague Mr Milligan will speak briefly and touch on some of these issues, and I recognise the significant work that he and his office continue to do to highlight the issues and the disadvantage that continues to exist in our Indigenous community in the ACT.

The overly high representation in a lot of the negative statistics warrants serious action, and action as a priority. Renaming a public holiday will most definitely not be this action. However, I reiterate that the opposition is supportive of the intent of this bill, and there is no doubt that a day of acknowledging the history and having an opportunity to reflect on where we have come from and where we are heading is a good thing for the ACT.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (11.27): I thank the minister for bringing forward this bill. I want to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of reconciliation not only for Indigenous people but also for Australia. We welcome the symbolic act of the day, which will fall at the beginning of Reconciliation Week. This year’s reconciliation week’s theme was “Remember”. It called on Australians to remember the two significant milestones in our reconciliation journey: first, the 25th anniversary of the Mabo High Court decision; and, second, and probably more importantly, the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum, a move begun under the Menzies government but completed by Holt. This significant moment, when more than 90 per cent of Australians voted yes in a referendum, allowed first Australians to be counted for constitutional purposes. It provided the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a symbol of recognition and it began our nation’s reconciliation journey.

Reconciliation is important. True reconciliation means ensuring that the diversity and distinctiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and perspectives are fairly represented. National Reconciliation Week and, of course, NAIDOC, provide all Australians with the opportunity to engage with Indigenous cultures. And we know that Australians are interested. In the recent Australian reconciliation barometer, most Australians stated that they believed in reconciliation. Ninety-seven per cent said they believed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are important to Australia’s identity.

This is essential in moving forward. It is essential because we need to confront the racial prejudice that is still experienced by many. It is essential because we will be having conversations in the next few years, as we consider further possible changes to the constitution. And it is essential as we continue to work with the Indigenous people in closing the gap between the Indigenous community and the non-Indigenous community, in the areas of education, health, business, housing and so on.

The referendum has, over the past 50 years, presented a symbol of recognition. Whilst this proposed day is also in that sense symbolic, it needs to flag a real intention by this government to start dealing with the many ongoing issues that face the community. I have mentioned many of the problems before and will continue to hold this government to account for them. The grim reality is that, whilst we are making progress in closing the gap in some areas, it is woefully inadequate, especially here in the ACT, where Indigenous numbers are small. We should have been able to make a significant difference, but we have not. There have been failures in child care and protection, in education, in housing policy, in public service employment, in health and in the growing prison numbers.

It was good to hear the other day some of the details of the childcare review from the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. This review is long overdue. We are in serious danger of being confronted with a second generation of stolen children. It was also good to hear that the review will be conducted jointly with some of our key Indigenous organisations here in the territory.

Whilst we recognise that it will take time to fully understand the issues, there is already so much evidence available in this space. This was evidenced at this week's SNAICC national voice for our children conference, which hosted over 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child welfare experts. Maybe the review process could be short-circuited and the minister could seek advice from some of them so that we can implement much-needed change in this sector sooner. Let us start the process for reconciliation here. We look forward to a day when the ACT will not be known for the high rate of children in care, currently the highest in Australia.

What was really disappointing, to put it mildly, was to hear the Chief Minister again dismiss the call for an Indigenous housing policy. To state that the need for a policy was only aspirational was a slap in the face for the Indigenous community, particularly when the homelessness rate in the Indigenous community is at the highest level, when 50 per cent of Indigenous people live in public housing and make up 8.7 per cent of public housing residents, when the cost of housing continues to rise, when the continuing levels of disadvantage experienced by the Indigenous community continue to grow, the result of high rates and skyrocketing house prices.

If we have to wait on the findings of the child welfare review, maybe the government could start the real process of reconciliation here. Perhaps it will start the real process for Indigenous reconciliation through the provision of jobs in the ACT public service, beginning with the Chief Minister's own directorate. It would be wonderful to see the percentage of Indigenous employees grow from the low of 1.4 per cent to the goal of

three per cent—or, aspirationally, perhaps more. Let us demonstrate a true commitment to reconciliation by achieving this goal.

We must make sure that the proposed Reconciliation Day is to be more than just a symbol, just another day off, one amongst nine public holidays in the first half of the year. It must be more than just a day for a barbecue, going to the coast or having a sleep-in. If the day is to achieve its stated purpose then the government must do something. What will they do to promote the first nations' culture and identity amongst non-Indigenous Australians? Will they put on additional cultural events? Will they begin with an educational program? Will they provide financial stimuli to help celebrate the day? Will they support Indigenous artists through additional arts funding, or support Indigenous musicians through a sponsored music event?

It needs to be more than a day off, otherwise there is little point in going to all of this effort. It will remain nothing more than a nod to reconciliation, a symbolic, empty, meaningless gesture amongst the many this government is very good at making. I am very keen about the opportunities that Reconciliation Day brings, but I am also sceptical about the reasons behind introducing this public holiday, and I will remain sceptical if we do not see this government making some very real moves towards achieving or honouring reconciliation. Reconciliation starts by building relationships, gaining respect and building trust. Full reconciliation can only be realised when equality and equity are finally achieved. Let us start with a day but work together to finish with real transformation in the lives of Indigenous Canberrans.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.34): 2017 is an important year of reflection for all Australians. It marks 50 years since the successful 1967 referendum on the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) Act. The referendum brought two changes to the constitution which introduced the inclusion of the Indigenous population in the national census official population figures and removed an exemption that prevented federal parliament from making laws in relation to Indigenous people.

It is important to recognise the significance of these changes. Prior to this referendum, Indigenous people had not been counted in our population determinations. According to political historian Scott Bennett, this was due to two widely held beliefs. The first was that Indigenous people were dying out and would soon cease to be a consideration, and the second was captured by Tasmanian MP King O'Malley when he said of the Indigenous people, "There is no scientific evidence that he is a human being at all."

The outcome of the referendum was a resounding yes, with 90.8 per cent of Australian electors voting for change. In a country where only eight of 44 referenda have been carried, the strength of this victory cannot be lost. So powerful was the sentiment for these changes, there was no preparation of the case opposing them.

1967 marked a change in the way our nation viewed Indigenous people. While significant, the 1967 referendum was not an end in itself but a means to an end yet to be achieved. Even before the successful yes vote, an editorial in the *Daily Mirror* captured this reality perfectly. It stated:

This is our chance to make some sort of amends. We still have a long way to go. But at least we can make a start at treating him as an equal.

Here in the ACT we have an opportunity to continue that start that was made five decades ago. In recognising this landmark occasion in our nation's history, we can play our part in the reconciliation process. Members may be aware that the coat of arms behind the Speaker's chair includes an acknowledgement of our shared history with the Indigenous people of our region. The black and white swans are not just symbolic of the wealth of native bird life in the territory but also represent both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians of the region.

Given that the coat of arms was formally adopted for the City of Canberra in 1928, it could be said the ACT is typical in setting the standard for Indigenous recognition. And here we are today, again leading the way in reconciliation. This amendment bill seeks to recognise the cultural and historical significance of 27 May 1967. Reconciliation Day in the ACT presents an opportunity to celebrate the relationship we have with the Ngunnawal, Ngarigo and Ngambri people of the Canberra region. In doing so the ACT becomes the first state or territory in the federation to recognise an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused public holiday. This reflects changes made to human rights legislation in the ACT to support the recognition of Indigenous cultural rights and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement, which committed the ACT government to strive towards achieving reconciliation.

Let us not forget the importance that symbolism can play. If we think of the process leading up to the 1967 referendum, the significance of that day stands out as a beacon of achievement. It is often thought that the referendum gave Indigenous people the right to vote in federal elections. However, this had in effect already happened when, in 1949, the Chifley government passed an act enabling anyone who was eligible to vote in state elections to vote federally. In 1962 legislation was extended to voluntary federal voting for all Aboriginal people of age. We also remember the referendum as giving Indigenous people the right to citizenship. This too is effectively not the case. The Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 gave citizenship to all Australians, who had, until then, been deemed to be British subjects. At this time all Aboriginal people were automatically given Australian citizenship.

It is also incorrect to say that the referendum result led to Aboriginal people being counted in the census or that it marked the time when we officially stopped classifying Indigenous people as flora and fauna. What is now the Australian Bureau of Statistics did count the Indigenous population, but they were not included in population determinations. None of these came into effect officially as a result of that vote, yet we remember it as though they did. We remember 27 May 1967 in this way because of its symbolism. The referendum result struck out section 127, allowing the Indigenous population to be counted in the census's official population, and amended section 61 to remove a restriction on the commonwealth parliament legislating in regard to Indigenous people. However, given the significance of the outcome, this vote now acts as a symbol of reconciliation and Indigenous recognition.

The bill that we are debating in this chamber today is another step towards achieving reconciliation. The 1967 referendum showed us the impetus each of these steps can have on our path towards equality. While much had been achieved until that point in time, it is the day itself that is recognised as a turning point, embodying the wishes of Australians for Indigenous equality.

The step we take together today as a city and territory in adopting this public holiday is one of national significance. It is one that captures the spirit of the yes vote, which called on Australians to “show the world the true Australian brotherhood”. It is one that unites us, not just with the Ngunnawal, Ngarigo and Ngambri people, but with all Australians of all backgrounds. It is one that does our two swans, black and white, side by side, proud; symbolising the willingness of Canberrans to share both our history and our future with the Indigenous people of our region. I call on all members of this Assembly to stand together in unity with our Indigenous community and vote in favour of this bill.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (11.40), in reply: When I presented this bill, I outlined outcomes of community consultations regarding a Reconciliation Day public holiday in 2018. As Mr Wall and Mr Rattenbury have done, I want to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Chris Bourke, the former minister, for undertaking those consultations and championing the new public holiday.

The community agreed that the day needed to have a logical and relevant link to a date of cultural or historical significance. The date put forward in this bill will see the ACT’s Reconciliation Day held on the first Monday on or after 27 May, the anniversary of the 1967 referendum and the first day of National Reconciliation Week.

I am particularly pleased that the bill will have tripartisan support in this place. I acknowledge the issues raised by Mr Wall and Mr Rattenbury around the need to balance public holidays at different times of the year. Mr Wall rightly outlined the complexities involved in this issue.

Passage of this legislation will be both a symbolic and practical demonstration of our territory’s commitment to reconciliation. Reconciliation is about developing a better relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians and repairing damage to the ancient culture that lives on in this land that we all call home.

Australia is often referred to as a young country, but we live on the oldest continent on earth; a continent that is home to the oldest living culture on earth, the culture of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, which is more than 60,000 years in the making. If Aboriginal culture were 24 hours old then the First Fleet arrived just five minutes and four seconds ago. We have an incredible opportunity and an important responsibility to recognise, understand, protect and respect its ancient sites, diverse customs, languages and peoples.

Unfortunately, there is still a distinct gap in our education and our general understanding as a community around what has happened to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country since 1788. As a result, generations of Australians have not learned about past atrocities and about how those atrocities have led to disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country were not simply treated like second-class citizens; by many they were not considered to be citizens at all. They were forcibly removed from their lands, and children were forcibly removed from their families. The intergenerational trauma of lost life and lost culture resulting from colonisation is deeply affecting and lies at the heart of contemporary disadvantage. Similarly, generations of Australians have missed out on learning about the rich and vibrant culture that developed here over more than 60,000 years.

The Reconciliation Day public holiday will encourage conversation about reconciliation. It is an opportunity to acknowledge our shared history and engage with the culture of Canberra's traditional custodians. It seeks to create space for further discussion about the past in order to acknowledge the trauma and understand the effects on people today so that we can move forward together in celebration.

I acknowledge Mr Milligan's comments regarding the need to ensure that Reconciliation Day is more than just a day off. I could not agree more, and I will be working with the community and my colleagues to ensure that we provide opportunities for Canberrans to engage in meaningful discussion and meaningful celebration of the contribution and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community. Just as we are coming together in this place to create Reconciliation Day, I hope our community can come together during and in the lead-up to Reconciliation Day 2018 to consider how we can all contribute to true reconciliation in our city.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.45 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Seniors—rates impact

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Veterans and Seniors. I refer to a report in the *Canberra Times* of 5 September that applications for rates deferrals due to hardship have doubled since the ACT government changed the formula for calculating rates on apartments and units. Minister, what have you done to assure yourself that senior Canberrans are not facing hardship as a result of your government's changes?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the member for his question. Clearly, the issue of supporting seniors and veterans is a priority of mine. I have had a number of conversations and a number of briefings with my directorate in relation to concession support. In conversations with the Chief Minister and my other colleagues, I am pleased to note that the concessions review that took place has meant there has been an increase in the supports being made available for our seniors who are on low incomes and who are renting. That has meant, I am advised, that around 15,000 of our poorest pensioners have been able to receive increased support through concessions. I will continue to monitor, continue to have conversations and continue to look through the matters, as was mentioned in the Assembly yesterday.

MR COE: Minister, is the government concerned about the impact of the increases in rates, and what have you done to advocate for veterans and seniors in this space?

MR RAMSAY: As I have said in a number of conversations, it is part of my role in government and I will continue to work on that. I note that there are around 30,000 Canberran households that are accessing the concessions and we are looking at how that can be further supported. I am pleased to note that this government has increased the funding to the concessions program by \$35 million over four years. I will continue to be active in the area as we move forward in ensuring that our most vulnerable people, our most vulnerable members of the community, are well supported.

MS LEE: Minister, what action have you taken to study the impact on Canberra pensioners and fixed income retirees of 10 more years of excessive rates increases caused by the Treasurer's plan?

MR RAMSAY: It is an awkward question to answer when the second half of the question contains a premise which I do not agree with. But I will continue to be active and, I hope, will continue to work with my directorate on ensuring that the most vulnerable Canberrans are supported in the most appropriate way, including, especially from my perspective, our older Canberrans.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—housing

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, in a recent *Canberra Times* article, the Chief Minister called the development of an Indigenous housing policy a “long-term aspirational goal”. Yet this government is a signatory to the national affordable housing agreement. The goal includes the provision of appropriate Indigenous social housing; support for the homeless, more than a quarter of whom are Indigenous; and the provision of an Indigenous housing policy. Minister, what other matters covered by this agreement are “aspirational” and will not be implemented by this government?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Milligan for the question. I am not quite sure where he is getting to with this, because the ACT government has been working very closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, particularly with the elected body, on ensuring that housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

is met. Indeed, we have already built one older persons housing facility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and have committed to build a second one.

I am not sure where Mr Milligan is going with this question. The government has made a commitment and we will deliver on it.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, will you at any point in the future be guaranteeing that your government will develop a specific Indigenous housing policy?

MS BERRY: As Mr Milligan and other members in this place will know, there is a conversation happening right now with the Canberra community around housing and housing affordability leading up to a summit on 17 October. We have already had thousands of conversations and a number of forums—around 35 forums—with all parts of our community, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Once we get to the summit and we build on a strategy for the ACT for the next decade around housing and housing affordability, I am sure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the elected body and others will be part of a conversation that talks about housing that is appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

MR PARTON: Minister, will the lack of genuine action in this space mean that members of the Indigenous community will continue to see a failure to provide adequate appropriate social housing for the Indigenous community, as this might also be considered aspirational?

MS BERRY: I do not agree with the premise of the question that there is not a genuine aspiration for the ACT government to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are housed in Housing ACT accommodation. We have aged residential accommodation for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Kambah, which I am advised has been very successful. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are very happy with how that has progressed and are keen to talk about a second one, which the Labor Party and the Greens supported leading up to the election last year. And we will deliver on that as well.

Government—borrowing program

MR STEEL: My question is to the Chief Minister. Why does the ACT government maintain an active local and international borrowing program?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Steel for the question. The government continues to believe in investing in a better Canberra. We want to ensure that Canberrans have access to better care when they need it, that there are better schools for our kids and that we deliver better services for the entire ACT community. That is why we are delivering on our election commitments by commencing new walk-in centres, starting work on expanding Canberra Hospital and new north side health facilities, upgrading school

classrooms and facilities across the territory, our significant investment in public transport, and our revitalisation of town centres.

It is also why, since 2012, the government has invested almost \$3.2 billion in infrastructure and capital works in Canberra, making our roads safer and more efficient, boosting our public transport network and building better public spaces and places. That is why there is another \$2.8 billion in the infrastructure pipeline over the next four years.

The territory's borrowing program supports this investment by giving us access to the resources we need to build Canberra for the future, whilst delivering quality services today. Without a borrowing program, the territory would not have the resources to invest now for future growth, to avoid congestion and to expand our health and education networks.

Affordable and sensible borrowing is one of the tools that we use to build a better city, and we will continue to draw on this within the framework of responsible fiscal and budget management.

MR STEEL: Chief Minister, what are the advantages for the territory of engaging in financial markets?

MR BARR: The infrastructure that we build today, from light rail to the SPIRE centre at the Canberra Hospital, will be used by generations of Canberrans. These are projects that span decades. When we are building infrastructure that will benefit generations of Canberrans, it is fair and reasonable that we pay for this infrastructure over time and not up front.

The second advantage of engaging in financial markets, particularly international ones, for our borrowing is that it raises awareness of Canberra among institutions and investors who can bring new ideas and investment to our city. When we travel to Singapore or to Tokyo to meet with investors who manage portfolios larger than the entire territory economy, we are putting Canberra on the map as a place to invest and do business, especially given our world-leading AAA credit rating. This has paid clear dividends for Canberra over the years since I commenced undertaking our post-budget investor roadshow in Asia, with foreign investment in our city growing and supporting more local jobs as well as a more diverse local economy. We put great stock in our credit rating and in our approach to the market. Financially literate and savvy investors around the world do the same.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, how has tapping into international financial markets reduced costs to the territory and contributed to the sustainability of our borrowing program?

MR BARR: By looking overseas to engage with international investors we diversify the territory's investor base and, as with any market, adding more players leads to competition and to better pricing. Every dollar we save in interest on the territory's borrowings is a dollar that can be invested back into infrastructure and services for the community. Having a diversified investor base is important for ensuring that there is a

strong and stable demand for our securities under a wide range of market conditions. This is important because government will need to access finance at various points in time.

Over recent years we have received very strong, positive feedback from our program of bond investor meetings, including increased awareness of the ACT and a very positive view of the government's borrowing strategy and objectives which are, of course, supported by our AAA credit rating. It is important that we continue to develop our relationships with more investors to further diversify our borrowing program and to promote its sustainability over the longer term.

These relationships can take time to develop but the benefits for the territory in secure and affordable access to financing are, of course, very significant. Conversely, simply sitting here and hoping that international investors stumble across us is a short-sighted and self-defeating approach.

Housing—affordability

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Chief Minister and concerns his recent release of a statement of expectation for the City Renewal Authority. The statement includes only one brief mention of affordable housing, and the government has not yet released the affordable housing targets as required by the authority's act. When will you be setting and releasing the affordable housing targets?

MR BARR: In the fullness of time, but not too long away.

MS LE COUTEUR: Chief Minister, what place is there for low income Canberrans in the Northbourne Avenue corridor?

MR BARR: Very significant. This provides an opportunity to address at least one of the misconceptions in this particular public discussion. There is and will remain public housing on Northbourne Avenue. Although the government is disposing of some aged, outdated public housing, we will be retaining public housing in the Northbourne Avenue corridor and we will also be building—

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: Facing Northbourne Avenue; you guys just don't quite understand the full public housing portfolio, clearly. You also need to look at this in the context of our commitments in relation to the Northbourne corridor. Being 10 metres from Northbourne Avenue I think is still a reasonable proximity to light rail; being 20 metres from Northbourne Avenue is still a reasonable proximity to Northbourne Avenue.

Indeed, in relation to our election commitments on social and affordable housing in the City Renewal Authority precinct and areas immediately adjacent, I want to highlight particularly our commitment to Common Ground, stage 2, in Dickson.

MR COE: Under the asset recycling initiative rules, are you allowed to have any public housing on those sites?

MR BARR: Under the asset recycling initiative rules, yes, we are. We are not excluded from that. The point I make is that we are retaining public housing on Northbourne Avenue.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: Those opposite might need to look at Condamine Court as an example of that.

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—aluminium cladding

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the *Canberra Times* article of 13 September 2017 reporting significant delays in the availability of cladding to replace dangerous flammable cladding, including on the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. I also note your answers to questions in this Assembly over the past two days where you stated that the Health Directorate has not ordered replacement cladding as yet. Minister, considering that the minister for planning has consistently stated that your government is at the forefront of monitoring the use of this cladding in Australia, why have you not yet ordered the cladding?

MS FITZHARRIS: As I indicated in my answer yesterday, we are undertaking a piece of work—it is called a statement of requirements—in order to inform our subsequent procurement of panels.

Madam Speaker, the opposition is continuing to demonstrate an utter lack of (1) any common sense and (2) a clear knowledge and understanding of our procurement processes.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why are you replacing that cladding if, as you say, it is safe?

MS FITZHARRIS: I have said repeatedly on advice from experts, including fire experts—including ACT Fire & Rescue—that the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children is a modern and safe building. What I have also said on repeated occasions in this place and to the media—which I know the opposition listen to—is that we are going the extra mile at the hospital and removing the cladding panels that we know contain the polyethylene core. That is five to 10 per cent of the panels. We are undertaking the necessary work to make the correct order.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, when will you table the report advising you that there was combustible cladding used on the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children?

MS FITZHARRIS: I have answered a significant number of questions, and I have not been directly asked, to my knowledge, to table that report. There has been sufficient discussion about this. I have been very clear, very open—

Mrs Dunne: I think you're not the person to judge whether it's been sufficient or not.

MS FITZHARRIS: Madam Speaker, neither, I think, is our resident fire expert over on the bench there, Mrs Dunne.

Planning—land release program

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, how is the government continuing its land release program so that Canberrans can build their own homes in vibrant new suburbs?

MS BERRY: The four-year land release program proposes a target of around 16,000 homes and about 4,000 sites per year, with 47 per cent of those in greenfield estates. If I may talk about Taylor for a moment, on 4 September, registrations opened for the second ballot of 142 single residential blocks, with 32 blocks offered under the land rent scheme. That is a great outcome for the Canberra community, particularly for people who are looking to get into homes of their own. An information expo for the Taylor ballot was held on Saturday, 2 September, with around 200 people getting along to that. There were also people from the ACT Revenue Office, EPSDD and the Education Directorate, who were able to provide information about what that suburb is going to look like for people who are looking to move into new and different homes. Ballot registrations opened at 10 o'clock on 4 September and they close on Friday 15 September. Fifteen hundred-plus ballot registrations have already been received.

MS ORR: Minister, how does the ACT government work with the community to ensure that the land we release is appropriate to people's different needs?

MS BERRY: Community conversations are very important as we plan new communities and we gather together a range of different views. Early and ongoing conversations with the community, business and research sectors are one of the priorities—and this happens in a bunch of different ways—to ensure that the planning proposals for greenfield or urban sites reflects the views of the community.

I know that Ms Orr has a particular interest in the planning of new suburbs, suburban development and urban development. It has been great to have Ms Orr come along to a few events out in Gungahlin, in some of the newer suburbs out there, to ensure that locals in the community can understand better what is happening within their community and contribute to the building of new suburbs in the ACT.

MR PETTERSSON: What activities are occurring to build and strengthen new communities being developed in Canberra?

MS BERRY: As I said yesterday when I was talking about Ginninderry, when the ACT government is building new suburbs we are doing more than just building bricks and mortar; we are building new communities with people who are moving into those places. We want to make sure that new residents are part of the building of those new communities and, when they move in with their families, that they are great places to socialise and live, learn and play.

One of the programs that the Suburban Land Agency will be continuing is the mingle program, which provides an opportunity for people to come together, meet each other and network before the suburb is even built. I have asked the Suburban Land Agency to continue with the mingle program but also to build on that in new and innovative ways so that people have the best chance to meet up and form new communities before the buildings are actually put in place.

Education—Shaddock review recommendation

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. In response to the boy in the cage scandal in 2015 the expert panel on students with complex needs and challenging behaviours made 49 recommendations to your government. One of those recommendations was that the Education Directorate publish policies about the placement of students in learning support units covering timing, eligibility criteria and rights of review. The original deadline for this recommendation was May 2016, and the revised due date is now September 2017. Minister, why has it taken so long to implement this recommendation?

MS BERRY: I refer the member to the comments that I made yesterday in response to his motion in this place: the advice of the advisory board was that the government take the time to take a considered approach to implementing all of the recommendations. Thirty-four of the 50 recommendations have been closed. As to a lot of the other recommendations, including the recommendation that Mr Wall is referring to, on the advice of the advisory board, the government is taking its time to make sure that the implementation of the recommendation makes an enduring change to the culture within ACT schools.

MR WALL: Minister, what has been the primary reason for the delay in publishing these policies as per the recommendation?

MS BERRY: There has been no delay. The time frame is three years. We are half way through the implementation of the recommendations.

MS LEE: Minister, will you guarantee that the deadline will not blow out again?

MS BERRY: I just do not accept the premise of that question at all. There has been no blowout of the deadline: three years, on the advice of experts, to take our time and be very careful and considerate of the approach in the implementation of the recommendations.

Hume—waste to energy plant

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, the FOY Group has recently changed its name to Integrated Green Energy and published a revised prospectus containing an offer to raise capital in its attempt to continue pursuing a waste to energy plant at its land in Hume. What is the current status of the contract for sale of land to the FOY Group, given that it has failed to meet not only the June date for completion but also the subsequent deadline of 7 September?

MS BERRY: As members could be aware from reports in the *Canberra Times*, the Foy Group has not met the requirements of the contract at this stage. It is still under a settlement process, which was the last advice I have received.

MS LEE: Minister, if the government has not yet terminated the contract for sale, will you be seeking money from the Foy Group for remediation and other works done on the site?

MS BERRY: I refer the member to my previous answer. The process is still continuing.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how much money does FOY owe in penalties under the contract for sale for the delayed completion, and will the government pursue this debt?

MS BERRY: On the second part of the question, the settlement process is still continuing, and I will have to get some advice on the first part of the question.

ACT Health—opioid treatment review

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to the Penington Institute Australia's annual overdose report for 2017 which was published this week. The report shows that there were 53 deaths in the ACT from overdoses of pharmaceutical opioids between 2011 and 2015. There were also 27 deaths from heroin overdose in the same period in the ACT. On 2 August, minister, you advised the Assembly that a long-overdue report on opioid treatment options would be ready by the middle of September. Have you now received this report and, if so, will you make it available to the Assembly?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mrs Dunne for the question. It was not a report; it was particular guidelines. Yes, I received those yesterday and I look forward to having a few more days to discuss those with ACT Health directly.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why was this review five years late given the number of deaths caused by opioid overdoses in the ACT?

MS FITZHARRIS: I think Mrs Dunne is potentially mixing up the overdose report and the treatment guidelines, which were for people on prescribed opioid treatment. However, I have also previously answered the question about the delays in finalising those particular guidelines that she referred to in her first question.

MR WALL: Minister, why did it take the *Canberra Times* publishing an article on the report being five years overdue for you to ensure that the report eventually got finalised?

MS FITZHARRIS: It was not only the *Canberra Times* report that prompted me to be aware of the delay in those guidelines.

Drugs—pill testing

MRS JONES: My question is to the minister for health. I refer to the government's working party on the feasibility of pill testing in the ACT. When will the working party on pill testing finish its work and when will they publish their findings?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mrs Jones for the question. I expect that work to be completed in the very near future. The government will subsequently make an announcement on the assessment of the proposal to be put to it regarding pill testing.

MRS JONES: Has the committee on tobacco, alcohol and other drugs been consulted about pill testing, given that it has not met yet this year?

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister for Health, did you hear the question?

MS FITZHARRIS: I am not expressly sure what committee Mrs Jones is referring to.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would you repeat the question, Mrs Jones?

MRS JONES: Sorry, it is my voice. Has the committee on tobacco, alcohol and other drugs been consulted about pill testing, given, as per an earlier discussion in the chamber this year, it has not met this year?

MS FITZHARRIS: I think that the committee that Mrs Jones is referring to and that has previously been raised here was, in fact, related to the opioid treatment guidelines that Mrs Dunne's earlier question was about. However, I know that, in the process of assessing the proposal received from the proponent of the pill-testing exercise, the ACT Health-led working group has, indeed, consulted a number of community stakeholders, including those in the alcohol and other drug sector.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, has there been consultation with the commonwealth government about pill testing, given the possibility that pill testing could be carried out on commonwealth land?

MS FITZHARRIS: Not expressly, to my knowledge, but I will take that question on notice.

Public housing—Wright

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and it relates to the public housing development in Wright. Minister, what has the government changed in its proposal in response to its consultation? When will the final DAs be lodged?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Hanson for his interest in and support for public housing in the ACT. The public housing renewal proposal has had some significant changes through conversations with the Wright community. Whilst there have been some members of the Wright community, and indeed some members opposite, including

Mr Hanson, who have not been completely supportive of this particular development in lots of different ways, there has been support from others in Wright for public housing renewal in the suburb of Wright.

There were significant changes made after conversations with—

Mr Hanson: I take a point of order on relevance, Madam Speaker. Maybe the minister is getting there but my question is specifically about the changes that have been made and when the DA will be lodged rather than a broader discussion about the merits or otherwise of public housing in the ACT.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think the minister was getting to it. I heard the word “changes”. The minister has a minute left, if she could come to those points.

MS BERRY: The Wright community were advised at the start of this conversation, as the other public housing renewal sites were advised, that we were going to commence the building of public housing but that we wanted to talk to them about the amenity. That included the size, the number, the look and feel, and the amenity as well as some issues around car parking and traffic control.

All of those issues have been discussed with the Wright community. As far as I am aware, the last time I was advised those changes were supported generally by the initial Wright community. Once the development application is lodged, which will be soon, the proposed development will be part of that development application.

MR HANSON: Minister, what is the total maximum number of dwellings that you will now allow to be built on this site in Wright?

MS BERRY: As I said, once the development application is launched, the actual number of units will be advised in the development application.

MRS JONES: Minister, are any other sites in Wright being considered for public housing development?

MS BERRY: I cannot recall at the moment if there are; certainly not as part of the public housing renewal program. There could be, so I am going to take that on notice and double-check.

Public housing—renewal program

MR PARTON: My question is directed to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development in relation to the public housing renewal program. Despite assurances from the Chief Minister earlier today that there would still be some public housing on Northbourne Avenue, we know that the vast majority is being moved elsewhere. Minister, what assessments were made in regard to the impacts of public housing closures in Civic and along Northbourne Avenue?

MS BERRY: Considerable work was done with the public housing tenants, and there continue to be considerable supports in place, through the public housing renewal task

force and with the linked in communities, to ensure that public housing tenants are properly supported during this renewal program. The Auditor-General in her assessment of the program also acknowledged that the support for tenants had been a great success through this program and that tenants were being well supported during the move.

There are 169 public housing properties that still exist on the Northbourne Avenue corridor. There are 177 replacement properties that have been purchased or built as part of the public housing renewal program, which is not many fewer than the numbers that were renewed to support tenants now and into the future and to ensure that they have sustainable housing that best suits their needs.

There is nothing at all stopping developers from building social or community housing along Northbourne Avenue. There is nothing stopping any developer from taking up that initiative themselves. But there are still a considerable number of public housing properties on the Northbourne Avenue corridor and within that region.

MR PARTON: Minister, what sorts of impacts were considered and, more specifically—a free kick question, really, for you—what strategies were adopted to resolve or manage those impacts? What strategies did you put in place to resolve the impacts on those who moved?

MS BERRY: I have had a number of questions on notice from Mr Parton on the public housing renewal program, I think; and I think my office has provided significant advice particularly about how tenants are being supported. One of the things that is happening with tenants who are supported during this program is ensuring that they have some choice about where they want to live in Canberra, which is not always the city. It is not always the city. Just like everybody else, public housing tenants want to live all over the city, in homes that best suit their or their families' needs.

The other part of it is that during the renewal program, when tenants move, they are supported before they move, they are supported during their move and they are supported after their move. They are connected up with the local community, with community service organisations and with other support services, to make sure that they are being supported through this whole process. As far as I am advised, and from the tenants whom I have spoken to who have already moved through this, they have been well supported and are happily getting on with their lives in their new homes.

MR HANSON: Minister, as distinct from social housing, how much public housing will remain on Northbourne Avenue?

MS BERRY: I am not sure what you are talking about.

Mr Hanson: From community housing.

MS BERRY: There are 177 dwellings that have been purchased or built through the public housing renewal program within the Northbourne Avenue corridor, and there are 169 public housing dwellings.

Education—ACT training awards

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research. Can the minister please update the Assembly about the recent ACT training awards?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Pettersson, who was able to join me at the ACT training awards, which are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the commitment, innovation and outstanding achievements of all of those involved in the ACT's VET sector. This year's awards attracted 82 nominations across 14 categories and were attended by almost 500 guests.

I also thank and congratulate local industry for their considerable support of the event. This year \$54,000 in sponsorship was received from 13 different organisations. Importantly, 42 judges, including industry representatives, past winners and government officials, also participated in judging panels. I was thrilled to announce the individual award winners on the night and to present Tiffany Davies with the 2017 ACT Australian Apprentice of the Year award. Tiffany studied for a certificate III in retail baking and is a great example of an apprentice whose hard work and dedication, displayed throughout her apprenticeship, has seen her flourish in an industry she loves.

It was also great to see our local businesses being recognised for their commitment to their employees and the ACT's VET sector. Employers recognised on the night included Canberra Connections, Calvary John James Hospital and the Vikings Group. Their contribution to the VET sector as users, advocates and role models for training is incredibly important. The outstanding achievements by local individuals and businesses are a testament to the quality provision of VET we have here in the ACT.

MR PETTERSSON: Can the minister advise the Assembly of how the ACT government is helping Canberrans to access vocational training?

MS FITZHARRIS: Indeed the ACT government, through Skills Canberra, supports jobseekers and existing workers through two main programs: Australian apprenticeships and skilled capital.

The Australian apprenticeships program provides vocational education and training in conjunction with employment under an apprenticeship or traineeship. Skilled capital funds VET in accordance with the identified demand for skills in the ACT and offers a range of additional funding supports to encourage completion of a qualification or, in the most recent list, the new skill set. Subsidies for skilled capital and Australian apprenticeships are provided towards training, relative to the demand for skills associated with each specific qualification. This means that funding is aimed at qualifications that are more likely to deliver good quality employment outcomes for students.

Skills Canberra also assures the quality of training delivered in the ACT through the ACT quality framework. I must mention that Canberrans are also able to access

VET through the Canberra Institute of Technology. CIT delivers hundreds of qualifications to a diverse range of students, subsidised by the ACT government. In 2016, CIT delivered 5.3 million training hours, with almost 31,000 program enrolments.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what are the next steps for winners of the 2017 ACT training awards?

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you, Ms Cheyne, for the supplementary. These winners will play an important role in our community over the next year, as have those that preceded them, as you know very well, Madam Speaker. By sharing their experiences, advice and knowledge, our most recent award winners and finalists are encouraging many more people to see the benefits of VET and how it can, indeed, change their lives. In addition, they also act to motivate employers to invest in VET and stay competitive with their training offerings.

Individual winners in aligned categories will represent the ACT as finalists at the Australian Training Awards Finalist Week, with the presentations this year being held in Canberra in November. Organisation winners from the ACT training awards have had their nominations progressed to the Australian training awards judging panels for review. During the Australian Training Awards Finalist Week, finalists across all jurisdictions participate in a range of professional development workshops, undertake a national judging interview, attend the Australian government's skills forum and participate in a range of other networking activities.

I am proud to say that the ACT achieved tremendous success at last year's Australian training awards, with Shane Dealy winning the Australian apprentice of the year category, Madeline Wallace being the runner-up in the Australian school-based apprentice of the year, the academy of Interactive Entertainment winning small training provider of the year, and Bond Hair Religion taking out small employer of the year. We look forward to success again in this year's awards.

Mental health—office for mental health

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. The 2017-18 budget contains \$500,000 to fund the office for mental health, which is not yet operating. In the *Canberra Times* of 13 September you are quoted as saying that the office will be operating by 1 July 2018. In your ministerial statement of 12 September you stated that you do not yet have a model for the office for mental health. Minister, how did you determine that \$500,000 would be the appropriate level of funding for the office for mental health given that you have not yet developed a model for it?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank Mrs Kikkert for the question. Clearly we need some funds available to undertake a range of consultation and establishment activities during this financial year. That is the basis on which the budget submission was put forward.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, how much of the \$500,000 allocated in this year's budget will be used, and what will it be used for?

MR RATTENBURY: Madam Speaker, I was actually asked a question about this by Ms Lee in the chamber yesterday, and I took it on notice. I was planning to answer it at the end of question time, as is normal practice, but I will take the opportunity now.

I can confirm the answer to Ms Lee's question yesterday, which was:

Minister, how much of the 2017-18 budget appropriation of \$500,000 has been spent so far on the office of mental health initiative, on what has this been spent and will the full amount be spent this financial year?

The answer is this. Only three weeks after the passage of the appropriation bill, as I suspected, none of it has been actually spent at this point. The funds will start to be expended by the end of October 2017. I expect that approximately the full amount will be spent by the end of the financial year. Of course, it may be a little less or it may be a little more; that is the nature of these things. But that is the budget we have for this financial year.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what was the target date for the opening of the office for mental health when the budget was developed?

MR RATTENBURY: I am just trying to think of the answer to that. Certainly, when the policy was announced during the election campaign there was not a target date because, as I stated in the press in the last few days, I held the view then, and I still hold the view, that it is important that we have this conversation with the community, that we actually speak to all of the stakeholders, who have a great deal of expertise, both within government agencies and outside government agencies, and that we take the time to get this right. So whilst Mrs Dunne has offered her views on how I should feel about myself, I do not share that analysis.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: The irony, from my colleagues in the Liberal Party, having regard to the style that they run in this place, when they actually walk up to people and say, "Are you okay?" is actually quite striking, considering the way they conduct themselves in this chamber on a regular basis. Nonetheless, I have been very clear that the target date for the office for mental health is 1 July 2018. That was certainly the basis of my thinking when we were putting the budget submissions forward.

Mental health—R U OK? campaign

MS CHEYNE: My question is also to the Minister for Mental Health and it follows perhaps some of the comments that the opposition were making across the chamber. Minister, what is the ACT government doing to support and promote the R U OK? Day campaign?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the question and I welcome the fact that many members are supporting today's important R U OK? national day, which traditionally takes place on the second Thursday in September. It is a very important initiative. I think the premise behind it is very powerful. R U OK? is a national suicide prevention charity dedicated to encouraging and empowering everyone to ask the simple question: are you okay?

The vision is a world where we are all connected and protected from suicide. The premise behind this charity is that simply asking the question and expressing concern is a powerful way to minimise isolation, for people to realise that they are not alone, that they can reach out and seek support when they are struggling with their sense of themselves and possibly contemplating suicide.

The ACT government is a strong supporter of this initiative. We were very pleased to welcome the R U OK? conversation convoy into Canberra recently. They had been travelling around the country for an extended period of time. They were in Canberra on 30 August. They had been on the road for six weeks travelling around 14,000 kilometres and visiting 20 communities during that tour.

I was very pleased to welcome them here. I was particularly appreciative of an event held over near Parliament House by the commonwealth Treasury department led by the secretary to that department. I think the great leadership shown by the secretary in having all his staff participate in a program like that was a good example of what can be done, particularly for those in leadership positions, to indicate that it is okay to seek help and also encourage others to offer that help where it is needed.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what is the importance of encouraging people in our community to reach out to friends, loved ones and colleagues and simply ask—seriously—“Are you OK?”?

MR RATTENBURY: The research undertaken by the R U OK? foundation has identified that many people are worried that they do not have the skills to reach out. The good news is that 70 per cent of respondents said they felt comfortable asking that question, but obviously around 30 per cent felt they were not. The reasons why they did not feel comfortable included not knowing what to say if someone did raise a concern, worrying that they might make it worse, and worrying that the person they asked might get angry. Some felt that they were not expert enough and that if they did ask the question and get a response they would not know how to proceed. Some of these conversations are too big for friends, but the important part is simply asking the opening question.

The R U OK? foundation has posited a four-step model which is a good one to think about. The first step is simply the question “Are you OK?” The second is to actively listen to the response, to simply be a listening ear, not needing to provide an answer straightaway. Some of us have a tendency sometimes to feel like we need all of the answers. The third step is to encourage action. That does not mean you need to have the answers yourself; perhaps it means encouraging someone to reach out to a mental

health service or to an organisation like Lifeline or others in the community that do have experts on staff.

The fourth step is to check in, to come back a little while later and ask how someone is now going and whether they have followed through on some of those actions. These are the ideas that are being promoted by the R U OK? foundation. They are great lessons for us, as members, to keep in mind, either to encourage us to take those steps ourselves or to encourage others in the community to think through those steps and be aware of them.

MR STEEL: Minister, what is the government doing to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Canberrans?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank Mr Steel for the question. A range of initiatives is in place right across a number of ACT departments. Specifically, in this year's budget we funded \$2.9 million to establish the new office for mental health which, despite comments from across the chamber, I think is well on the way and is certainly provoking an important community conversation about how we get this exactly right.

We have opened the new rehabilitation beds at the Dhulwa mental health unit. This project has been in train for some years now, but certainly in the time I have been the minister I have been very pleased that that facility is now open and has added another component to the ACT's mental health response.

The budget also saw \$5.3 million to invest in a range of programs and services to improve the mental health of Canberrans, including continued funding for headspace and the detention exit outreach program. We also invested \$1.8 million to reduce the incidence of suicide in our community through funding for the Black Dog Institute's LifeSpan suicide prevention program. They are a couple of the specific initiatives in this year's budget.

Of course, a range of other services is being provided right across our community directly by government through things such as our community mental health services as well as the more acute end of the spectrum in the emergency department and the adult mental health unit, then through a range of community organisations that are funded by the government to provide support and, of course, the additional resources they bring to it through fundraising. There is a lot of work across the community. My focus in the next couple of years is to ensure those services are well coordinated and provide a clear pathway for people who come into contact with their services.

Mr Barr: Madam Speaker, further questions can be placed on the notice paper.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice

Light rail—local contracts

MS FITZHARRIS: Yesterday in question time the opposition asked me about locally based firms engaged by Canberra Metro on the light rail project, and I am very pleased to report that 58 per cent of the contracts have been awarded to Canberra

businesses. The 137 contracts that have gone to 114 ACT companies are: TR Civils; AAPT, with their locally based employees here; ABS Facade; ACT Concrete Cutting; ACT Earthing; ACT Undercut; ACT Water; ActewAGL; AECOM; ALS; AmPelite; Auricon; Beast Solutions; Blackwoods & Jay; Canberra Drilling Rigs; Cancut; Capella Hydraulic and Civils; Capital Asphalt; Capital Cut and Core; Capital Hydraulics and Drains Pty Ltd; Capital Lines & Signs Pty Ltd; Cardno & Coffey Testing; Casbaill Crane Hire; City Group Pty Ltd; Citywide Solutions; Civil Construction Hire; Coates Hire; Coffey Australia; Coffey Environments Australia; Commence Communications; Condrill; CPS Concreting; CR Kennedy & Co; D Group; Daley Boring, trading as Daley Directional Drilling; Devlin Engineering; D-Group; Digitin Coms; Diverse Concreting; DSB; Ecowise; Elton Consulting; J James; Gjames; Glade Group; Gold Leaf Tree Services; Grande Formworks; Greenaway Sediment; Group One; Gungahlin Concrete Pumping; Hallam Excavation & Haulage; Holcim; ICON; iiNET; Jackson Road Sweeping Services; JAG Pumping; Jascott Construction; Jaybro; JEMINA; Jim's Fencing; JMG Concreting; Joe Max, trading as Jacko's Concrete Cutting; Josh Small; Landmark Surveys; Leach Steger; Len Madden; LinQ Consultants; Liscon; M&M Civil Constructions; MA Baker Transport; Manteena; Michael Dean Fencing; Midtown Hydraulic Solutions; MMA Civil Contractors; Monaro Mix Specified Concrete; Muddy's Contracting; Nathan Contractors; Native Seeds; NBN; NGH Environmental; No Waste Wood Busters; Optus; OzMetalWorks; Patches Asphalt; Patches Earthmoving & CPB Direct; Pinnacle ACT; Premier Metal; Provincial; Quinn Masonry; RAR Crane Hire; Rick Thorne Construction; RMD Australia; Rodgers Electrical; Rovera; Shadow Security (Jason & Paul Handley); SJL Welding, trading as Little River Earthworks; Skyhire; SMEC; Snowmax Civils; SNP; Sodablast; Southern Sullage Service; Staples; Surefab; Telstra; Tiger Waste Collection (Carmody & Sons); Total Traffic Engineering; Truflow Spray Booths; Uncle Jimmy; Water Relocation; Webb Australia Group; and Yarralumla Nursery.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3.25): Under standing order 213, I move:

That the document being quoted from by Ms Fitzharris (Minister for Transport and City Services) be presented to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.25): I would be delighted to. I present the following paper:

ACT companies involved with the light rail project—List.

Hume—waste to energy plant

MS BERRY: Before we move to Ms Lawder's business, I have a question time matter regarding the FOY Group. The Suburban Land Agency is working with the FOY Group in relation to a settlement. Interest penalties will be determined when a resolution is decided.

Order to table

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.25): I seek leave to move the motion circulated in my name.

Leave not granted.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Ms Cody for today for personal reasons.

Display of nutritional information for food—review report Paper and statement by minister

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.26): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Food Act, pursuant to section 115—Nutritional Information for Food—Review of Display—Review report—2017.

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

Leave granted.

MS FITZHARRIS: I am very pleased to table the report *Review of Display of Nutritional Information for Food*. On 1 January 2013 the Food Act 2001 was amended to require certain standard food outlets to display the average energy content of their standard food items in kilojoules. The amendments, which are commonly referred to as the kilojoule display laws, were introduced principally to enable consumers to make more informed choices when purchasing ready-to-eat foods.

In accordance with the act, affected standard food outlets are required to display the average energy content of standard food items for sale, expressed in kilojoules. Retail food outlets are only captured by these display laws if they sell standardised food items and operate as a part of a chain business which operates at seven or more sites in the ACT or 50 or more sites across Australia. Businesses affected by the kilojoule display laws typically include supermarkets, convenience stores and larger fast food/cafe and bakery chains.

The report reviews the operation and impact of the kilojoule display laws and presents studies undertaken by Australian jurisdictions on requirements to display nutritional information at food outlets. In presenting these studies, the report also considers the merits of including additional nutritional information—that is, fat, salt and carbohydrate content—on point-of-sale displays. The review of the operation of the kilojoule display laws found that the laws operate as intended. Generally, there is a

high level of industry compliance with the display requirements. The displays also serve the purpose of providing more information to consumers to enable informed dietary choices.

With respect to the impact of the kilojoule display laws, the review found that consumers are supportive of the laws. There are, however, some consumer knowledge gaps that may prevent effective use of the available nutritional information. For instance, many consumers are still not aware of the displays and some consumers do not know the average daily energy intake for an adult or how best to apply kilojoule displays to their food choices. These gaps present opportunities, however, for government to improve consumer understanding and use of the displays. They are also an opportunity to work with industry to maximise the potential benefits of the laws.

I accept and support the recommendations made in the review report. The ACT government remains committed to promoting and enabling healthy food and lifestyle choices in order to minimise the adverse personal and community impacts of obesity in particular. As such, my directorate is already working to action the report's recommendations and take advantage of the insight into potential areas of improvement the report has highlighted. In accordance with my obligations under the act, I commend this report to the Assembly.

Standing orders—suspension

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.29): I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Ms Lawder moving a motion to require the ACT Government to table documents relating to cladding on the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children.

What we have seen today from this government is part of an ongoing pattern, a pattern, I guess I would call it, of treating the opposition like mushrooms. And, in case you are not aware, that involves keeping them in the dark and feeding them manure. This is what we are seeing here. We had that discussion earlier this week about the pesky number of questions that the opposition has the temerity to ask of the government. That is because the government do treat us like mushrooms. They do try to keep as much information from us as possible.

The case in point today is the report relating to the flammable cladding at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. The government does not want to have this discussion, and you have to ask why they do not want to have this discussion. According to what we have already heard in this Assembly, Ms Fitzharris has told us that ACT Health has met with representatives of commercial services and infrastructure in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, ACT Fire & Rescue and Access Canberra, as well as internal clinical representatives, to discuss the draft report findings, cross-agency implications and operational implications for ACT Health. Yet the government are unwilling or unable to release that report to the opposition. It is because they like to think of themselves as the—

Mr Gentleman: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

MS LAWDER: Can we stop the clock, please, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER: Stop the clock, please. Yes.

Mr Gentleman: My understanding of the standing orders is that debate needs to be relevant to the motion. The motion in this case is to suspend standing orders to allow what I see as a private member's motion to go forward, and I have not heard any debate relative to that part of the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, on the point of order?

Mr Coe: Yes, on that point of order, Ms Lawder has said on numerous occasions why she thinks the government does not want to address this matter. That is at the core of what suspension of standing orders is all about and I think she is entirely in order.

MADAM SPEAKER: I am not going to rule on the point of order, but I will ask Ms Lawder to be more succinct and direct in her comments as to the reason for the suspension in the time that she has left.

MS LAWDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To return to what I was saying, this government needs to be more open and accountable. We have talked about that. The government themselves on many occasions have talked about open government, transparency, and yet they are stymieing every opportunity. In the past few weeks, starting with unanswered questions to my email of 12 July to Minister Gentleman and numerous questions in this place, the government has continued to obfuscate and avoid the questions that we have asked. If we had access to this document, who knows, I might think, "Oh, perhaps I do not need to keep asking these questions because I have some answers." This document might provide those answers. But until this government lives up to their lovely, honeyed words of openness and transparency, we will not know.

We asked questions in this place and then what did we see, magically? An article in the paper yesterday from the task force about the cladding. They are perfectly happy to give this information to the *Canberra Times* but not to the opposition. Heaven forbid that we give information to the opposition. Heaven forbid that we give leave to move a motion requiring them to table the report. No, what we want to do here—this government, this arrogant, out-of-touch government—is continue to obfuscate and continue to withhold information that any opposition in any parliament in our Westminster system would have every right to seek.

I do not understand why they are so unwilling, when they have already discussed this report with so many other agencies and organisations, to provide it to the opposition, why they are so unwilling to answer questions, why they are so unwilling to live up to their own words of openness, transparency, accountability. A compact with the ACT people? No. Instead it is actually about treating the opposition like mushrooms, and it makes me really, really angry.

Mr Steel: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the member has not once brought this back to the question of why standing orders should be suspended. On a matter of relevance I ask that you please rule.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lawder, you have 48 seconds left. I am sure you will conclude.

MS LAWDER: Thank you so much. I might just repeatedly call on the government to live up to their own rhetoric, which would be a nice change. Instead of talking the talk, I would actually like them to walk the talk this time, just this once, and provide that information to the opposition.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.34): I note that—and I may be mistaken—the first time that the opposition asked for the particular document referred to in Ms Lawder’s motion was about 20 minutes ago. And then, unbeknown to me and to members here, a motion was circulated—

Mr Coe: You refused.

MS FITZHARRIS: I was not directly asked and I did not refuse. In the interests of a functioning Assembly—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe—

Ms Lawder interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members of the opposition, Ms Lawder was heard in peace, other than a couple of points of order. Give that due respect back to the minister, thank you.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a very serious matter. The tirade of sarcasm that we have just been subjected to could have been avoided if a simple question had been put to me: “Would the minister consider tabling this report?” I have been very open in all my dealings on this matter in this place, in responding to questions from the opposition, in responding to questions in the media. I note again that ACT Fire & Rescue has confirmed that the Centenary hospital is a safe, modern, building. This reckless political exercise by the opposition is not really what they claim it is. This is a political exercise by which they are seeking to whip up fear in our community.

Mrs Dunne has suggested on many occasions that she wants to be a constructive partner. I do not consider this exercise constructive—to ask for something about 20 minutes ago and to then circulate a motion. Mrs Dunne and many other members, all other members of the opposition, are welcome to walk around here and ask me, as I frequently walk around and talk to members on the other side.

I am open to considering this if the opposition actually want to be constructive on this matter. So far all they have sought to do is whip up fear, not listen to experts, and pull stunts like this. If they would like to deal with this constructively rather than asking for it at about 10 past 3, towards the end of the day, I am very open to listening. I am very open to that. I would like to move that we adjourn debate on this motion, and I will come back to this place on the first sitting day of next week with a response.

MADAM SPEAKER: You cannot. You cannot adjourn it, Ms Fitzharris. Have you concluded? You have. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (3.38): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this matter forward, and I also want to speak on why it is important to suspend standing orders. The minister has talked about stunts and a whole lot of things like this. What we are looking for is transparency. The minister says, “I have been very open.” If the minister was being absolutely open, she would have tabled this report when the issue of cladding first became an issue, but that has not been the case. There has been a lot of questioning about the cladding. The minister’s response has been, “Believe me, and believe what I am telling you other people have told us.” It is not sufficient for the people of the ACT for the government to just say to trust the minister, to trust that she is telling us everything that she has been told by officials.

That is why Ms Lawder has attempted to have the report tabled here today. If the minister were so open to this, the government would have allowed leave and it would have been unnecessary to have a 15-minute debate on the suspension of standing orders. If the government were open to this they could have given leave. In the course of the debate on the substantive motion, if the minister was uncertain she could have said, “Well, give me another time or give me until next week.” We could have suspended it till next week. But we did not get to that point, because leave was not given. Now Ms Lawder has to move for the suspension of standing orders to move that the debate proceed. You could have saved a whole lot of time if you had just given leave.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3.40): Having just heard Mrs Dunne’s and Ms Lawder’s contributions, there is no case to suspend standing orders. If an outbreak of cooperation might proceed from this point, I make a few suggestions to members. Dropping in motions like this with no notice, when you have other forms of this place to use in a sitting fortnight, including private members’ business, is not the appropriate form. It is open to Ms Lawder, having given and lodged an undated notice of motion, to move this in private members’ business next week. If she was so keen and the matter was so urgent that the information had to be provided today, as opposed to when the Assembly could have time to consider her motion, she could have approached the minister beforehand and sought agreement either to have a conversation in relation to the specific document or at least agreement in this place on how we would deal with the matter.

The government is very clear in relation to how we will approach these matters. Pulling stunts such as seeking to suspend standing orders and seeking to drop in

motions like this with little or no notice will not be encouraged or supported. It will not be encouraged or supported and—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR BARR: Mr Coe's interjections, whilst they might be interesting parliamentary tactics, show no courtesy whatsoever. When you are seeking to suspend standing orders, you need a majority of members in this place to agree with you. A simple conversation beforehand may have resolved this matter. My advice to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is that you can, of course, as I indicated earlier, place this on notice and have the Assembly devote an hour to debating it next Wednesday, in six days time, when this place devotes an entire day to private members' business, more time than any other parliament in the country devotes to private members' business. That would be an appropriate use of the forms of this house for discussion of these matters, and that is why we will not be supporting the motion for the suspension of standing orders this afternoon.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury, you have about 45 seconds.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3.43): That is what I figured. Everyone else has been so talkative this afternoon. Madam Speaker, the Greens would normally support this sort of suspension of standing orders; we do, as members know, generally take the view that the Assembly should consider these matters. But Ms Le Couteur and I have listened carefully to the debate, and we take on board the point that the minister for health made: that this was not actually asked for in question time. Just 30 minutes ago, the minister could have been asked for this paper. She was not asked for the paper in question time and so we do not see the urgency in debating this matter now.

Mrs Kikkert: I have something to say.

MADAM SPEAKER: No. We only have 15 minutes, and time has expired.

Question put:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent Ms Lawder moving a motion to require the ACT Government to table documents relating to cladding on the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 12

Mr Coe	Mr Milligan	Mr Barr	Ms Orr
Mrs Dunne	Mr Parton	Ms Burch	Mr Pettersson
Mr Hanson	Mr Wall	Ms Cheyne	Mr Ramsay
Mrs Kikkert		Ms Fitzharris	Mr Rattenbury
Ms Lawder		Mr Gentleman	Mr Steel
Ms Lee		Ms Le Couteur	Ms Stephen-Smith

Question resolved in the negative.

Economy—vocational education and training

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM SPEAKER: I have received letters from Ms Cheyne, Mrs Dunne, Mr Hanson, Mrs Kikkert, Ms Lee, Ms Orr, Mr Parton, Mr Pettersson, Mr Steel 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 Steel be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of supporting VET students to contribute to the wider ACT economy.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (3.48): I am very pleased to finally be able to speak on this matter of public importance today, to highlight the significant contribution that vocational education and training students and the VET sector make to the future prosperity of the territory. Our government supports a strong VET system and a strong Canberra Institute of Technology, because these institutions build skills and human capital, which drive our economy. As a government we have made a concerted effort to ensure that all young people and mature age students are afforded a quality education and the opportunity to be supported to gain the skills they need to enter or re-enter the workforce, to build careers, businesses and industries.

Vocational education in the ACT is a well-regarded and nationally recognised alternative and offers a considerable benefit to our community. The skills that are built in the VET system enable students to go on to work in a range of industries that contribute significantly to the economy. The system gives young people and other students the opportunity to develop and acquire practical workplace skills or to re-skill and go on to provide a valuable contribution to the ACT economy.

This week, many of my colleagues have spoken about the importance of our government's responsible economic management in the ACT. If the ACT is to continue to grow our economy, we need to continue to ensure that our workforce is equipped with new skills and the qualifications for the growing needs of our city and our economy. Often these skills are gained on the job and in close collaboration with employers and their industries. In fact, the distinguishing and important feature of the vocational and education training sector is the workplace learning opportunities that bring students into direct contact with the workplace. This is something we need to continue to build on, to strengthen our VET system by working with employers, industry bodies, the CIT and other private registered training organisations, and by looking at new opportunities. These opportunities are often identified by employers, based on emerging industry skill needs and how students can be better supported and equipped for the needs of employers and the economy.

VET should not be seen as a secondary or lesser status pathway for students. Students participating in the VET system can enter well-paid jobs and have fulfilling careers. VET in the ACT plays a crucial role in meeting the demands of new and emerging market needs that universities simply do not offer. VET should not be seen or become the forgotten "middle child". That is why our government places a strong emphasis on

the importance of this vocational pathway for ACT students. We must continue to strengthen this pathway and support students with quality skills training.

It is important to acknowledge that the focus on dodgy VET providers, while no doubt an important compliance effort by the commonwealth to ensure that the quality of the VET sector is not undermined, has been a distraction for the development of VET policy generally in this country, but it is not an issue that has particularly affected the ACT, where we have a very strong VET sector, delivering real job outcomes for VET students.

Our Canberra Institute of Technology in particular is well known and respected as a quality institution. This is reflected in student outcomes and reflected by employers. There are many other respected registered training organisations in the ACT as well. These VET institutions will continue to gain importance with the rise of high skilled jobs in the economy. Data from the ABS labour force survey shows that employment is showing the greatest growth in occupations requiring a degree or a diploma level qualification.

As our economy changes rapidly, so too must our VET system be able to prepare students to contribute to the new economy, particularly the digital economy. The disciplines of science, technology, engineering and maths, including digital literacy skills, continue to increase in importance. The Committee for Economic Development of Australia, CEDA, suggests that adapting to the digital economy means focusing on a diverse and transferable set of skills and fostering creativity and social intelligence. The CSIRO also suggests that communication skills and the ability to interact and apply social skills in the future economy may be of even more importance than the core STEM and literacy skills. Preparing students for careers rather than focusing on a particular job may also assist during this evolution, as well as continuing to align VET training with the needs of employers.

While the digital economy is no doubt causing disruption and may result in future jobs becoming automated, among the 25 per cent of jobs with the lowest probability of being automated are the following prominent VET-related occupations: childcare workers; fitness instructors; occupational therapy technicians; fashion designers; training and development specialists; recreational workers; and social and community service managers. These are all sectors and industries which rely on the skills gained through the VET system, and these and other skills-based occupations are growing, so there continue to be significant opportunities for more students to pursue VET pathways that contribute to our present and future economies.

The Canberra Institute of Technology strategic compass 2020 has also considered the changing nature of the economy. As skill demand increases and workplaces change, the CIT is preparing for the future of learning by, among other things, ensuring that students have access to contemporary learning environments on all campuses; implementing new digital learning platforms and capabilities to keep our students connected; establishing centres of excellence in areas such as trades and renewable energy; increasing digital connectivity for students to seamlessly integrate learning from the workplace into the classroom and into everyday life; strengthening industry connections to ensure students have the best access to their future employers; and

collaborating with forward thinking bodies, such as the CBR Innovation Network, peak industry bodies and other tertiary and research institutions connecting CIT students with other leaders in Australia's knowledge capital. It is fantastic to see the CIT, in particular, embracing innovation and providing students with the best support in building the skills necessary for the wider economy.

CIT have placed a high priority on the preparation of students entering this changing and complex area of Canberra's digital economy. To meet this incoming demand for digital jobs and IT workers with cutting-edge skills, CIT has partnered with one of the nation's leading IT companies, Dialog, to develop the ICT careers program. Fifteen certificate IV students studying information technology will be given the opportunity to continue their education as industry trainees for Dialog. This unique opportunity directly addresses the need for more students to learn about the ways that technology is being deployed in Canberra and will help to facilitate graduates to gain entry into this new and exciting area of our economy. While undertaking the program, students will be offered the opportunity to continue their studies and gain further skills by completing a diploma of information technology during their time on the job with Dialog.

The ACT has become a hub for renewable energy industry investment, growth and development, and research and product development, as well as education and training, driven by our government's responsible approach to climate change and the environment. Over the next five years, the CIT will extend quality vocational training initiatives, with qualifications in wind, solar, sustainability and a range of associated programs, including construction and contract management, workplace safety, conservation and land management and project management, all part of the CIT's renewable energy skills centre of excellence.

These innovative programs are building on Canberra's reputation as a destination for first-class education. Our CIT is drawing students from across Australia and all over the world to take part in innovative programs, an export trade that contributes to our economy locally. Last year, 18.8 per cent of all students were from New South Wales, 11.5 per cent came from other states and 5.6 per cent came to study from other countries. This is a great achievement that proves the many strengths of the VET sector in the ACT.

During my time in the Assembly, I have spoken ad nauseam regarding the importance of early childhood education and development. The economic evidence is unequivocal: if we invest in our young children by providing quality early childhood education, delivered by qualified educators who are trained through our quality VET system, we can amplify children's development. This in turn has profound economic benefits in children's later education and when they enter the workforce. We know from PricewaterhouseCoopers modelling that the benefits to gross domestic product of children receiving a quality education and care program are \$10.3 billion cumulative to 2050.

The Spark west Belconnen and Parkwood training and employment initiative has recognised these facts. The Spark training initiative was developed in collaboration with the Land Development Agency and Riverview developments, Belconnen

Community Service and CIT early childhood. The initiative is an important step towards meeting the forthcoming market needs in the growing north of Canberra, which will soon cater to thousands of young families.

Students studying their certificate III in early childhood will be supported by an expert team of qualified early childhood supervisors led by Canberra Institute of Technology professionals, including educator Michelle Armstrong. The fantastic initiative has been created with the increased economic potential of early childhood education as a growing area for employment and the need to support well-equipped and skilled graduates to, in turn, support children's development and our future prosperity in mind.

All of the programs and initiatives that I have spoken about today have illustrated that VET is a critically important part of our economy and our tertiary education system. VET in the ACT opens up many important pathways for students to make their valued contribution to our community and our economy. Our government will continue to work with schools, businesses and industries to provide the best possible vocational education system in the ACT and support VET students to achieve the best possible skills and job outcomes, because it is crucial for the ACT's future prosperity.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (3.59): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the opposition on this matter of public importance, which is about the importance of supporting vocational training students to contribute to the wider ACT economy. When it comes to the support that it takes to get through vocational training in the many formats in which it can be presented, I can largely draw on my own experience of doing school-based training through my college years, workplace training in hospitality, also whilst at school, as well as in a formal apprenticeship later on in my career.

As I said, vocational training comes in many shapes, sizes and forms. With respect to my experience, whilst in college I did a certificate I and II in hospitality and kitchen operations. That was delivered as part of a line item in my college timetable. Each week we piled into the hospitality classrooms and learnt those skills. Upon completing two years of study, those in the class all got two certificates which certainly, for most of my classmates, made it much easier to achieve a part-time job whilst they continued studying at university.

I took a slightly different route. I am amongst the minority in this parliament on a number of fronts, including as one of those who have not been to university. Instead my career took me through hospitality. I did retail operations as a formal qualification whilst working at McDonald's and, later, upon entering my family's business, undertook a carpentry apprenticeship. That sort of training in the workplace can be delivered in a variety of ways—through a partnership with a TAFE organisation like CIT here in the ACT, which is where I went, or with other registered training organisations that oversee the formal qualification components of that training.

Another one that is becoming much more popular is the role of group training. That is a method of delivering vocational education for people in the ACT that has great benefits, both for the trainees themselves and for the businesses that are employing them. The group training organiser is able to take care of the training formalities, the

government requirements, the regulatory hoops that need to be jumped through and ticked off to gain the formal qualification. Also, they take care of the legal employment side for the trainees, such as superannuation, workers comp insurance and making sure that their salaries are paid weekly. For the businesses that then hire these young trainees through group training organisations, it means they do not need to worry about the regulatory hoops and it allows businesses to focus on what they do best—that is, getting on with the job.

In my experience in the construction industry, it was about building the city that we live in. For a sole operator—an electrician, a plumber, a small businessperson—it gives them the opportunity to say, “I want to give back to the trade. I want to ensure that the next generation are given the skills and the opportunities that I was given as a tradesperson.” The opportunities that exist through group training provide great efficiency and are a great win-win for business and trainee alike.

I also note that there is a substantial amount of work done at the commonwealth level in supporting traineeships and apprentices, through support for the businesses that take them on. There are other avenues that exist that certainly did not exist when I did my carpentry apprenticeship and which in many ways would have made it easier—that is, the opportunity now for vocational training to qualify for a student loan scheme.

Taking on a traditional trade often requires a substantial investment in tools, in order to do your trade appropriately. The opportunity to access a very cheap finance source to deck yourself out appropriately and make sure that you have the tools that you need to do your job and to learn, and to see yourself through study and then not have to pay that back until your income hits a threshold of slightly over \$55,000, is a very generous opportunity that exists now that did not exist when I went through my apprenticeship.

A lot more, though, can be done both at the commonwealth level and at the local level in supporting trainees, as well as businesses. Just last week I spoke to a hairdresser when I was getting my hair cut. They had just had a new apprentice start and she said, “This is the last time we ever do it. This is the last apprentice we’re taking on.” Of course, it twigged my interest and I asked about it. They find it very difficult as a small business taking on the responsibility of an apprentice, from day one in the workforce through the three to four years of hairdressing to get them to graduation. Their worry is that often they bring on an apprentice, they get them through their traineeship and, as soon as they are qualified, they say, “Thanks very much,” and they are off. So that return on their effort and their investment goes and they are simply poached by another business that does not give back, does not contribute and does not see the need to invest in training the next generation in their profession.

More sadly, there is also the difficulty they have had in finding good candidates to undertake training. Certainly, it has been my experience and that of a lot of my friends that went in this direction and went down the trade route that the expectation always is that you get through school, you get a year 12 score, you go to university, you get a good degree and then you get a good job. It is often frowned upon, sadly, and, for those who choose to take the vocational route, it is believed they have underachieved

in some way, shape or form. I think there is a lot that we can do in this place to support business, to support the apprentices and trainees that go down that route and, more broadly, to dispel those myths and promote the great opportunities that exist through vocational training and taking up alternative training.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (4.05): I thank Mr Steel very much for bringing this important matter forward. I know, Madam Speaker, of your longstanding interest and leadership in this area over a number of years. The establishment by the government of the higher education, training and research portfolio demonstrates the government's commitment to bringing a strong economic development and jobs focus to our relationship with Canberra's nationally and internationally recognised education, research and training institutions. A diversified economy with skills and talent at its core is how we view the job ahead. Skills and talent are the building blocks of new industries, and they are also the necessary ingredient for ongoing business competitiveness and innovation.

Today I specifically want to talk about the importance of supporting VET students, and the way they contribute to our economic development—and, beyond that, how VET is there to support all Canberrans to develop the skills they need to participate meaningfully and effectively in our labour market. The enormous contribution of VET and its students was recently on display at the ACT training awards that I spoke about earlier this afternoon. It was a parade of incredible students, teachers, employers and training providers, all with a clear passion for VET and what it is achieving. But while awards nights are there to celebrate the high achievers, it is hard not to reflect on the enormous contribution that VET and its various outputs are making generally; indeed, how all of us interact every day with the traditional trades, personal services, health care and the hospitality sector—and the list goes on—and how we possibly take some of the outcomes from the sector a little bit for granted sometimes.

Without VET and all its moving parts and players, without eager and passionate students coming in and moving through the system, and without those dedicated employers and trainers, Canberra simply could not operate. That is why VET, its students and supporters of the VET sector will always be a priority for the ACT government. We are focused on supporting the skills our community needs and skills for new industries to build our successful economy. We are focused on providing appropriate support for students to ensure that they have the best chance of completing their qualifications.

I am personally also very committed to removing the barriers that people face in accessing lifelong learning opportunities. Over the past two years, the ACT government has implemented a number of initiatives to support this. Through the skilled capital training initiative, the government has supported over 6,000 ACT residents' participation in VET qualifications since early 2015, and more recently in skill sets. We have also increased our engagement with Australian apprentices and their employers through a field officer program, ensuring that they can be appropriately supported throughout their training. The program also allows us to more broadly promote the enormous benefits of VET pathways for achievement in life, career and personal development.

We have recently changed our apprenticeship policy to broaden eligibility to include refugees and asylum seekers who hold temporary and bridging visas with working rights. Additionally, the ACT government also removed the limit on the number of funded traineeships and apprenticeships an individual can access over the course of his or her life. We are also working to improve access for individuals and particularly for mature-age workers. Through these changes we have seen the number of students commencing an apprenticeship in the ACT increase by over 25 per cent.

It is also important that our VET system is there to support people who would otherwise struggle to participate fully in the mainstream job market—people in our community who may come from disadvantage or those that have disengaged from the system for one reason or another. I am pleased to say that we have in place a range of strategies to ensure the opportunity for engagement and participation in VET. I speak of people in our community, particularly people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women returning to work after long absences caring for family, mature-age workers and older Canberrans, youth at risk, the unemployed and underemployed—all are addressed.

Both the skilled capital and the Australian apprenticeships programs provide additional funding support for services for students with identified needs and fee concessions to address barriers to participation. We also help registered training organisations support these students.

Our regulatory framework is also important. The standards for the delivery of training, which form part of the ACT quality framework, require RTOs to complete pre-training assessments of apprentices and trainees and arrange for additional support should they need it. In addition, students holding a health care or pension concession card or demonstrating genuine financial hardship are eligible for a fee concession under the skilled capital and apprenticeships programs.

How VET interacts and works with employers is also critical, as both Mr Steel and Mr Wall have noted. In that regard the work-based learning model is a really important aspect of delivery, supporting new workers with both technical knowledge and hands-on industry experience. The significant value that employers place on the skills and experience gained through work-based training is demonstrated in the recent moves to provide support for work placement opportunities in the higher education sector.

If we think about the jobs of the future, the work-based training model is also critical. The ACT government is an active supporter and participant in a current higher apprenticeship pilot being led by PricewaterhouseCoopers nationally. Higher apprenticeships combine higher level vocational qualifications—diplomas and advanced diplomas—and on-the-job training. Higher apprenticeships can be an attractive pathway for school leavers who do not wish to go to university, who want to earn and learn. Higher apprenticeships can also provide a valuable opportunity for existing workers to upskill and progress their career.

One of the features of this pilot is its flexibility in training delivery. We are fortunate in the ACT to have such a high quality public provider in the CIT. Under this pilot employers who would not have traditionally accessed VET to take on new workers have worked closely with CIT to develop flexible training that meets their needs.

We are, of course, all aware of CIT's presence and position in our VET system. It is by far the ACT's largest VET training provider, offering a wide range of courses, delivery styles, assessment methods, locations and support services. What CIT does touches on practically every member of our community. Indeed, most of us have a personal story to tell about a connection with CIT, as we have already heard this afternoon. We recognise how important this is and the need to support CIT into the future.

That is why we have committed to providing CIT with a minimum of 70 per cent of total ACT government funding for VET training delivery. We recognise the enormous change happening nationally in VET delivery and the critical role CIT has to play in shaping our economy and, indeed, our community. In conversations certainly with my counterpart ministers in other jurisdictions, given the significant reforms which have been detrimental to the VET sector in a number of other jurisdictions, the role of public TAFEs is as important as it has ever been, and a lot of jurisdictions do look to the ACT as a beacon in the VET sector.

Finally, the ACT government, along with other states and territories, is currently negotiating with the commonwealth to develop a new national partnership. The central part of that is the skilling Australians fund that was announced in the most recent budget. While the states and territories still have some concerns around the design parameters of the proposed fund, I am optimistic that a strong and collaborative effort will produce the right outcomes and system of support that apprentices and trainees need in the ACT and that the VET sector needs nationally.

We remain committed to building the very best VET sector we can, in partnership with our many stakeholders. At its heart the ACT government-funded VET system is people focused, working to ensure that every Canberran has the opportunity to reach their potential, contribute to the city and add to the strength, uniqueness and success of our city.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.13): In my time in the Assembly, I believe that the subject of vocational education and training—VET—has been a matter of public importance topic several times, and for very good reason. As we have heard, the VET sector is a major contributor not just to our economy but to the social fabric of our city.

CIT, the largest provider of vocational education in Canberra, is an internationally recognised leader in adult education and also has a long, strong and proud record of supporting its students to overcome barriers to engage in lifelong learning. For that reason it is a large part of the Greens' motivation for ensuring that the parliamentary agreement contains a specific mention: "to recognise that the Canberra Institute of Technology should remain the primary provider of high quality vocational training in the ACT, and to commit to maintain the CIT under public ownership".

We took this position because the central importance of CIT in the ACT speaks to that level of priority being given to it. As Ms Fitzharris touched on, we have seen attacks on the vocational education sector in other jurisdictions, which I think have undermined the sector. We want to make sure that it remains strong here in the ACT and that government has an ability to play a role in ensuring that it delivers not just for economic reasons but for important social reasons. We also know and recognise that there are many small and medium sized private registered training organisations in the ACT who are doing fantastic things to engage students and provide them with solid skills. They are contributing positively to the overall economic prosperity of the territory.

VET offers adults the chance to upskill, retrain or try out a completely new career pathway. We often think of these things as being for young people. I certainly know of examples where people have set off on a career path and have either realised it is not for them or have simply been inspired by something else and have taken the opportunity to go back to, in this case, CIT in the ACT and retrain, and embark on a new pathway. I think that is a pretty gutsy thing to do partway through your life, especially once you have trained for something else. The fact that that opportunity is there is a real strength for our city.

Certainly, in today's increasingly insecure work environment, and with growing underemployment and casualisation, it is entirely appropriate for a progressive government to support initiatives such as CIT. That point about insecurity is a very important one. I have framed my observations about people I know who have changed paths in a positive light, but there are, of course, those who are forced to change paths for reasons of job insecurity or underemployment. In that sense the CIT is an important part of the social safety net, and VET training generally, in terms of enabling people to retrain when circumstances might require it.

The ACT government provides direct support in the form of subsidies to these providers and to students to ensure that the great training opportunities are widely available. The government also promotes the learning capital concept and encourages new providers to enter our education and training system. Of course, there are, as is touched on in the topic of the matter of public importance today, benefits for the wider local economy from having a strong and vibrant VET sector.

It is also worth reflecting on the fact that there are direct financial benefits that will flow to students who have increased their employment prospects as a result of undertaking adult education. As I said before, undertaking adult education could be quite a daunting proposition. I also want to acknowledge the less tangible but nonetheless important social and personal benefits that flow from taking those opportunities.

Certainly, VET can offer students from a disadvantaged background a step up. It is a sometimes challenging environment, but with the right support and encouragement it can also be a life-changing experience that can grow self-esteem and have many positive impacts not only for the individuals but also for their families. You can get involved in a dry policy debate about the importance of VET and the economic

opportunities, but the very powerful social impact that can come through opportunity is something that is quite important to reflect on when we are considering this topic.

Looking forward, it is evident that vocational and other future training needs in the ACT must consider the context of a changing labour market, changing technologies, issues of gender equity, embracing cultural diversity and the development of new skills for a green economy. It is clear that the world is moving in different directions. We have all listened to those who speak about the future, and we have seen the analysis that indicates that jobs that exist today will not exist in just a decade's time. Jobs that we cannot even imagine now will exist in a decade's time.

We need to have the ability for people to adapt. Environmental services will be a particularly important part of that. The ACT government is striving hard at the moment to make this city a centre of renewable energy excellence, and we need to make sure that we provide a training base for people to go into that industry and to take up those opportunities as they grow in our city.

I certainly look forward to seeing more focus on the green economy in our city in the years to come. The ACT has strong foundations for being a city of the future in this regard, and the vocational education and training sector can be a really important part of that. There are many other areas in which the VET sector will also play a part, but that is obviously one of particular interest to me.

I thank Mr Steel for bringing forward this discussion today. It is important that we do focus on this matter, for all the reasons I have touched on today, as well as the reasons touched on in comments made by other speakers. It is a very important part of providing the opportunity in this city for people to be trained and to develop the skills they need to participate in the workforce.

Discussion concluded.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

R U OK? campaign

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.20): I rise today to talk about the successful R U OK? campaign that has been on the road for six weeks, travelling 14,000 kilometres and visiting 20 communities to show Australia that we all have what it takes to support those struggling with life, and culminating in today's recognition of R U OK? Day. There was some discussion of this in question time earlier today, but I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on it in the adjournment debate because I think this is a very important day. Once again I thank members, as so many members today are wearing their R U OK? Day badges and helping to promote this important cause.

As the first dedicated Minister for Mental Health in the ACT, I know that we need to talk more about our mental health and wellbeing. Each of us can do more in our own lives, starting with making a real effort to look out for our loved ones and acquaintances and commit to asking them “are you okay?” when you have a feeling that they are struggling or are not behaving as they normally would. Given that one in every five Australians experiences mental ill-health each year, it is an issue that directly or indirectly touches most Canberrans. Each of us needs to be informed about mental health and we have a responsibility to create supportive and inclusive communities.

The impact of stigma associated with mental illness can be as debilitating as the illness itself. Stigma can prevent people from seeking help early and it can contribute to social withdrawal, feelings of shame and a reduced capacity to participate in our community. That is why using such informal and normalising language like “Are you okay?” can really help people to open up about the challenges they are facing and ask for support. I believe it is also time to engage with mental health differently. Rather than just focusing on the problem of mental illness, we should also consider the resilience and strength that supporting each other can bring.

I grew up in a small town on the South Coast, and from a young age learned to really value community connectedness and the support and sense of wellbeing it brings. Similarly, Canberra is a place where community is strong and families and friendships can thrive—no-one is ever too far away, and it is important to remember that. When life gets busy, it can be easy to lose connections, but in Canberra it is not too hard to pick them back up again. As social connectedness is a protective factor in suicide prevention, it is important to hold on to those relationships.

The mission of R U OK? is to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling with life. R U OK? targets the help-giver, not the person who is struggling. It tells us that we should trust our gut when we think someone is not okay, learn how to ask and listen without judgement, and encourage people struggling to take action. R U OK? nurtures our sense of responsibility to regularly connect and support others. It also gives us the tools to have these conversations, with the four steps to an R U OK? conversation guide. These messages are very empowering as they give us all a sense that we can contribute to the wellbeing of our loved ones and those in our community by connecting with them through meaningful conversations.

Mental health and suicide prevention are continued priorities for the ACT government. We recognise the importance of investing in prevention and the promotion of support services and also in the need to provide coordinated and accessible services to those in our community who need help. Any death from suicide is one too many. However, it is a sad fact that each year so many families and communities are torn apart by these untimely and preventable deaths.

Suicide remains the leading cause of death for people under the age of 45, with an average of eight Australians taking their lives every single day. So on this day I congratulate the R U OK? foundation on their work and offer the reminder that as a

community and as individuals we can all make a difference with these deceptively simple words, “Are you okay?”

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (4.24): I too rise to speak about R U OK? On 30 August I was delighted, with Bec Cody, to welcome the R U OK? conversation convoy to Government House, with His Excellency Peter Cosgrove, the Governor-General and community representatives, including representatives of ACT schools. The convoy was raising awareness of the importance of R U OK? Day, which is today. R U OK? is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 2009 which encourages everyone to invest more time in giving the people around them the skills, motivation and confidence to start a conversation about anyone that they might be worried about.

The R U OK? “convo convoy” has been travelling across the country to raise awareness about suicide prevention, starting at Uluru on 1 August and travelling 14,000 kilometres around Australia. By the time the convoy reached Cairns today, marking R U OK? Day, they would have visited 20 communities across Australia. The theme of this tour around Australia was to promote the four steps to an R U OK? conversation—ask, listen, encourage and check in—as well as to address the problem of social isolation and how it is one of the key factors for suicide.

The conversation convoy leads up to other important social events, such as World Suicide Prevention Day, which took place on 10 September, and Mental Health Week in October, aimed at promoting the message that there are better outcomes when all stakeholders work together in addressing mental health concerns.

While R U OK? is not an organisation funded by the ACT government, mental health and suicide prevention are also continued priorities for the ACT government, as demonstrated by the establishment of the portfolio of the Minister for Mental Health. Within this portfolio are strategies focused on setting targets for suicide reduction and providing more support for our young people in particular. In the budget I was very pleased to see the \$2.9 million that has been invested in the soon to be established new office for mental health, which will, in addition to ACT Health, mental health, justice health, and alcohol and drug services, provide mental health services for those that work with people experiencing moderate to severe mental health problems, including suicide issues.

The ACT government supports the importance of mental health services in Canberra and promoting suicide prevention initiatives for young people and other members of the community. The R U OK? organisation is one of the most recognisable initiatives across the country. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the R U OK? convoy participants and CEO Brendan Maher on a fantastic journey. I encourage the Canberra community to take time on R U OK? Day to learn the four steps to an R U OK? conversation and support your friends and relatives.

Small business—Kingston shops

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (4.27): I am sure that you will agree with me that our local shops are a site of community, convenience and day-to-day living for many

Canberrans. They are where we go to pick up our milk and bread. They are where we gather for local festivals like the Light Up Lyneham night I spoke about a few weeks ago in this chamber, or the pop-up market at the Red Hill shops that saw a buzz of activity on Saturday, 26 August. It is also where local businesses look to set up so that they can contribute to their local community.

It is greatly disappointing to see local shops go through deterioration, as we have seen at a number of sites. This evening I talk specifically about the Kingston shops, now commonly known by locals as old Kingston. Once upon a time, the Kingston shops were the vibrant heart of the inner south, where you could run into your next-door neighbour or even the Prime Minister having coffee on a Saturday morning. Evenings were a buzz of activity, with cafes, restaurants and bars full of jolly Canberrans and visitors. Nights were full of young people enjoying their youth, enjoying a drink and perhaps making some new friends.

Fast forward to today and local businesses at the Kingston shops are struggling to keep their doors open. It is always disappointing to see a local business close. Behind every local business is the blood, sweat and tears of a hardworking Canberran, and usually their family and friends. The closure of the Kingston IGA is already having an impact on residents, local businesses and visitors. Kingston is a high density residential area and is a popular place to live for new Canberrans, particularly those who relocate to Canberra for a public service job. A lot of these young people do not have cars and rely on the services available at the Kingston shops for their groceries, weekend brunch, after-work drinks and a night out.

Kingston shops are home to award-winning restaurant Otis Dining Hall, a longstanding Canberra business in Stephanie's boutique, and the very trendy Floral Society's flower bar, just to name a few. Those who know that these exciting businesses exist will seek them out. But what these businesses, and all the other businesses at the Kingston shops, will miss is the foot traffic or the random visitors who may pop into these businesses before or after going to the supermarket. Supermarkets are a core necessity for local shops to survive and thrive.

I understand that there is a full-line supermarket due to open at the Kingston shops in 2019. But, in the meantime, Kingston residents and local businesses are to be left without a basic supermarket for two years. The site of the proposed supermarket, which is a part of a larger development, including residential, is on Eyre Street, on the opposite side from the former IGA site. Even when the new supermarket does open, it will run the real risk of creating a tale of two sides of Kingston: there will be the shiny, new development at Eyre Street, while its poor cousin runs along the opposite side of Kingston square at Jardine Street with boarded-up empty shops, if something is not done to revitalise the Kingston shops overall.

The Canberra Liberals are not new to fighting for the residents of Kingston. In the last term, my colleague and fellow member for Kurrajong Mr Doszpot lobbied hard, and I acknowledge his great work, in getting the grass at Green Square rejuvenated, making this common area more accessible and usable for residents and visitors.

I know that the Assembly inquired into supermarket policy in the last term. I hope that, in implementing policies like these, the government takes very seriously the impact on local businesses and access to amenities at local shops. We all want our local businesses to thrive. The best thing the government can do is to support the set-up and then allow businesses to do what they do best: get on with running their business. Funding for the upkeep of common areas like open spaces and public toilets, the maintenance of roads accessing the shops, and making sure there is ample and safe parking and support for local community groups to hold festivals, markets or food stalls are just some of the ways in which the government can and should help.

None of us wants to see our beloved local shops go from a thriving gathering place for Canberrans to desolate, boarded up, soulless places where Canberrans drive by, wistfully thinking of better times long gone. To all our hardworking business owners at the Kingston shops, I thank you for everything you do in making and keeping Kingston an integral part of the inner south, especially when times get tough.

Yerrabi electorate

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.32): I rise today to update the Assembly on my involvement with my electorate since our last sitting period. Since our August sitting period I have had the pleasure of being able to represent the minister for housing at the Community Housing Canberra scholarship presentation here at the Assembly. The Ken Horsham scholarships were presented to CHC housing patrons who are experiencing hardship but are endeavouring to excel in their fields of study. The Ken Horsham scholarships aim to remove some of the barriers to their goals by providing money for things like laptops, software, course fees and child care to support recipients in their educational pursuits. I was impressed by the diversity of students who were studying at college, undertaking apprenticeships at CIT, going to university and replacing or retraining for industry-specific registration of qualifications obtained internationally.

In the weeks following I was also able to join the minister for housing at a welcome ceremony to begin construction of CHC's first land rent site. A tree-planting ceremony marked the commencement of the construction of 32 new affordable two and three-bedroom townhouses in Moncrieff. The properties will be delivered by CHC under the ACT government's land rent scheme. These affordable properties will give a number of low income Canberra families the opportunity to realise the dream of owning their own home.

The government's land rent scheme gives people the chance to rent land through a land rent lease at a rate of two per cent of the unimproved value of the land rather than purchasing the land to build a home. The lessee is then only required to get a loan for the value of the actual house. While it is encouraging to think how many individuals and families have been able to benefit from the land rent scheme, the ACT government will continue to look at ways to make housing more affordable, and I note the number of conversations already underway with the community as part of the towards a new housing strategy engagement. A number of CHC's existing affordable rental tenants have taken up the opportunity to purchase one of the properties in the development in Moncrieff, in my electorate of Yerrabi.

At the welcome ceremony, we planted trees around the site to help commemorate the start of building works, and it was touching to see new families truly welcomed into the community with kindness and a broad understanding of their needs. Most of us here know that moving house takes a lot of organisation and patience and, particularly for families, moving can also be quite disruptive. So it is encouraging when the stability of home ownership can be celebrated by those around us.

I was also able to reach out to those in Yerrabi by offering students from Harrison school the opportunity to attend the EMILY's List annual oration. The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP delivered the oration on extensive women's issues and reproductive rights. The young women from Harrison School were particularly interested in the relationship between education and better outcomes for women in regard to unplanned pregnancy, domestic violence, sexual violence, reproductive coercion and reproductive freedom. I was impressed that the girls asked questions during the question period and shared their own experiences. It was a pleasure to meet with the young women from Harrison School and to hear their experiences.

R U OK? campaign

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.35): Much has already been said in this chamber today about R U OK? Day. I wish to add a personal contribution. R U OK? encourages concerned people to follow four simple steps that could change a life. The fourth of these is to check in. It is important, of course, to start this whole process of checking on people, but I hope that we will understand the absolute importance of this last step, especially since it unavoidably goes beyond a single event or even a single day. Four suggestions accompany this step. I quote the first and the last of these:

First, pop a reminder in your diary to call them in a couple of weeks. If they are really struggling, follow up with them sooner.

Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.

That was the fourth step. Personal experiences this year have reminded me just how important it is to follow up with people and maintain contact with them. A few months ago a young friend reached out to me one day and asked for help. I was busy working, but it is my goal never to be too busy to serve others. When I found this friend on the side of the road, he was in pretty bad shape. I did what I could for him right there and then. And then, thankfully, I had the good sense to keep checking in. Over the course of the past few months I have sought to regularly stay in touch through Facebook, text messages and phone calls.

It is this regular contact that most clearly communicates to people that our care and concern are genuine, and this is what can make a real difference. With his permission, I would like to read out a slightly edited version of a message he sent to me today:

Last night our conversation reminded me that, not too long ago, you came to help me when I was sitting in my car on the side of the road, in bad shape and with absolutely no way out of the situation I was in, but in the end you came to me. I am not giving up hope ... God bless you.

What a perfect reminder that the small things we do can make a real difference and even change a life.

In conclusion, I think of a dear friend of mine who has invited me on several occasions to assist her church, Calvary Chapel in Chifley, to serve food to the homeless. I love getting to participate because they offer far more than food. Each person who comes to eat is greeted by a friend who is happy just to take the time to listen, to be kind and to love a brother or a sister.

I hope we will all go beyond the helpful slogans and a special day to really care about our neighbours; to not only ask, "R U OK?" but to follow up with them for as long as it takes, no matter how long it takes, till we can rest assured that they are safe.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.39 pm until Tuesday, 19 September at 10 am.

Answers to questions

Alexander Maconochie Centre—methadone program (Question No 273)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 May 2017
(*redirected to the Minister for Mental Health*):

Further to the answer to question taken on notice #17 during the Justice and Community Safety Annual Reports Hearings 2015-16 on 7 March 2017, in relation to the methadone program at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, how (a) long do methadone recipients stay in the medical centre after ingesting the methadone and water, (b) long does it take for the ingested methadone to leave the recipient's system completely (c) is it known if a detainee is suspected of regurgitating methadone and is it possible for it to happen without detection.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- a) Newly inducted detainees receive their first dose of methadone in the Hume Health Centre (HHC) before 2 pm.

Detainees remain in the designated area until the staff person is satisfied that the detainee has taken the methadone. The staff member will:

- Complete a check of the inside of the detainees mouth;
- Speak with the detainee so that detainee will communicate in a manner that satisfies the officer there is nothing in the mouth. This may take several minutes to complete.

Detainees then remain in the HHC until ACTCS are available to escort them back to the residential areas. Nursing staff then review them in the residential areas 3-4 hours after dosing.

On subsequent days, newly inducted detainees receive their doses in the residential area, with this group also being reviewed by nursing staff at 3-4 hours after dosing.

After 5 days, detainees transition into the maintenance program whereby routine methadone dosing occurs within the residential areas. Detainees remain in the designated area until the staff person is satisfied that the detainee has taken the methadone. The staff member will:

- Complete a check of the inside of the detainees mouth;
- Speak with the detainee so that detainee will communicate in a manner that satisfies the officer there is nothing in the mouth. This may take several minutes to complete.

These rounds are completed by 2pm allowing nurses on site to respond to any concerns raised by detainees or custodial staff.

- b) Methadone is a long acting drug that can take up to several weeks to clear from the system completely.

- c) Regurgitation of methadone is detected by visual observation. It is possible for regurgitation to occur without detection.

Health—influenza (Question No 358)

Mrs Dunne asked the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) How many cases of flu had been recorded as at 1 August 2017 and how does this compare to the 2016 flu season.
- (2) How does the 2017 flu season compare with the flu seasons of (a) 2015, (b) 2014, (c) 2013 and (d) 2012.
- (3) How many people have been treated at The Canberra Hospital (TCH) and Calvary Public Hospital for influenza during the 2017 flu season.
- (4) What impact has the 2017 influenza season had on bed occupancy rates at TCH.
- (5) What impact has the 2017 influenza season had on waiting times at TCH Emergency Department.
- (6) Has TCH exceeded its optimum occupancy rate during the 2017 flu season; if so, how often and when did the hospital exceed the optimum occupancy rate.
- (7) Did this year's flu vaccinations cover all of the strains active during this year's flu season and how many cases of flu were of strains not covered by flu vaccinations.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. Between 1 January and 1 August 2017, there were 515 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza reported to ACT Health. Comparatively, between 1 January and 1 August 2016, a total of 241 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported.
2. Each year there is marked variation in the start, duration, and end of the influenza season, as well as in the total number of influenza cases reported to ACT Health. The total number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases reported to ACT Health in previous years (1 January to 31 December) are as follows:

2016	1603 cases
2015	1205 cases
2014	1264 cases
2013	549 cases
2012	667 cases
3. FluCAN is a national surveillance network that tracks the number of people admitted to participating hospitals with an acute respiratory illness who are later confirmed to have influenza. According to the latest FluCAN report, there was a total number of 121 laboratory-confirmed influenza-related hospital admissions to Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital between 3 April and 11 August 2017. It is important to note that FluCAN is a surveillance tool used to inform a picture of national trends in influenza admissions, and all surveillance systems may miss some cases of influenza.

4. Increases in bed occupancy cannot necessarily be solely attributed to flu season.
 5. Waiting times and average presentations per day cannot necessarily be solely attributed to flu season.
 6. Yes, during the period from 1 July 2017 till 10 September 2017, there has been a total of 72 days on which Canberra Hospital has been over 90 per cent occupancy.
 7. Laboratory testing to determine similarity between the flu vaccine and circulating strains can only be done at the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza in Melbourne, and is only done on a small proportion of influenza samples collected around Australia annually. Based on testing to 24 July 2017, the 2017 seasonal influenza vaccines appear to be a good match to circulating influenza virus strains.
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Canberra Hospital—emergency patient discharge (Question No 362)

Mrs Dunne asked the Health and Wellbeing, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

In relation to the answer to a question taken on notice on 9 May 2017 about patients being discharged from The Canberra Hospital following the switchboard fire on 5 April 2017, (a) how many of the 60 discharged patients were assessed for re-admission to hospital, (b) were all such patients re-admitted within 28 days; if not, (i) how many were not, (ii) why were they not and (iii) in what time-frame were they re-admitted.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (a) As per the normal process for patient discharge at Canberra Hospital, all patients who were discharged on 5 April 2017 were deemed to be clinically appropriate for discharge by medical and nursing teams. Of these, 21 patients re-presented to Canberra Hospital within 28 days of their discharge on 5 April 2017.
 - (b) Of the 21 patients who represented within 28 days of their discharge on 5 April 2017, 18 were admitted as per the normal process. These subsequent presentations and readmissions were not necessarily related to the earlier episodes of care.
 - (i) Three patients were not admitted.
 - (ii) The three patients who presented and were not admitted were not deemed clinically appropriate for admission.
 - (iii) The 18 patients who represented, as outlined above, were readmitted within 28 days.
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Hospitals—bed availability (Question No 363)

Mrs Dunne asked the Health and Wellbeing, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) How many beds are in each public hospital in the ACT.

- (2) How many beds are available in private hospitals in the ACT.
- (3) What was the average growth in bed numbers in public hospitals in the ACT between 2012-13 and 2016-17, in percentage terms.
- (4) What were the bed numbers per 1,000 head of ACT population for public hospitals in the ACT for each of the years from 2012-13 to 2016-17.
- (5) Of total ACT Government expenditure on health in the ACT for 2016-17 what proportion was spent on (a) admitted patient care, (b) outpatient care, (c) emergency care, (d) hospital administration and (e) Health Directorate administration, excluding hospital administration.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

ACT Health is currently preparing the 2016-17 Public Hospitals Establishment data submissions which are due in February 2018. For this reason, ACT Health is unable to provide 2016-17 bed numbers but will provide historic data for 2012-13 to 2015-16.

1. As at 30 June 2016, the total number of beds in each ACT public hospital was:

Canberra Hospital and Health Services:	777 beds
Calvary Public Hospital:	303 beds
Queen Elizabeth II Family Centre:	26 beds

2. ACT Health does not report data for private hospitals in the ACT.
3. Between 2012-13 and 2015-16, ACT public hospitals had an average growth rate in bed numbers of 3.9 per cent.
4. The number of available beds per 1,000 population in ACT public hospitals, between 2012-13 and 2015-16 was:

2012-13:	2.63
2013-14:	2.70
2014-15:	2.77
2015-16:	2.83
5. The proportion of total ACT Government health expenditure spent in the ACT for 2016-17 by service streams is as follows:
 - (a) \$737,842,935.
 - (b) \$121,932,955.
 - (c) \$114,688,775.
 - (d) (Canberra Hospital and Health Services), \$54,601,130.
 - (e) \$59,425,074.

Planning—Weetangera (Question No 368)

Mrs Dunne asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Has the Minister failed to answer my letters dated 21 April 2016, 30 August 2016 and 22 February 2017 about the development at 36 Kinleyside Street in Weetangera; if so, why.
- (2) In relation to the development referred to in part (1), what is the natural fall of the land on the block from the street to the rear boundary of the block.
- (3) Was any external land-fill material introduced to the site; if so, why.
- (4) If the purpose was to level the construction footprint for the building, how high from the natural fall of the land did the ground floor of the building at its highest point (towards the rear of the property) become.
- (5) To what extent does this new height impact on the application of the rules relating to restrictions on the use, placement and size of windows used in the area of the building at its highest point from the natural fall of the land.
- (6) To what extent does the raised height of the building above the natural landfall impinge on the privacy and solar access of neighbours to the west, east and north.
- (7) What building inspections were undertaken for the property.
- (8) What building defects or building code defects were noted.
- (9) Have those defects been rectified.
- (10) Have all fences been constructed to a minimum of 1.8m.
- (11) Are those fences of lapped and capped timber; if not, (a) what is the construction used, (b) what agreement did the developer reach with neighbours and (c) did the planning agency within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate approve it.
- (12) Is the planning agency satisfied the developer completed the landscaping in accordance with the landscape intentions plan, as approved on 30 September 2015; if not, what has the planning agency done to ensure compliance.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) I have completed a response to your correspondence relating to this development. I apologise for the delay in responding.
- (2) The natural fall of the land is approximately 2.0m from the street frontage (southern boundary) to the rear (northern) boundary of the block.
- (3) The development required fill which would have included material sourced externally to the site. Fill appears to have been introduced to secure all three units at the same finished floor level, and to ensure an even grade for the access driveway.
- (4) At its highest point the rear portion of the development (Residence 3) is approximately 1.45m higher than natural ground level, which gradually diminishes towards the front part of the development.

- (5) The planning and land authority considered the ground floor level of Residence 3 to be a lower floor level and assessed as rule compliant with the side and rear setback requirements of the Multi Unit Housing Development Code. There is a minor encroachment of the parapet of Residence 3 in the building envelope to the rear (northern) boundary. This minor encroachment was considered by the planning and land authority in its assessment of the proposal.
- (6) I am advised that the upper floor level setbacks from side and rear boundaries comply with the setback requirements (rule compliant) of the Multi Unit Housing Development Code. The approved development complies with the building envelope requirements (rule compliant) in relation to the eastern and western boundaries. As already stated, there is a minor encroachment of the parapet of Residence 3 in the building envelope requirement in relation to the rear (northern) boundary. This minor encroachment will have no overshadowing impact on to the adjoining property due to its orientation. The raised height of the development is not considered to have an adverse impact on the privacy and overshadowing of the adjoining properties.
- (7) Access Canberra officers inspected the property on 11 March 2016.
- (8) The inspection revealed no breaches under the *Building Act 2004*. No breaches were identified under the provisions of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*.
- (9) Not applicable.
- (10) Photos from the inspection report indicate the colorbond fence on site has been built to 1.8m in height. I am advised that, at the time of the inspection, it was suggested to the parties that, if privacy was an ongoing issue (despite the property having been built to the approved plans), privacy screens could be attached to the fence to address any concerns about overlooking.
- (11) All boundary fences have been upgraded to 1.8m high colorbond or timber lapped and capped fence. A condition of approval in the decision required new fencing to all boundaries with the adjoining blocks to a minimum height of 1.8m, constructed as lapped and capped timber, or to another standard acceptable to all parties. It was also a requirement that the lessee would consult with the adjoining neighbours. The planning and land authority was not required to adjudicate in this regard and is not privy to any subsequent agreements between adjoining neighbours.
- (12) A site inspection was undertaken when the Unit Title application was lodged with the planning and land authority. Following the site inspection, the developer was advised to plant screening plants along the side and rear boundaries, and also trees within the private open spaces of the three dwellings. Photographic evidence was provided by the developer after planting to comply with the approved Landscape Intentions Plan.

Canberra Hospital—electrical systems (Question No 370)

Mrs Dunne asked the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) In relation to works for the electrical main switchboard project at The Canberra Hospital, what procurement process was used to engage (a) Barry Tam (for

performance specifications), (b) Steensen Varming Pty Ltd (for design development), (c) Brooks Marchant Pty (for regular thermal imaging), (d) Martin Donnelly Pty (for interim works) and (e) Shepherd Electrical (ACT) Pty (for interim works).

- (2) In relation to each contract referred to in part (1), (a) when were expressions of interest called, (b) what was the closing date, (c) when were the expressions of interest assessed, (d) when was the decision made as to the successful tenderer, (e) when was the decision communicated to the successful tenderer, (f) what subsequent negotiations took place with the contractor, (g) when was the contract signed, (h) when did work commence and (i) when was work completed; if not completed, what is the target date.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

At **Attachment A**.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Planning—Weetangera (Question No 371)

Mrs Dunne asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Has the Minister failed to answer my letter dated 13 April 2017 in relation to the development on Blocks 13 and 14, Section 1 in Weetangera; if so, why.
- (2) On what date was an appropriate development notice placed at the site referred to in part (1).
- (3) What information specific to the development referred to in part (1) is included on that notice and what is the detail of that information.
- (4) On what date was the development application listed on the planning agency's website.
- (5) In what media were public announcements made about the public consultation period.
- (6) In relation to each medium used, on what date was the announcement published.
- (7) What was the formal (a) start date and (b) closing date for public consultation.
- (8) Were neighbouring residents informed in writing that a development application had been lodged and that the public consultation period had begun; if not, why not; if so, (a) on what date was that notice sent, (b) by what means was the notice sent and (c) to which blocks in the relevant sections was the notice sent.
- (9) Given their lack of residential proximity to the front boundary of the site, what special arrangements were made to notify neighbours to the rear of the site (for example, residents whose properties front Belconnen Way and Springvale Drive) as to the development application and the public consultation period; if none, why not.

- (10) If special arrangements were made to notify neighbours to the rear of the site,
 - (a) what was the nature of the notification given, (b) when was the notification given and (c) by what means was the notification delivered.
- (11) How many public submissions were made during the public consultation period.
- (12) Were receipt acknowledgements sent to those who made submissions.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) A response to the letter of 13 April 2017 has been completed. I apologise for the delay.
- (2) Two signs were placed on the site on Thursday 8 June 2017
- (3) The notice described the proposal which included the demolition of existing dwellings and construction of a multi unit development with a lease variation to permit a maximum of 15 dwellings. It also noted the commencement date of 8 June 2017 and that representations are to be received by 29 June 2017. The full text of the notice is provided at **Attachment A**.
- (4) The development application was listed on the planning agency website on 5 June 2017.
- (5) The application was made publically available through both the Planning website and the DA finder App. No other media were involved in the notification process – this is standard practice for the notification of this type of development.
- (6) The application was listed on the planning agency website on 5 June 2017 and available through the DA finder App on 6 June 2017.
- (7) The Public Notification Period commenced 8 June 2017 and closed COB 29 June 2017.
- (8) All adjoining properties were notified via mail posted on 5 June 2017. **Attachment B** provides a Map identifying the subject blocks and those blocks notified.
- (9) All adjoining properties were notified in accordance with Section 153 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. Some of these properties front Belconnen Way and Springvale Drive.
- (10) Not applicable
- (11) Eight representations were received during the public notification period.
- (12) Yes, receipt acknowledgements were sent to all representors. A sample of this acknowledgement is provided at **Attachment C** and **Attachment D**.

(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).

**Planning—lease variation
(Question No 375)**

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What would be the charge for varying the lease of a shop in the Hackett Shops from food retail to another business.
- (2) What would be the charge for varying the lease of the Girl Guides building on the Hackett Oval to allow it to be a place of worship.
- (3) What is the Government doing to minimise the frictions lease variation costs present to small businesses and community organisations.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) There would be no lease variation charge if the site was still to be used for the purpose of a shop and shop is a permitted use in the Crown lease. A shop is defined in the Territory Plan as meaning the use of land for the purpose of selling, exposing or offering the sale by retail or hire, goods and personal services. A shop includes a number of different types of businesses (for example, a butcher, chemist, grocer or camping supplies store).

The lease variation charge for varying a Crown lease to add an additional use that is not permitted by a Crown lease is considered a section 277 chargeable variation under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, which means that the lease variation charge is determined through a valuation exercise and obtaining a valuation report to determine the value uplift of adding a new use. This would depend on the current market value at the time a decision was made to approve a new use being added to a Crown lease. If there is no increase in the value of the land, the lease variation charge would be 'nil'.

- (2) The lease variation charge for varying a Crown lease to add an additional use that is not permitted by a Crown lease is considered a section 277 chargeable variation under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, which means that the lease variation charge is determined through a valuation exercise and obtaining a valuation report to determine the value uplift of adding a new use. This would depend on the current market value at the time a decision was made to approve a new use being added to a Crown lease. If there is no increase in the value of the land, the lease variation charge would be 'nil'.
 - (3) There are a number of remissions and incentives in place to assist with lease variation charge costs. For example, there is currently an exemption for lease variation charge to add the use of child care centre to a Crown lease. There is also currently an economic stimulus remission package in place that provides a 25% discount on an LVC to vary a Crown lease where a building is also being constructed, if the LVC is a section 277 chargeable variation (and not a codified lease variation charge). The Government regularly reviews LVC provisions and initiatives.
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**Waste—public bins
(Question No 380)**

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Why are public use bins in Braddon funded by property and business owners through a levy.
- (2) How did this policy originate.
- (3) How many bins are provided through this levy.
- (4) How many other bins are provided in the Braddon precinct by the ACT Government.
- (5) How frequent are rubbish bin collections and are collections also subject to payment through the levy.
- (6) What is the levy contribution per business and how and on whom is it assessed and collected.
- (7) For how long has the levy been applied.
- (8) What other retail precincts fund essential services through a levy on local businesses.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The provision and maintenance of public bins in Braddon is funded by the ACT Government through the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Directorate. In July 2017, In The City Canberra (ITCC) utilised the City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy (CCMIL) funding to install metal bin shrouds to house the existing bins, as a means to improve the amenity of Braddon. Locations were selected in areas of highest use.
- (2) The use of levy funds is managed by ITCC.
- (3) No bins are provided through the levy, however 10 bin shrouds in Mort and Lonsdale Streets were funded by the levy including dual bin shrouds to accommodate recycling bins at two locations.
- (4) There are 12 other bins provided in the Braddon Precinct, including 10 in Haig Park.
- (5) Rubbish and recycling bins are emptied twice weekly by TCCS using recurrent funding.
- (6) The CCMIL applies to all rateable commercial properties in the City and some selected areas of benefit in Braddon that are in close proximity to the City. The CCMIL is charged on a zone basis at a rate of 0.2992 percent (retail core) or 0.2161 percent (non-retail core) of average unimproved value over the rateable period.
- (7) The CCMIL was introduced as part of the 2007-08 Budget.

- (8) Not applicable as essential municipal services in Braddon are funded by the ACT Government.
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**Planning—Downer shops
(Question No 381)**

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What is the current status of the re-establishment of the Downer Shops.
- (2) How many vacancies remain in the Downer Shops buildings.
- (3) Which businesses are currently tenants of the buildings at Downer Shops.
- (4) What work has the Government done, and what work is the Government doing to re-establish the Downer Shops.
- (5) What community consultation is taking place in the process of re-establishing the Downer Shops.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The restoration of the heritage listed Downer shops is now complete and was carried out by the Lessee.
 - (2) Of the four shops in the newly configured centre, three are currently vacant.
 - (3) A cafe opened in July 2017 and a Village Vet practice is coming soon. I understand that the lessee and owner of Downer shops are continuing negotiations with prospective tenants for the other shops within the centre.
 - (4) The re-establishment of Downer shops has been undertaken by the Owner. In February 2017 the Government re-confirmed the LDA commitment to provide support to the upgrade of the Downer Village Square which is in between the Downer shops and the Downer community centre.
 - (5) The ACT Government will be consulting with the community on the design and specifications of these upgrades in the coming months with a view to commencing works in 2018.
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**Alexander Maconochie Centre—methadone program
(Question No 385)**

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 4 August 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Mental Health*):

- (1) How many Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) inmates are currently on the methadone program.

- (2) How many of these inmates are (a) having their dose(s) dispensed by two registered nurses and (b) having their dose(s) dispensed by a pharmacist.
- (3) Where exactly are the two registered nurses dispensing the methadone and are they being filmed on closed circuit television while doing this.
- (4) What dosing system are the registered nurses using and how does this system compare with alternative systems.
- (5) Are there any plans to move to another system in the future; if so, what are these plans.
- (6) How much time is spent each day by the registered nurses dispensing these doses.
- (7) Were the registered nurses (a) hired specifically to prepare and assist in the dosing of methadone or (b) existing staff within the AMC and have been given these responsibilities on top of their existing responsibilities.
- (8) What training specific to opioid maintenance treatment have these nurses undertaken.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. As of 29 August 2017 there were 115 people on the methadone program at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
2. Of those detainees,
 - (a) all have their dose administered by two nurses, and
 - (b) the exact number of methadone doses pre-dispensed by the community pharmacy or dispensed by nurses at the AMC is variable due to the constant changes to the location of detainees within the AMC. Approximately 60% of the methadone doses are pre-dispensed by the pharmacist.
3. Nurses undertake methadone medication dosing rounds across the AMC, including the Hume Health Centre, Women's accommodation, Sentenced Block, Remand Block, Accommodation Unit and Special Care Centre. All dosing areas within the AMC, with the exception of the Women's area, are under camera observation.
4. There are currently two systems for administration of methadone at the AMC;
 - a. Pre-prepared doses of methadone supplied to Justice Health Services by an external pharmacy; and
 - b. Dispensing methadone from a manual pump.

These systems are comparable to other correctional facilities nationally.
5. idose™ is a computerised method of daily dosing of methadone. This was implemented at the AMC on 30 August 2017.
6. There are two methadone medication rounds that occur concurrently every day. Each methadone round requires 2 nurses and takes between 4-5 hours to complete.

7. The nurses at the AMC are:
 - (a) not hired specifically to prepare and assist in the dosing of methadone, and
 - (b) have all been recruited to undertake a full range of responsibilities including methadone administration.
 8. Nursing staff at the AMC undertake onsite drug and alcohol training provided by the Clinical Development Nurse.
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Government—media and public relations (Question No 386-414)

Mr Coe asked the Chief Minister, the Minister for Urban Renewal, the Minister for Economic Development, the Treasurer, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Minister for Women, the Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research, the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Minister for Planning and Land Management, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Minister for Regulatory Services, the Minister for the Arts and Community Events, the Minister for Veterans and Seniors, the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, the Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Mental Health, the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, and the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017 (*redirected to the Chief Minister*):

- (1) What is the total number of staff by full-time equivalent and headcount assigned to media or public relations roles for each directorate and government agency for which you are responsible.
- (2) What is the breakdown, by ACT Public Service classification type, of the number of staff assigned to media or public relations roles for each directorate and government agency for which you are responsible.
- (3) Does any of the directorates or government agencies for which you are responsible engage any consultants or contractors to perform media, communications or public relations roles; if so, what is the (a) number of consultants or contractors for each body and (b) value of that contract.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

See **Attachment A** for answers to these questions, as at 24 August 2017, for all ACT Government directorates. Please note that media and public relations roles are not titles commonly used and do not reflect modern communications service delivery. Therefore the response includes current communications roles including strategic communications and media, digital communications, marketing and advertising.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Government—expenditure (Question No 420)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What is the total number of invoices paid by the ACT Government in the financial years (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 (c) 2016-17 and 2017-18 to date.
- (2) How many invoices paid by the ACT Government in (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2017-18 to date were (i) under \$10,000, (ii) between \$10,000 to \$12,499, (iii) between \$12,500 to \$24,999, (iv) between \$25,000 to \$49,999, (v) between \$50,000 to \$99,999, (vi) between \$100,000 to \$149,999, (vii) between \$150,000 to \$199,999 and (viii) over \$200,000.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The total number of invoices paid by the ACT Government are as follows:
 - a) 2014-15 – 350,313
 - b) 2015-16 – 351,412
 - c) 2016-17 – 337,073
 - d) 2017-18 to 31 July 2017 – 20,442
- (2) Invoices that were paid by the ACT Government in the following years by categories:

Financial Year	<\$10,000	\$10,000- \$12,499	\$12,500- \$24,999	\$25,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$99,999	\$100,000- \$149,999	\$150,000- \$199,999	>=\$200,000	Grand Total
2016-17	306,343	5,060	11,117	6,273	3,730	1,275	701	2,574	337,073
2017-18 (July only)	18,233	358	737	412	285	118	75	224	20,442

Icon Water—shared services (Question No 421)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

Further to Question on Notice E17-055 for the Select Committee on Estimates 2017-2018, is there a statutory impediment which makes Icon Water Limited as a Territory-owned corporation ineligible to access to the ACT Government's shared services unit; if so, what is the title of the relevant legislation and section number of that legislation; if not, why is Icon Water Limited not eligible to access the ACT Government's shared services unit.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

There is no statutory impediment to Icon Water Limited accessing ACT Government Shared Services. However, Shared Services' mandate and governance structures are focused on delivering services to ACT Government Directorates and Agencies. Icon Water is neither a directorate nor an agency of the ACT Government. Shared Services'

delivery of services to Icon Water would involve competing with the private sector. Its current cost structures would not be directly transferable, as appropriate measures to remove advantages of government ownership to meet the ACT's competitive neutrality obligations would need to be made.

The range and type of services provided to Icon Water under the services agreements are significantly different to those that are provided through the ACT Government Shared Services Centre. In particular, the Icon contract includes customer-facing services such as meter reading, household billing and first response contact centre calls, which are not replicated within the Shared Services Centre.

The ACT Government's competitive neutrality commitments are set out in the 2016 Intergovernmental Agreement on Competition and Productivity Enhancing Reform and the ACT's Competitive Neutrality Policy. The Agreement is available at www.coag.gov.au and there is a link to **Competitive Neutrality Policy in the ACT** on the ICRC website, www.icrc.act.gov.au, on the **competitive neutrality government regulated activities** web page.

Budget—community sector (Question No 422)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Which community organisations were represented at the community briefing for the 2017-18 ACT Budget held at 12.15 pm on Tuesday, 7 June 2017.
- (2) Why was it necessary to design, print and distribute regional brochures advising of measures in the 2017-18 ACT Budget when the same households also received an *Our Canberra* newsletter shortly thereafter.
- (3) Would it have been more cost-effective to cover the Budget in the *Our Canberra* newsletter.
- (4) What were the costs for (a) design, (b) printing and (c) distribution for the 2017-18 ACT Budget regional brochures.
- (5) Which organisations were responsible for the (a) design, (b) printing and (c) distribution of the 2017-18 ACT Budget regional brochures.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The RSVP list of organisations is at **Appendix A**.
- (2) Five regional brochures were created to highlight specific regional and other expenditure in the ACT Budget to provide the community with information on where the budget goes.
- (3) It was not practical to include the level of detail required to provide households with sufficient information on the 2017-18 Budget in the *Our Canberra* newsletter, in addition to its existing focus on community news, services and initiatives.

- (4) Design effort associated with the 2017-18 Budget regional brochures was facilitated by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's (CMTEDD) Communications Team and was therefore absorbed internally. Costs for these brochures, including printing and mailing, was \$46,205.31.
- (5) The 2017-18 ACT Budget regional brochures were: designed by CMTEDD in accordance with the *Electoral Act 1992* and the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*; printed by Union Offset Printers and Elect Printing; and (apart from those copies made available by CMTEDD at the media and community briefings) distributed by Australia Post.

Appendix A — 2017-18 Budget community briefing

A Gender Agenda	Families ACT
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB)	Griffith Narrabundah Community Association
ACT Bar Association	Headspace Canberra
ACT Children and Youth Services Ministerial Council	Health Care Consumers' Association Inc.
ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations	Heart Foundation
ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)	Holy Covenant Anglican Church
ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)	Housing Industry Association ACT
ACT Law Society	Independent Education Union
ACT Mental Health Consumer Network	Kidsafe ACT
ACT Playgroups Association Inc.	Kingston and Barton Residents Group
ACT Screen Industry Association Limited	Kulture Break
ACT Shelter	LGBTIQ Ministerial Advisory Council
Advocacy for Inclusion	Living Streets Canberra
AIDS Action Council of the ACT	M16 Artspace
Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs Association ACT	Marymead
ANZ Research	Master Builders ACT
Association of Independent Schools of the ACT	Menslink
Australian Catholic University	Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Inc
Australian Computer Society (ACS)	National Capital Attractions Association
Australian Federal Police Association	National Council of Women of ACT Inc
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association	National Capital Educational Tourism Project
Australian Medical Association	National Seniors Australia
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation	North Canberra Community Council
Australian Services Union	Nutrition Australia ACT Inc
Belconnen Community Council	Pedal Power ACT
Canberra Business Chamber	People With Disabilities ACT Inc
Canberra CBD Limited	Physical Activity Foundation Ltd
Canberra Community Law	Property Council of Australia ACT
Canberra Community Clubs	Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)
Canberra Glassworks Limited	St James Uniting Church - Curtin
Capital Health Network	Superannuated Commonwealth Officers' Association
Carers ACT	The Childers Group
Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn	Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation
CFMEU ACT	UnionsACT
Community and Public Sector Union	Vietnam Veterans and Veterans Federation (ACT Inc)
Conflict Resolution Service	Volunteering and Contact ACT

Conservation Council ACT Region	Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health Service Inc
Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia (CAPIA)	Woden Community Service Inc.
Council of the Ageing ACT (COTA)	Woden Valley Community Council Inc
Domestic Violence Crisis Service	Youth Coalition of the ACT
Domestic Violence Prevention Council	YWCA Canberra
Engineers Australia	

Community services—grants (Question No 428)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Does the website of the Community Services Directorate report that applications for the 2016-17 funding round for the Community Support and Infrastructure Grants and the Participation (Digital Communities) Grants have closed; if so, what was the date that each of the 2016-17 funding rounds for these grant programs closed.
- (2) Has the outcome for the two funding rounds referred to in part (1) been determined; if so, when were the applicants advised.
- (3) When will the website of the Community Services Directorate be updated with the list of grant recipients for the programs referred to in part (1).
- (4) When will applications open for the 2017-18 funding round for the Community Support and Infrastructure Grants and the Participation (Digital Communities) Grants.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Community Services Directorate website indicates that the Community Support and Infrastructure Grants and the Participation (Digital Communities) Grants closed at midnight on 28 May 2017.
 - (2) The Community Support and Infrastructure Grants have been finalised. Letters to applicants were mailed out on 11 August 2017 and successful applicants were announced on 18 August 2017. The Participation (Digital Communities) Grants have been finalised and were announced on 22 August 2017.
 - (3) The Community Services Directorate website is typically updated within five (5) working days from a grants announcement.
 - (4) The 2017-18 funding round for the Community Support and Infrastructure Grants and the Participation (Digital Communities) Grants is expected to open in March 2018.
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Planning—Casey (Question No 430)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What is the development status of Block 5, Section 103 Casey.
- (2) Are there any limitations on Block 5, Section 103 Casey restricting any development on the block to single storey only.
- (3) Is there a rule in place preventing a builder or developer from making a profit on a block of land; if so, (a) on how many occasions has this rule been enforced in (i) 2014-15, (ii) 2015-16, (iii) 2017-17 and (iv) 2017-18 to date, (b) what penalties are in place for anyone who breaks this rule and (c) what mechanisms are in place to limit the possibility for builders or developers to profit on a block of land.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Exemption declaration was approved by the planning and land authority on 30 May 2017. On the basis of this exemption declaration building approval was issued by a private building certifier on 4 July 2017.
- (2) No, there are no limitations in the Territory Plan on Block 5 Section 103 Casey restricting any development to single storey only.
- (3) No, there is no rule in place therefore a, b and c are not applicable.

**Westside village—costs
(Question No 432)**

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Urban Renewal, upon notice, on 4 August 2017
(*redirected to the Chief Minister*):

- (1) How much has been spent by the ACT Government in support of the Westside Village located at West Basin since its establishment.
- (2) Can the Minister update the total amount spent to date on (a) infrastructure works at the site, (b) site improvements or enhancements, including water and electricity upgrades, (c) external contractors, including event specialists, (d) advertising, (e) the salary and on-costs of any public servants working in support of the Westside Village or supervising the clean-up of the site and (f) preparation for the closure of the Westside Village, including cleanup of the site and removal of all structures from the site.
- (3) What is the timetable for the removal of the containers and other equipment from the site of the Westside Village.
- (4) What is the expected total cost to clean up the site after the closure of the Westside Village, including for the removal of all structures from the site.
- (5) What is the total amount received in commercial rent for the period since the Westside Village was established until 1 January 2017.
- (6) What is the total amount received in peppercorn rent since 1 January 2017 to date.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1&2) Total Government expenditure on Westside Village from its establishment in early 2015 to 31 July 2017 is \$2,307,381.05 (excluding GST), including staffing, structure removal and site-clean-up. During its operation, over 50 major organised events are estimated to have attracted more than 100,000 visitors. Visit numbers for attendance outside organised events have not been estimated.
 - (3) All containers and other equipment associated with Westside Village were removed by 16 August 2017.
 - (4) The expected total cost to remove the structure, containers, and clean the site is \$175,000 (excluding GST).
 - (5) The total amount received in commercial rent for the period since the Westside Village was established until 1 January 2017 was \$129,680 (including GST).
 - (6) The total amount received in peppercorn rent since 1 January 2017 to date is \$0.
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**Regulatory services—fix my street portal
(Question No 435)**

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Regulatory Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What is the total cost of the project to improve the Fix My Street portal.
- (2) What enhancements are being made to the Fix My Street portal and the date each enhancement will be implemented.
- (3) Is the work to improve the Fix My Street portal being undertaken within the ACT Public Service or external organisation; if an external organisation is undertaking the work, what is the name of the organisation undertaking the project.
- (4) What areas across the ACT Public Service are involved in the project to improve the Fix My Street portal.
- (5) What testing is being undertaken to ensure the enhancements operate effectively before they are implemented on the portal.
- (6) How will transparency for users of the Fix My Street portal be improved.
- (7) Is it expected that the improvements will result in Fix My Street submissions, such as regarding failed street lights, being resolved faster than is currently the case.
- (8) Is a public relations program being developed to promote the changes to the Fix My Street portal; if so, what public relations activity is proposed.

Mr Ramsay: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Improvement to Fix My Street are undertaken within existing resources.

- (2) A range of enhancements are planned to Fix My Street. These include a review of the existing category list and trialling the use of digital devices for workers in the field. Improvements to customer's access to information are also being developed. There is no implementation date identified as yet.
 - (3) As identified above, Access Canberra has undertaken the improvements to the Fix My Street portal within existing resourcing.
 - (4) Primarily Access Canberra who provide and manage the online platform and directorates such as Transport Canberra and City Services who provide data support and action reported municipal issues raised by the community through the platform.
 - (5) Minor changes to Fix My Street are tested across a range of devices, browsers and internal stakeholders. Major changes are also tested with customers and regular users of Fix My Street.
 - (6) Improvements continue to be made to reporting, actioning and closing communication loops once works are complete with members of the community through Fix My Street.
 - (7) See response to question 6.
 - (8) The community will be informed of any upgrades to Fix My Street and user feedback sought so improvements can continue to be made. There isn't a specific campaign as the platform continues to evolve and enhancements will continue to occur. It is expected the community will be informed through existing channels including the Our Canberra newsletter, social media and media.
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Community infrastructure—vandalism (Question No 439)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Further to the Minister's answer provided to the Select Committee on Estimates 2017-18 (reference E17-653) in relation to vandalised bus shelters that data captured does not differentiate vandalism from general repairs and maintenance, why is data on the repairs required to bus shelters as a result of vandalism not recorded.
- (2) Are there any other examples where repairs to community infrastructure are required because of vandalism and that information is not recorded which attributes the damage was due to vandalism.
- (3) If records on the damage caused by vandalism are not maintained, how does the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate determine which bus shelters are at most risk of being damaged by vandalism, and which may require special measures.
- (4) If accurate records on the damage and subsequent repairs are not maintained, how does the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate assess the impact of vandalism on the community.

- (5) What was the total cost of repair to the 15 bus shelters in Gungahlin which were damaged on 25 June 2017.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Data on repairs to bus shelters has historically not been differentiated. This is partly due to the difficulty in determining if the damage is due to an accident or an act of vandalism.
- (2) Graffiti, damage to street signs and streetlights may at times be due to vandalism, however it is not always possible to differentiate between vandalism and accident related damage or deterioration of an asset.
- (3) Repeat occurrence of certain types of damage in the same location is an indicator of deliberate damage. Patterns of repeat occurrences are monitored using TCCS' asset information system.
- (4) Refer to response to Question 3.
- (5) One TCCS owned aluminium bus stop in Gungahlin was damaged on 25 June 2017 at a repair cost of \$415.00 to replace the glass. The remaining bus shelters damaged are owned and maintained by Adshel.

Schools—Gungahlin (Question No 445)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) Further to Question on Notice 235, what options are being considered for enrolment planning for the whole of the East Gungahlin region, particularly in Franklin, and the expected timeframe for the implementation of measures to address the shortage of public education places in this area.
- (2) When will the ACT Government engage in discussions with the community on the best way to address the shortage of public education places in this area.
- (3) What stakeholders are expected to participate in the discussions in part (2) and what is the process which will be followed.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Enrolment planning for the ACT, including the East Gungahlin region, is regularly refreshed. Investments in the current budget will support capacity expansions at Harrison School and Neville Bonner School, as well as expansions at Palmerston District Primary School and Gold Creek School. A new P-6 school is due to open in the suburb of Taylor in 2019, which will add significant additional capacity to the region. The Government has announced funding for early planning work for a new school in East Gungahlin. This school will open in time to meet the growing needs of the region and, at the right time, the government will announce an opening date for this new school. In my response to your earlier question (No 235 of 12 May), I

advised that expanding the capacity of the Franklin Early Childhood School was being considered as a component of the overall planning for the whole of the East Gungahlin region. This is still the case.

- (2) While schools in Gungahlin are facing enrolment pressures, there is no “shortage” of places. The ACT Government provides a place for every ACT child that seeks a place in their neighbourhood public school. The 2017-18 Budget invests more than \$24 million for expanding schools in Gungahlin as well as planning for a new school. Communities will be engaged in discussions at appropriate points as these projects progress. The Future of Education community conversation, that is already underway, has a broad scope and the government welcomes discussion of the role of a school in its local community and school choice as part of this discussion.
- (3) Any stakeholder with an interest is welcome to be a part of the current discussion about education in the ACT, including current and future parents, teachers, students, graduates, community sector groups, school staff, unions and academics. The process is outlined at <https://yoursay.act.gov.au/futureofeducation>.

Canberra Hospital—electrical systems (Question No 446)

Mrs Dunne asked the Minister for Regulatory Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) In relation to the answer to parts (3)(b)-(e) of Question on Notice 296, what were the details of the incidents of (a) electric shock (inspected 3 January 2014), (b) electrical shock to client (inspected 29 October 2014), (c) uncontrolled leakage of a substance (inspected 4 March 2015), (d) electrical incident (inspected 7 September 2015), (e) Nitrous Oxide release (inspected 23 and 25 August 2016) and (f) kitchen fire (inspected 21 February 2017).
- (2) For each incident listed in part (1), (a) what notices were issued, (b) was WorkSafe ACT satisfied that The Canberra Hospital (TCH) complied with the notices; if not, what action did WorkSafe ACT take to ensure compliance, (c) was WorkSafe ACT satisfied that TCH complied within any timelines specified in the notices; if not, what action did WorkSafe take in response, (d) what other action did WorkSafe ACT take and (e) what were the outcomes, including for any third parties involved.

Mr Ramsay: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1)
 - (a) A staff member reported the electrical shock. Following a subsequent medical assessment they were cleared to return to work immediately. Testing did not find any fault. WorkSafe engaged with The Canberra Hospital (TCH) to update testing records and schedule to ensure regular testing of Residual Current Devices (RCD) – circuit breakers. No notices were issued.
 - (b) A staff member received electrical shock that was determined to be only 24 volts and was potentially only static electricity as testing did not find any fault. However, the Test Date for Body Protected Electrical Areas was out of date by 2 months. Testing conducted immediately after event by TCH on direction of WorkSafe ACT. No notices were issued.

- (c) A slow fluid leak from the ceiling was discovered in the MRI preparation room. It was determined the fluid contained nitrates, indicating the presence of urine. A plumbing issue was discovered and repaired. No notices were issued.
 - (d) In Ward 12B a circuit breaker tripped causing a loud noise to emanate. An electrical failure in the Sterilizing unit located. The unit was tagged out of service and then repaired. No further action required by WorkSafe. No notices were issued.
 - (e) Several Nitrous Oxide gas cylinder bottles fell from a pallet while being moved within the plant room. A full inspection of the plant room revealed other safety issues. Inspectors revisited on 25 August with all remediation completed to the satisfaction of WorkSafe. No notices were issued.
 - (f) A kitchen fire occurred during food preparation. No workers were injured. ACT Fire and Rescue attended and extinguished the fire. TCH investigated the cause in consultation with the manufacturer of the kitchen appliance. No further action required by WorkSafe. No notices were issued.
- (2)
- (a) No notices were issued by WorkSafe ACT in relation to the above incidents.
 - (b) Not applicable.
 - (c) Not applicable.
 - (d) No other actions were warranted in relation to the incidents.
 - (e) All recommendations provided to TCH and ACT Health by WorkSafe ACT in relation to the specific incidents was actioned with no ongoing safety issues evident.
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**Government—ex gratia payments
(Question No 447)**

Mr Doszpot asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 4 August 2017 (*redirected to the Treasurer*):

- (1) When were the Ex gratia Guidelines first made available to the public.
- (2) Is there a process for applying for an ex gratia payment under the Financial Management Act.
- (3) How many applications for ex gratia payments have been made in the past five years.
- (4) How many applications for ex gratia payments have been granted in the past five years.
- (5) What is the value of these payments.
- (6) Are records of all ex gratia payments made public.

- (7) Have any ex gratia payments been made subject to non-disclosure conditions.
- (8) Have any ex gratia payments been made subject as part of legal settlements.
- (9) Have ex gratia payments been used in the process of employment, during employment, during employment disputes or disengagement of any public servants, including teachers, nurses, police or any others.
- (10) Have ex gratia payments been used as any part of the response to the loose-fill asbestos emergency since 2014 including emergency housing, rental assistance, payments for removal and including the Asbestos Response Taskforce program.
- (11) Has the Government used the mechanism of ex gratia payments to facilitate payment for any other purpose.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The guidelines used to assess the merits of a request for an Act of Grace payment have been in place for many years and are communicated to those making such a request.
 - (2) Section 130 of the *Financial Management Act 1996* permits the Treasurer to authorise an Act of Grace payment. The process is for applicants to write to the Treasurer requesting such a payment.
 - (3) This information is not collected in a manner that can be collated. While some requests specifically seek an Act of Grace payment and would therefore be recorded as such, others are more general in their request for assistance from the Government but are then referred into the Act of Grace context for consideration. Information on the number of Act of Grace requests received over the past five years therefore does not give an accurate picture of requests for assistance. As noted in the next two subsections, the number and value of approved Act of Grace payments are published in the notes to the Territory's annual consolidated financial statements.
 - (4) The number of Act of Grace payments approved in each financial year are published in the notes to the Territory's annual consolidated financial statements.
 - (5) The total amount of Act of Grace payments approved in each financial year are published in the notes to the Territory's annual consolidated financial statements.
 - (6) See answer to (5) above. The Government does not release details of individual recipients for privacy reasons.
 - (7) See answer to (6) above.
 - (8) See answer to (6) above.
 - (9) See answer to (6) above.
 - (10) No.
 - (11) No.
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**Roads—traffic studies
(Question No 448)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) In relation to suburban safety and maintenance, have there been any traffic studies conducted in the last 10 years for (a) Delamere Street, Hawker, (b) Bingle Street, Flynn, (c) Tillyard Drive, (d) Kuringa Drive and (e) Copland Drive; if so, how many traffic studies were conducted and in which years did they take place.
- (2) What was the nature of the study and what were the findings of all the traffic studies conducted (if any) for each of the locations listed in part (1) for the past 10 years?
- (3) Are there any current traffic studies being conducted in the locations listed in part (1); if so, (a) what is the nature of the study and (b) when will the traffic study be completed and when will the results be released.
- (4) Are there any plans to conduct traffic studies in the locations listed in part (1); if so, when will the studies commence; if not, why not.
- (5) How often has street monitoring been conducted in each suburb of the Ginninderra electorate for the last 10 years.
- (6) What is the nature of the street monitoring undertaken.
- (7) What steps are taken to improve streets when findings have been reported as a result of the street monitoring.
- (8) Has any street monitoring been conducted over the last 10 years for Delamere Street, Hawker; if so, what are the dates of the street monitoring conducted and what were the findings of the street monitoring; if not, why not.
- (9) Are there any plans to monitor and prevent street hooning behaviour and speeding on Delamere Street, Hawker; if so, what are the details of these plans and when will they be implemented; if not, why not.
- (10) Are there any plans to reduce speed and frequency of traffic on Delamere Street, Hawker by (a) installing speed-controlling infrastructure like speed humps and or chicanes, (b) closing the street at the playing fields when not used and at night; if so, when will these plans be implemented; if not, why not and what alternative measures will be taken to improve safety along this street by reducing speed and frequency of traffic.
- (11) In relation to Tillyard Drive, are there any plans to (a) monitor the number of heavy vehicles that drive down this road daily, (b) reduce traffic noise caused by heavy vehicles, (c) increase road maintenance due to amplified road wear by heavy vehicles, (d) increase road safety due to frequency of heavy vehicles; if so, what do the plans detail and when will they be implemented; if not, why not and what measures will be taken to address issues of traffic noise, the need for increased road maintenance and road safety due to the volume of heavy vehicles.

- (12) How often is road sweeping undertaken in Allman Circuit, Macquarie and what are the dates of all road sweeping undertaken in this area for the past 10 years.
- (13) Are there any plans to provide adequate street lighting for the (a) Hawker playing fields' (located along Walhallow Street) car park, (b) Hawker playing fields' change room, (c) pathway between the Hawker playing fields and Hawker College extending between Murrarji Street and Belconnen Way, (d) the path adjacent to Belconnen high school from Murrarji Street to Walhallow Street; if so, when will the street lights be installed; if not, why not and what is the plan to improve visibility and safety of the Hawker playing fields area.
- (14) What steps have been taken to improve the level of maintenance for the gutters and storm drains in the Ginninderra electorate.
- (15) Is there increase in frequency of street maintenance in the Ginninderra electorate during the autumn period for keeping the waterways free from fallen leaves; if so, (a) by how much has the frequency of street maintenance increased, (b) what is the nature of the maintenance undertaken; if not, why not and what is the plan to improve the current condition of the waterways in the Ginninderra electorate.
- (16) What is and has been the regular maintenance budget allocated for the 2017-18 financial year and the past 10 financial years.
- (17) How is the maintenance budget allocated to ensure ongoing maintenance in the Ginninderra electorate given that the budget is not broken down by electorate.
- (18) What is the total annual expenditure for maintenance in each electorate for this year and the past 10 years.
- (19) Is it the role and responsibility of City Rangers to undertake regular and recorded inspections of their assigned operational areas; if so, (a) how often do the City Rangers undertake recorded inspections in each suburb of the Ginninderra electorate, (b) when, where and what were the findings of each inspection in each suburb of the Ginninderra electorate for the past 10 years; if not, (a) who has the role and responsibility of undertaking regular and recorded inspections of the Ginninderra electorate and how often are recorded inspections conducted and (b) when, where and what were the findings of each inspection in each suburb of the Ginninderra electorate for the past 10 years.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Studies undertaken in the last 10 years:
- (a) Delamere Street, Hawker – No.
 - (b) Bingle Street, Flynn – Yes, 1, currently underway.
 - (c) Tillyard Drive – Yes, 1, currently underway.
 - (d) Kuringa Drive – Yes, 1, currently underway.
 - (e) Copland Drive – Yes, 1, completed in 2015.
- (2) They were all studies to improve road safety and amenity on the streets, and are undertaken on streets that are high ranking in terms of traffic volume, speeds and crashes. The studies identified options for implementation based on the results of the technical analyses of traffic data and community feedback.

(3) Yes.

(a) A study is currently underway on Tillyard Drive, Kuringa Drive and Bingle Street.

(b) September 2017.

(4) No.

Bingle Street, Tillyard Drive, Kuringa Drive and Copland Drive have been recently studied. Current traffic data on Delamere Street indicates it is performing better than other similar ACT streets and so is not among the top priority streets for investigation.

(5)

Ginninderra Suburbs	No. of times street monitoring has been conducted in the last 10 years
Aranda	6
Belconnen	8
Bruce	10
Charnwood	8
Cook	6
Dunlop	9
Florey	8
Flynn	7
Fraser	7
Hawker	4
Higgins	4
Holt	8
Latham	5
Macgregor	8
Macquarie	7
Melba	6
Page	6
Scullin	7
Spence	7
Weetangera	4

(6) Traffic counters are installed to conduct surveys to monitor travelling speeds and traffic volumes.

(7) The traffic data is analysed to inform priorities for more detailed studies.

(8) Yes.

Details presented in table below:

Site Description	Towards	Suburb	Speed Limit	Survey Start Date	Weekday Average Volume (vehicles per day)	Weekday Mean Speed (Km/Hr)
Delamere St	Alexandria St	Hawker	50	10.06.16	217	53.4
	Walhallow St				190	50.9

(9) Roads ACT will continue to monitor traffic speeds on this road and take action when warranted. Street hooning behaviour is an enforcement issue for ACT Policing.

- (10) No. The data in (8) indicates that Delamere Street is performing better in comparison to other similar roads in the ACT. Roads ACT will continue to monitor traffic conditions on this road and take action when warranted.
- (11) Tillyard Drive is a major collector road whose primary function is to distribute traffic from the arterial road network (Ginninderra Drive, Kuringa Drive and Kingsford Smith Drive) into the adjacent suburbs. Heavy vehicles up to 4.5 tonnes are allowed on this road on an unrestricted basis to ensure that all residents have adequate access to a range of services (e.g. waste collection, removalists, etc).
- (a) No. The most recent traffic data (2016) shows that about 7% of the traffic flow consists of heavy vehicles. This is considered reasonable in the context of this street.
- (b) No. The relatively low volume of heavy vehicles on the road is unlikely to increase traffic noise above acceptable levels.
- (c) Tillyard Drive was last inspected in 2014 and the next inspection is scheduled for late 2017. Maintenance requirements resulting from inspection outcomes will be programmed within future resurfacing programs.
- (d) No. An analysis of the crash history on the road indicates there is a relatively low incidence of reported crashes with heavy vehicles (2 crashes in the last 5 years).
- (12) The suburb of Macquarie is swept during January, May and September each year.
- (13) There are currently no plans to install infill streetlighting in the Hawker playing fields area. These requests will now be investigated and assessed against a set of criteria, with safety the primarily consideration. Requests are evaluated alongside similar requests to identify prioritised options.
- (14) Roads ACT conducts a comprehensive street sweeping program to remove leaves and debris from gutters along the road network. Roads ACT also cleans stormwater sumps and implements street sweeping and gross pollutant trap cleaning programs to remove pollutants and debris from the stormwater drains and waterways.
- (15) Every suburb in Canberra receives at least two sweeps of streets every year. Over the period between May and August efforts are concentrated on the removal of leaf litter from the deciduous street trees. Increased sweeping frequency in identified suburbs is listed in the street sweeping schedule available on the TCCS website.
- (16) Regular Roads ACT maintenance budgets for 2017-18 and the past 10 years are as follows:

	Budget \$'000
2007-08	33,714
2008-09	35,938
2009-10	38,917
2010-11	40,648
2011-12	44,590
2012-13	44,821
2013-14	43,679
2014-15	46,287
2015-16	48,111
2016-17	49,199
2017-18	56,169

- (17) Budget is allocated by class of asset and function according to technical demand, prioritising safety, serviceability and sustainability, rather than regionally.
- (18) Expenditure data is not recorded by Electorate.
- (19) The City Rangers undertake both proactive and reactive patrols throughout the ACT. Incidents and breaches are recorded per suburb but not necessarily by electorate.
- (a) & (b) The information sought is not recorded by electorate.
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**Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assaults
(Question No 449)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

Of the eight people who were assaulted at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre in 2015-16 by other Bimberi detainees, for how many of them was this their first experience being the victim of an assault.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Please see the response to Questions Without Notice, Taken on Notice during Question Time on 1 August 2017.

**Children and young people—protection
(Question No 450)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

In relation to the conduct and decisions made by the Children and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) and/ or ACT Together, what are all the available remedial steps that parties (including both carers and involved family members) of children in care can take in cases where (a) applications, for example, kinship applications, made to the CYPS have not been responded to, (b) applications made to the CYPS have not been responded to in a timely manner, (c) concerns raised by parties to the CYPS concerning placement decisions made by the CYPS have not been responded to, (d) concerns raised by parties to the CYPS concerning placement decisions made by the CYPS have not been responded to in a timely manner, (e) visitation arrangements for children in care organised by the CYPS are cancelled on more than one occasion, (f) there is a disagreement to change in visitation arrangements for children in care, for example, reduction in visitation, (f) parties have concerns relating to the quality of care given to children, (g) parties can demonstrate that there has been a failing of decision-making and or care for the best interests of a child, (h) the CYPS and/ or ACT Together have breached confidentiality by disclosure of sensitive information to sources that pose a threat to parties and or children in care and (i) decisions made by the CYPS are contrary to court recommendations on the same matter.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (a) Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) must consider all applications for kinship care of a child or young person for whom the Director-General has parental responsibility. Complaints about applications for kinship care should be directed to the relevant Manager or the CYPS Complaints Unit. The decision to not approve an applicant as a kinship carer is a reviewable decision under s839 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (the Act). The applicant can expect written notice of the outcome of their application with a clear rationale for the decision and may seek a review through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
- (b) Concerns regarding the timeliness of a response to a kinship application should be directed the relevant Manager or the CYPS Complaints Unit.
- (c) Where concerns are held regarding a placement decision, any party who is impacted by that decision may request the rationale for the decision be provided in writing. A request for a review of the decision should be directed to the relevant Manager. If concerns are held regarding the decision making process, a complaint may be lodged with the CYPS Complaints Unit. An application to amend the Care and Protection order to include specific conditions regarding the placement may also be lodged with the ACT Children's Court.
- (d) Concerns regarding the timeliness of a response in relation to issues with a placement decision should be directed to the relevant Manager or the CYPS Complaints Unit.
- (e) Concerns regarding unexpected cancellations of contact should be directed to the caseworker in the first instance to seek the reasons the contact has been cancelled. A request for a review of contact arrangements should be directed to the relevant Manager. If concerns are held regarding the decision making process, a complaint may be lodged with the CYPS Complaints Unit. An application to amend the Care and Protection order to include specific conditions regarding contact may be lodged with the ACT Children's Court.
- (f) Where concerns are held regarding the quality of care provided to children and young people in care, a child concern report should be made to CYPS Intake. Concerns regarding children and young people in residential care may also be directed to the Official Visitor, or the Children and Young People Commissioner.
- (g) A request for a review of a decision that may have failed to consider the best interest of a child should be forwarded to the relevant Manager. If concerns are held regarding the decision making process, a complaint may be lodged with the CYPS Complaints Unit, or the Children and Young People Commissioner. An application to amend a Care and Protection order may also be lodged with the ACT Children's Court.
- (h) A breach of confidentiality should be reported to the relevant Manager. CYPS can assist parties to access protection orders and alert police to a possible threat where necessary. Legal advice should be sought regarding any remedial options available through court processes. Concerns regarding any breach of legislation may also be reported to ACT Policing.
- (i) The ACT Children's Court makes orders in accordance with the Act for children and young people in need of care and protection. A Care and Protection order authorises the Director-General and his delegates to make decisions in accordance with those orders. Legal advice should be sought regarding any concerns that CYPS is acting in breach of an order.

Please note: The CYPS Complaints Unit include a list of contacts for escalation of concerns with each complaint response. A copy of this list is included at Attachment A.

**Alternative avenues for pursuing concerns regarding services provided
by Child and Youth Protection Services**

Quality, Complaints and Regulation

The Quality, Complaints and Regulation Unit within the Community Services Directorate provides an independent complaints resolution service, or review function, for the Director-General.

To contact them please email Quality@act.gov.au or on 6207 5474.

Office of the Public Advocate (ACT)

The Public Advocate represents the rights of people who are not able to represent themselves.

Further information can be obtained at www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au or on 6207 0707.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People can help resolve complaints about services for Children and Young People.

Further information can be obtained from www.hrc.gov.au or on 6205 2222.

**Children and young people—youth justice
(Question No 451)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What was the rate of recidivism of sentenced young people in custody in the ACT for (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12, (c) 2012-13, (d) 2013-14, (e) 2014-15, (f) 2015-16 and (g) 2016-17.
- (2) What was the rate of recidivism of sentenced young people on community-based orders in the ACT for (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12, (c) 2012-13, (d) 2013-14, (e) 2014-15, (f) 2015-16 and (g) 2016-17.
- (3) What percentage of children and young people who have served a custodial sentence at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre have gone on to serve a custodial sentence at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), since its opening in 2008.
- (4) What percentage of children and young people detained at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre have gone on to serve a custodial sentence at any other adult correctional facility in Australia, since its opening in 2008.
- (5) How many (expressed as a ratio) of those serving custodial sentences in the AMC had previously served a custodial sentence at Bimberi for (a) 2010–11, (b) 2011–12, (c) 2012–13, (d) 2013–14, (e) 2014–15, (f) 2015–16 and (g) 2016–17.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The rate of recidivism of sentenced young people in custody in the ACT is:

(a) 2010-11	22%
(b) 2011-12	29%
(c) 2012-13	33%
(d) 2013-14	56%
(e) 2014-15	36%
(f) 2015-16	50%
(g) 2016-17	17%

Note: The recidivism rate for custody is subject to fluctuations due to the small numbers of young people who receive custodial sentences. Over the time period presented, there was an average of 14 young people per year on a custodial sentence. Small variations in the numbers of young persons reoffending can lead to disproportionate variations in the rate of recidivism.

2. The rate of recidivism of sentenced young people on community-based orders in the ACT is:

(a) 2010-11	31%
(b) 2011-12	32%
(c) 2012-13	26%
(d) 2013-14	26%
(e) 2014-15	30%
(f) 2015-16	21%
(g) 2016-17	16%

3. The Government is unable to provide data on the percentage of young people who have served a custodial sentence at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and gone on to serve a custodial sentence at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). ACT Corrective Services currently ask detainees upon induction at the AMC about any previous juvenile custody. However, this information is self-identified and there is no distinction between local and interstate juvenile custody or sentenced and remand episodes.

4. The Government has previously considered the viability of reporting on the movement of young people into interstate adult correction systems and has determined that it is not able to do so. Obtaining such data is not viable as it would require ACT Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) to track the movements of its former clients which would be resource-intensive and arguably not an appropriate function for CYPS to undertake. There would also be substantial issues in organising and maintaining the cooperation of other adult corrections jurisdictions.

5. As noted above, the data collection tools of ACT Child and Youth Protection Services and ACT Corrective Services do not allow for this information to be identified.

Waste—Fyshwick energy plant (Question No 454)

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) What impact will the proposed waste plant at Fyshwick have on emissions targets for the ACT, given the process involved burning waste that is currently directed to Mugga Lane landfill.
- (2) Will the impact of such a process on the ACT Government's renewable energy targets be a factor to be addressed in any environmental assessment required for the proposal to proceed.
- (3) When was the Minister first made aware of this proposal and has the Minister been included in Cabinet or directorate level discussions.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The impacts of the proposed waste to energy proposal, in Fyshwick, are currently unknown as the proponent is preparing documentation to submit to the planning and land authority.
- (2) Any waste to energy project in the ACT would not affect the ACT's 100% renewable electricity target as arrangements to meet this target are already in place. The waste to energy proposal is undergoing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The EIS process is an information gathering exercise to determine the impacts and impose appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the impacts. As part of the EIS process the proponent is required to investigate what effect the proposal may have on climate change and explain how the proposal is consistent with associated ACT and national policies.
- (3) An application for a scoping document was submitted to the planning and land authority and circulated to entities in May this year. The scoping stage is the beginning of the EIS process and is in place to identify key matters for the EIS to address. As this is the early stages of the process, there has not been any Cabinet discussion. I was made aware of the project on 19 July 2017.

Transport—bike facilities (Question No 455)

Ms Le Couteur asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) In relation to the recent announcement of privately-backed "bike stops" initiative to support local businesses to provide "end-of-ride" support for commuter cyclists, does the ACT Government intend to further investigate publicly-owned "bike hubs" such as those operating in Brisbane.
- (2) What guarantees will be in place to ensure that commuter cyclists will have free or affordable "end-of-ride" support services and will not be unduly limited by commercial considerations.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The ACT Government intends to further investigate publicly-owned "bike hubs" such as those operating in Brisbane during this term of Government, as per the Parliamentary Agreement.

- (2) When signing up to participate in the program, prospective Bike Stop Businesses are required to sign an agreement noting that they agree to provide the services free of charge to bike riders and others wanting to use the facilities for similar purposes (after a run or walk commute).
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Government—land development policies (Question No 457)

Ms Le Couteur asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) How many local centres are upgraded every year and what is the total annual budget available.
- (2) Is an upgrade scheduled for the Downer Local Centre.
- (3) Given that local residents have advised me that the Land Development Agency previously committed to the Downer Residents Association that the Government would upgrade the public areas of Downer Shops once the Community Housing Corporation land purchase was complete, what is the status of that undertaking and how much funding is available for the upgrade.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Over the past 15 years, 28 local centres have been upgraded, resulting in an average of two upgrades per year. There have been 13 major refurbishments and 10 minor upgrades (totalling over \$20m) to improve safety, amenity, function and commercial viability.
 - (2) There are no current plans to upgrade the Downer Local Centre.
 - (3) In February 2017, the LDA CEO was quoted in the Northside Chronicle newspaper as stating that there had to date, been no funding allocated to the proposed renewal of the public space adjacent to the local shops and the Downer Community Centre, and furthermore, that the nature of any future upgrade was still to be determined. This remains the case to date. The direct sale to Community Housing Canberra was finalised on 29 June 2017.
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Seniors—rates (Question No 458)

Ms Le Couteur asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) With respect to the Aged assistance Deferral scheme for rates, can the Treasurer advise the (a) number of property owners using the scheme, (b) annual value of rates deferred, (c) cumulative value of rates deferred, (d) interest rate charged on rates deferred, (e) average income of the property owners who have deferred rates, (f) minimum, average and maximum time that rates are deferred for and (g) total value of properties who rates have been deferred.

- (2) With respect to the Hardship assistance Deferment scheme for rates, can the Treasurer advise the (a) number of property owners using the scheme, (b) annual value of rates deferred, (c) cumulative value of rates deferred, (d) interest rate charged on rates deferred, (e) average income of the property owners who have deferred rates, (f) minimum, average and maximum time that rates are deferred for and (g) total value of properties who rates have been deferred.
- (3) With respect to the Pensioner Assistance scheme for rates, can the Treasurer advise the (a) number of property owners using the scheme, (b) annual value of rates rebated, (c) cumulative value of rates rebated, (d) average income of the property owners who have rebated rates and (e) total value of properties whose rates have been rebated.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The ACT Government allows rates deferment under three different criteria – Aged, Hardship and Pensioner. Data for each scheme is provided below:

Aged Assistance Deferment

- (a) Number of property owners using the scheme - Two
- (b) The annual value of rates deferred. Not available – reporting only contains cumulative data of deferrals and does not provide an annual figure.
- (c) The cumulative value of rates deferred was \$24,019 as of 30 June 2016 (including interest).
- (d) Interest rate charged on rates deferred - 1.73 per cent simple interest (This is the 'market rate' as defined in the *Taxation Administration Act 1999* – and is the monthly 90 day bank bill rate. It is adjusted every six months. The current rate is 1.73 per cent per year.)
- (e) Average income of the property owners who have deferred rates - \$35,652 as at time of application.
- (f) Minimum, average and maximum time that rates are deferred for – This information is not available.
- (g) Total value of properties who rates have been deferred - \$1,227,000 (Unimproved Value of land as of 1 Jan 2017 - not the market value of house and land)

Hardship Assistance Deferment

- (a) Number of property owners using the scheme - 32
- (b) Annual value of rates deferred. Not available – reporting only contains cumulative data of deferrals and does not provide an annual figure.
- (c) Cumulative value of rates deferred - \$299,090 as of 30 June 2016 (including interest).
- (d) Interest rate charged on rates deferred – 1.73 per cent simple interest
- (e) Average income of the property owners who have deferred rates – ACTRO does not collect this information - applicants need to satisfy criteria set by Commonwealth Government for income support.
- (f) Minimum, average and maximum time that rates are deferred for - This information is not available.
- (g) Total value of properties whose rates have been deferred - \$9,899,979 (Unimproved Value of land as of 1 Jan 2017 – not the market value of house and land)

Pensioner Deferment

- (a) Number of property owners using the scheme - 148
- (b) Annual value of rates deferred – Not available – reporting only contains cumulative data of deferrals and does not provide an annual figure.
- (c) Cumulative value of rates deferred \$1,420,064 of 30 June 2016 (including interest).
- (d) Interest rate charged on rates deferred – 1.73 per cent simple interest.
- (e) Average income of the property owners who have rebated rates – ACTRO does not collect this information - applicants need to satisfy criteria set by Commonwealth Government for Pension eligibility.
- (f) Minimum, average and maximum time that rates are deferred for – This information is not available.
- (g) Total value of properties with deferral- \$54,638,567 (Unimproved Value of land as of 1 Jan 2017 - not the market value of house and land).

The Government also provides a Pensioners Rebate Scheme for rates.

- (a) Number of property owners using the scheme - 18,007
- (b) Annual value of rates rebated - \$10,856,220 for the 2016-2017 year.
- (c) Cumulative value of rates rebated - \$31,162,533 – for the last three financial years.
- (d) Average income of the property owners who have rebated rates – applicants need to satisfy criteria set by Commonwealth Government for Pension eligibility.
- (e) Total value of properties whose rates have been rebated - \$14.4 billion (Unimproved Value of land as of 1 Jan 2017 - not the market value of house and land).

Housing—energy efficiency (Question No 461)

Ms Le Couteur asked the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) In relation to ACT Housing’s upgrades of existing public housing for improved energy efficiency and thermal comfort, how many homes were/ will be upgraded in the (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2017-18 financial years.
- (2) What are the full range of energy efficiency and thermal comfort upgrades the program delivers and which of these elements are expected to be the most cost-effective in terms of improving comfort and energy efficiency.
- (3) Does the program include draught-proofing; if so, (a) how many of the homes receive this and (b) what is the average cost per home.
- (4) Does the program include installation of insulation; if so, (a) how many of the homes receive this, (b) what does the typical insulation installation include and (c) what is the average cost per home.
- (5) Does the program include appliance upgrades or installation of heating/ cooling equipment; if so, (a) how many of the homes receive this and (b) what is the average cost per home.

- (6) Has a before/ after assessment of homes been undertaken using a rating tool or other methodology; if so, what were the results.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) a) In the 2016-17 financial year, 1,245 homes received improvements under the Energy Efficiency Program.
- b) The program ceased at the end of 2016-17.
- (2) The full range of upgrades available under the energy efficiency program included ceiling and cavity wall insulation, draught sealing, pelmets, gas and electric boosted solar hot water systems, 5 star gas hot water systems and panel heaters. Passive elements such as ceiling insulation, cavity wall insulation and draught sealing are considered the most cost effective measures to improve thermal comfort as they are not subject to a residents use and behaviours.
- (3) Yes, the program included draught sealing.
- a) In 2016-17, 1,036 properties received draught sealing under the program. It would be administratively inhibitive to ascertain how many properties received this over the 10 years of the program from 2007-08 to 2016-17.
- b) The average cost of draught ceiling is \$375.00.
- (4) Yes the program included the installation of cavity wall and ceiling insulation.
- a) Approximately 3,100 properties received ceiling insulation and approximately 1,300 received cavity wall insulation.
- b) There is no typical installation of insulation. Housing ACT properties are assessed at the time of installation to determine insulation requirements. Some properties may need a full roof insulation replacement whilst others may only need a top up to the required standard. Not all walls are always completed on the cavity wall insulation program, often western and southern walls are completed to address specific issues such as condensation and sometimes whole properties are completed. Housing ACT properties also vary in size from one bedroom to five bedrooms properties.
- c) Taking into account the information in answer 4) b) the average cost of wall insulation is \$2,750.00 and the average cost of ceiling insulation is \$1,450.00
- (5) Yes the program included appliance upgrades such as hot water systems and some heaters.
- a) There have been 868 heat pump hot water systems, 1,043 solar hot water systems, 616 gas storage hot water systems and 63 panel heaters installed.
- b) The average cost per home is not available. However, the average cost per appliance is:
- Heat pump hot water systems - \$3,500.00
 - Solar hot water systems - \$5,000.00

- Gas storage hot water systems - \$1,600.00
- Panel heating - \$615.00

(6) Housing ACT's Total Facilities Manager, Spotless, has recently installed data loggers on approximately 30 hot water systems as a methodology to determine their use and efficiency. The results of this study are not yet available.

Planning—lease variation (Question No 463)

Ms Le Couteur asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 August 2017:

- (1) In relation to crown leases to which a Lease Variation Charge may apply and with respect to residential leases where the purpose clause permits “residential purposes only” or other non-limiting number, (a) during what periods were these types of leases primarily issued, (b) approximately how many of these types of leases are there, (c) in what parts of the ACT are these types of leases typically found and (d) what is the typical lease wording for these types of lease.
- (2) With respect to residential leases where the purpose clause specifies a number, or maximum number, of dwellings (a) during what periods were these types of leases primarily issued, (b) approximately how many of these types of leases are there, (c) in what parts of the ACT are these types of leases typically found and (d) what is the typical lease wording for this type of lease.
- (3) What other common types of residential leases are there.
- (4) During what periods were each of the types of leases referred to in part (3) primarily issued.
- (5) Approximately how many are there of each of the types of leases referred to in part (3).
- (6) In what parts of the ACT are each of the types of leases referred to in part (3) found.
- (7) What is a typical lease wording for each of the types of leases referred to in part (3).

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1) (a) The increase in lease variation charge to vary a Crown lease to specify the number of units to permit unit titling applies to residential Crown leases that do not already specify the number of units. Most of these leases were issued before 2000, but there may also be leases outside of this time.
- (b) It is difficult to establish how many of these leases there are in the ACT without interrogating each residential Crown lease in the ACT. However, the ACT planning and land authority normally receives on average 40-50 applications per year to specify the number of dwellings in a residential Crown lease.
- (c) These are typically found in older residential areas where leases were first granted pre-2000.

- (d) The wording of these leases is generally for 'residential purposes'.
- (2) (a) Post 2000 residential Crown leases generally specify the number of dwellings.
- (b) It is difficult to know an approximate number of how many of these leases exist in the ACT as a lease variation is not required for unit titling for these kinds of leases.
- (c) The leases are typically found in newer suburbs where Crown leases were issued after 2000.
- (d) The wording of these leases is usually for a 'maximum' number of dwellings. For example: 'one dwelling and a second dwelling where permitted by the Territory Plan'.
- (3) Residential leases can come in a number of different forms with different wording. The most common wording for residential leases is 'residential purposes' or to specify a certain number of dwellings, for example 'for a maximum of 9 dwellings' or 'for a single dwelling and a second dwelling where permitted by the Territory Plan'. Other forms of wording are not common.
- (4) Leases for 'residential purposes' were generally issued pre-2000. Since 2000, residential leases are generally issued for a number of dwellings, and often specify a minimum and/or maximum number of dwellings, for example 'for a minimum of 9 dwellings and a maximum of 25 dwellings'. Other forms of wording are not common and do not cover a particular period of time.
- (5) This is difficult to ascertain without interrogating each residential Crown lease in the ACT, although most residential leases in the ACT would include the types of wording specified in 3).
- (6) 'Residential purposes' leases are generally found in older suburbs that were developed before 2000. Newer suburbs developed post-2000 or 'Mr Fluffy' blocks generally specify the number of dwellings permitted. Other forms of wording are not common and are not specific to certain suburbs.
- (7) The typical lease wording is 'residential purposes' or specifies the number of dwellings permitted, for example 'for a minimum of 9 dwellings and a maximum of 25 dwellings' or 'for a single dwelling and a second dwelling where permitted by the Territory Plan'.
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**Budget—lease variation charge
(Question No 464)**

Ms Le Couteur asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 4 August 2017 (*redirected to the Acting Treasurer*):

- (1) How is a Lease Variation Charge (LVC) calculated for lease variations to limit the maximum number of dwellings permitted on the land under a residential lease that does not meet the Zone test of Schedule 1 Item 1/1A/1B of the Determination, for example, because the land is in CZ5 Mixed Use Zone.
- (2) How is a Lease Variation Charge calculated for lease variations to increase the number of dwellings permitted on the land under a lease that does not meet the residential

locality test for assessment under Schedule 2 of the Determination, for example, because the land is in a group centre.

- (3) How is a Lease Variation Charge calculated for other lease variations granting new and/ or additional residential development rights that do not fall under Schedule 1 Item 1/1A/1B or Schedule 2 of the Determination.
- (4) What was the (a) total LVC revenue for lease variations granting new and/ or additional residential development rights, (b) number of development applications that this revenue was raised from and (c) number of additional dwellings these development applications permitted, for the financial years 2013-14 to 2016-17.
- (5) For each of the data points provided in response to part (4), can the Treasurer provide a breakdown of revenue, development applications and additional dwellings on the basis of (a) lease variations under Schedule 1 Item 1/1A/1B of the Determination in force at the time, (b) lease variations under Schedule 2 of the Determination in force at the time, (c) lease variations to limit the maximum number of dwellings permitted on the land under a residential lease that did not meet the Zone test of Schedule 1 Item 1/1A/1B, (d) lease variations to increase the number of dwellings permitted on the land under a lease that did not meet the residential locality test for assessment under Schedule 2 and (e) other cases.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) If a proposed residential lease variation does not meet the terms specified in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of Disallowable Instrument 2017 176, the variation is assessed under section 277 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, that is, $(V_1 - V_2) \times 75\%$, where V_1 is the after value and V_2 is the before value. Any applicable remissions are also applied.
- (2) As above.
- (3) As above.
- (4) (a) (b) (c)

	LVC revenue (a)	LVC development applications (b)	Additional dwellings (c)
2013-14	\$2,356,750	46	457
2014-15	\$1,958,250	54	267
2015-16	\$1,305,000	60	204
2016-17	\$3,777,125	99	675

- (5) (a) Schedule 1:

Schedule 1	LVC revenue	LVC Development applications	Additional dwellings
2013-14	\$980,000	37	143
2014-15	\$1,400,000	42	228
2015-16	\$1,031,250	53	156
2016-17	\$2,091,250	83	345

(b) Schedule 2:

Schedule 2	LVC revenue	LVC Development applications	Additional dwellings
2013-14	\$22,500	1	2
2014-15	\$155,250	1	4
2015-16	\$202,500	3	37
2016-17	\$218,250	5	45

(c) If the application does not meet the zone test, it is assessed under section 277 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*:

s277	LVC revenue	LVC Development applications	Additional dwellings
2013-14	\$1,197,500	7	278
2014-15	\$256,250	5	21
2015-16	\$71,250	4	11
2016-17	\$866,875	6	204

(d) If the application does not meet the residential locality test for assessment under Schedule 2, it is assessed under section 277 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. The answer is provided in 5(c) above.

(e) Other cases:

Other	LVC revenue	LVC Development applications	Additional dwellings
2013-14	\$156,750	1	34
2014-15	\$146,750	6	14
2015-16	\$ -	0	0
2016-17	\$600,750	5	81

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—bush healing farm (Question No 471)

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Why is there a 24 hours / seven days a week security presence on the premises of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.
- (2) What is the nature of the security presence.
- (3) When was it instigated.
- (4) What reported incidences have there been of security breaches at the property that require the presence of 24/7 security.

- (5) How many incidences.
- (6) What is the nature of these incidences.
- (7) What damage has been done to the property.
- (8) How much is it costing the Government to have the 24/7 security on the property
(a) weekly and (b) since it was instigated.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The Ngunawal Bush Healing Farm is remote from other ACT Government facilities and support and security presence will protect the ACT Government asset.
2. There is one security officer stationed on the site 24/7, providing security services including perimeter patrols and to act as a general deterrent to trespassers and vandals.
3. The security presence was started at the handover of the facility to ACT Health in November 2016.
4. Since November 2016 there have been seven security breaches.
5. There have been seven incidents reported.
6. The nature of the incidents were:
 - a. Three instances of illegal shooting on the wider property. Two were reported to Parks and Conservation service and one was reported to the Police.
 - b. Gates at the rear of the property have been damaged twice.
 - c. Three motion activated cameras have been stolen from the back of the property.
 - d. A guard was "spotlighted" and verbally abused by persons in a vehicle trying to enter the property illegally.
7. Damage occurred to property gates, including replacing a chain and rehangings.
8. In regards to the cost:
 - a. Based upon full month invoices from December 2016 to May 2017, the average weekly cost is \$7991.75. The reason for the original approximate figure is due to weekly variations with public holidays, attracting higher invoice costs.
 - b. The total costs from November 2016 until May 2017 are \$214,112.38.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—family group conferencing (Question No 472)

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Did the Family Group Conferencing pilot project go out to tender.

- (2) How many tenderers were there.
- (3) Who were the tenderers.
- (4) What indigenous organisations were considered for the project.
- (5) What were the selection criteria for the appropriate organisation.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The tender process for the Family Group Conference pilot project was a single select tender.
- (2) One.
- (3) Curijo Pty Ltd is the preferred organisation and is an Aboriginal operated organisation certified with Supply Nation.
- (4) Curijo Pty Ltd has extensive experience in delivering Family Group Conferences and its staff are accredited in Family Group Conference facilitation. Curijo Pty Ltd currently conducts Family Group Conferences in New South Wales and has over 20 years experience working in child protection systems.
- (5) The primary consideration for this pilot project was expertise in Family Group Conferences facilitation and accreditation status to deliver this model. In addition, the ability to deliver training, facilitate Family Group Conferences, mentor and support other staff to facilitate Family Group Conferences and provide an evaluation report at the end of the pilot were further considerations.

Government—market research (Question No 476)

Mr Coe asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

In relation to the payment made by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate to Orima Research Pty Ltd, which was published in the June 2017 ACT Government Notifiable Invoices Register, (a) what is the nature of the market research prepared by Orima Research, (b) what is the timeframe of the research project, (c) what is the total amount paid to Orima Research Pty Ltd for the research project, (d) what actions will be undertaken as a result of the market research and (e) will the outcome of the research be made available publicly; if so, when will the outcome be released and where can it be accessed.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

In relation to the payment made by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate to Orima Research Pty Ltd, which was published in the June 2017 ACT Government Notifiable Invoices Register:

- a) The research consists of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) to test the views and perceptions of the ACT Community about ACT Government priorities and programs.

- b) The survey was conducted between 4 and 19 May 2017.
- c) The total amount paid to Orima Research was \$34,655.
- d) Cabinet is briefed on the findings of the research to inform policy and project development and cabinet decision making.
- e) There are no plans to release the outcome of the research publicly.

Budget—rates
(Question No 477)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

How many enquiries or complaints have been received from members of the community in (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2017-18 to date regarding (i) increased residential rates and (ii) changes to utility concessions.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Members of the community can contact the Government via a number of avenues. Information on queries received via these various avenues is not centrally collated, however the below table shows enquiries received by the ACT Treasury, including those referred by the office of the Treasurer.

	(a) 2016-17	(b) 2017-18 to date
(i) Increased residential rates	29	4
(ii) Changes to utility concessions	2	1

Budget—rates
(Question No 478)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Does Table 6.2.1 of 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3 (BP3) report a 12% variance between the 2016-17 estimated outcome for residential general rates and the 2017-18 Budget figure for residential general rates.
- (2) Does paragraph on Residential General Rates on page 226 of BP3 indicate that the variance reflects an increase of around 7 per cent on average for houses as well as adjustments to the total value of residential land and the number of properties.
- (3) In calculating the variance, could the Treasurer please advise how these additional factors were determined, particularly the methodology used to (a) adjust the total value of residential land, including the percentage of the adjustment and the actual amount of the total value adjusted and (b) calculate the expected growth in the number of properties, including the amount by which the ACT residential property stock is expected to increase.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes.
 - (2) Yes - as the number of residential properties increases so will the total Average Unimproved Value (AUV) pool.
 - (3) The increase between 2016-17 estimated outcome for residential general rates revenue and the 2017-18 figure includes the estimated additional revenue generated from the change in calculation methodology and the estimated impact of new properties coming onto the system throughout the year. The methodology is a "top down" approach based on the expected overall revenue increase resulting from new property growth throughout the year. This approach takes into account the overall revenue growth experienced in previous years rather than the growth of each component.
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**Icon Water—works
(Question No 479)**

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) What was the nature of the works being undertaken by Icon Water on Northbourne Avenue on 2 August 2017.
- (2) What is the (a) duration and (b) cost of the works undertaken by Icon Water along Northbourne Avenue.
- (3) Was the jet of water on Northbourne Avenue on 2 August 2017 planned as part of Icon Water's works; if so, were (a) local residents, (b) local businesses, (c) Canberra Metro and (d) Transport Canberra and City Services notified and when; if not, (a) what caused the jet of water and (b) how was it managed on site.
- (4) In relation to the damage caused to property, road infrastructure, or light rail infrastructure caused by the jet of water on Northbourne Avenue on 2 August 2017, (a) what property or infrastructure was damaged, (b) what was the nature of the damage, (c) was the property owned by Canberra Metro, Transport Canberra and City Services, or a private individual or group, (d) will compensation will be offered and (e) what is the cost and timeframe for repair.
- (5) Did local businesses or local residents lose access to water and/or sewage services due to the jet of water or works undertaken by Icon Water; if so, what was (a) the number of residential properties without the services, (b) the number of commercial properties without the services and (c) the period of time which the services were unavailable.

Mr Barr: The following answers to the Member's questions have been sought from Icon Water Limited (Icon Water), which operates as an independent corporation:

1. In response to a question from the Canberra Times on 2 August 2017, Icon Water initially advised that the jet of water on Northbourne Avenue was linked to planned works. Later that day, it was established that this statement was incorrect and Icon Water did not undertake any planned works on Northbourne Avenue on 2 August 2017.

A reactive crew from Icon Water attended the Northbourne Avenue site at 1:20pm on 2 August 2017 after receiving a report of a potential burst water main. The crew assisted in the isolation of the water main. The water main had been previously isolated by Icon Water personnel on 24 July 2017 and the isolation failed on 2 August 2017 when a valve was opened without the consent of Icon Water.

- 2a. Icon Water did not undertake any planned works prior to the event on 2 August 2017, nor were any planned works scheduled to be undertaken at this site on that date. The Icon Water crew were in attendance for 15 minutes.
- 2b. The total estimated cost of the response by Icon Water, based on labour and truck utilisation, was in the order of \$300.
3. On 2 August 2017, Icon Water did not undertake any planned works on Northbourne Avenue. The jet of water on Northbourne Avenue on 2 August 2017 was caused by unknown parties opening a valve, which requires a key or tools to operate, without authorisation from Icon Water. The valve had been closed by Icon Water on 24 July 2017 and was clearly labelled with a “Danger Do Not Operate” tag [refer to the first photograph in the attached four photographs of the incident]. A contractor on site observed the jet of water and took appropriate corrective action by closing the valve to prevent the flow of water.

Icon Water has established a strong customer relationship with Canberra Metro to ensure water and sewer assets are managed appropriately. Canberra Metro staff and contractors have been briefed on procedures to follow when works impact Icon Water assets.

4. There was no damage to property, road infrastructure or light rail infrastructure. Minor water impact occurred as part of the excavation process with no restorative action required.
5. No local businesses or local residents lost access to water and/or sewage service due to the jet of water, or works undertaken by Icon Water, on Northbourne Avenue on 2 August 2017.

(Copies of the images are available at the Chamber Support Office).

Sport—Rugby League World Cup sponsorship (Question No 480)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Economic Development, upon notice, on 18 August 2017 *(redirected to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events)*:

- (1) What is the total amount that the ACT Government will spend to sponsor the Rugby League World Cup.
- (2) What payments have been made to date for sponsorship of the Rugby League World Cup and what entity received the payments.
- (3) Does the June 2017 ACT Government Notifiable Invoices Register includes two payments of \$137,500 each made to the Australian Rugby Union for ‘Event Rugby

League World Cup – sponsorship’; if so, (a) what is the role of the Australian Rugby Union in the Rugby League World Cup event and (b) why were two separate payments of \$137,500 made.

- (4) What benefits will the ACT receive as a sponsor of the Rugby League World Cup.
- (5) Will the ACT receive complimentary tickets to the Rugby League World Cup matches held in the ACT; if so, how many tickets will be provided and how will those tickets be allocated.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The ACT Government’s investment in the Rugby League World Cup 2017 is commercial in confidence as part of an agreement between the Territory and Rugby League World Cup 2017 Limited (the tournament organisers).
 - (2) See response to Question 1.
 - (3) The Australian Rugby Union has no role in the Rugby League World Cup 2017. The figures highlighted have been referenced incorrectly and relate to two instalments for sponsorship of the upcoming Rugby Union Test Match between Australia and Argentina.
 - (4) The ACT will receive a range of benefits as a result of being selected as a Host City for the Rugby League World Cup 2017. These include:
 - Designation as an ‘Official Host City’ for the tournament to assist with promoting Canberra’s matches and the city’s status as a major events destination;
 - Match venue and playing field signage recognition;
 - Host city messaging and branding recognition on key tournament marketing assets;
 - Opportunities to access participating teams and players for community engagement opportunities.
 - Significant destination profiling and exposure via a global television broadcast and international media coverage.
 - The opportunity to drive tournament related legacy benefits – e.g. increased grass roots participation for Rugby League in the Canberra region and further enhancement of Canberra’s reputation as a world-class event host.
 - Capacity to drive interstate and international visitation from visiting teams, officials, spectators, media and event partners.
 - Community benefits in the form of enhanced community pride, city vibrancy and opportunities for local participation in the tournament (e.g. as volunteers).
 - (5) The ACT will receive 150 complimentary tickets to each Canberra match. These tickets will be allocated under an approved ticketing plan, whereby the majority will be distributed to the local accommodation sector for packaging purposes and to local/regional media outlets for promotional prizes.
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**Government—office accommodation
(Question No 481)**

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Economic Development, upon notice, on 18 August 2017 (*redirected to the Acting Treasurer*):

- (1) What were the occupancy rates of Callam Offices as at (a) 1 July 2015, (b) 1 July 2016 and (c) 1 July 2017.
- (2) What organisations currently occupy Callam Offices.
- (3) Are any of the organisations currently occupying Callam Offices expected, or scheduled, to move out of this precinct in the next twelve months; if so, which organisations.
- (4) Are any other organisations expected, or scheduled, to relocate to Callam Offices in the next twelve months; if so, which organisations.
- (5) What is being done to address the relatively low level of occupancy of Callam Offices.
- (6) What was the total cost of repairs, maintenance, landscaping and refurbishment to Callam Offices in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17.
- (7) How much has been budgeted in 2017-18 for repairs, maintenance, landscaping and refurbishment to Callam Offices.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The occupancy rates of Callam Offices as at:
 - (a) 1 July 2015 was 75%
 - (b) 1 July 2016 was 83%
 - (c) 1 July 2017 was 56%
- (2) Woden Valley Community Services – Community Organisation

Wellways Australia Limited – Mental Health Services

CMTEDD Security Services ICT – Shared Services

Education Directorate – The Board of Senior Secondary Studies/Education

Health Directorate– Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- (3) None of the current community organisation tenants has indicated that they would consider vacating prior to their expiry of their 5 year licence agreements.

The three Government Directorates above are on MOUs for periods of up to five years.
- (4) We are currently refurbishing a number of office spaces in Callam. Available office space is fully tenanted.

- (5) The current occupancy rate is approximately 56% of available space. We are undertaking refurbishment works including upgrading of office space.

Once completed the refurbished space will be offered to both community and the private sector.

- (6) Summary of expenses:

Callam Offices - Repair, Maintenance and Capital Expenses				
	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Budget
Repairs	\$123,774	\$153,797	\$146,166	\$135,496
Maintenance	\$437,725	\$376,672	\$363,057	\$336,554
Landscaping			\$33,242	\$150,000
Refurbishment	\$50,470	\$15,817	\$532,403	\$1,150,000
Totals	\$611,969	\$546,286	\$1,074,868	\$1,772,050

- (7) \$1,772,050 in total, which is made up of:
- (a) \$135,496 estimate for repairs;
 - (b) \$336,554 estimate for maintenance;
 - (c) \$150,000 allocated for landscaping works; and
 - (d) \$1,150,000 for refurbishment.

Planning—answers to questions on notice (Question No 482)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

Why was the Question on Notice E17-593 to the Select Committee on Estimates 2017-18 not delivered to the Committee Secretariat until 4 August 2017 when it had been approved for circulation by the Minister on 21 July 2017.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Unfortunately the response was not provided to the Committee Secretariat immediately after it was approved. This was due to an administrative error. I apologise for the delay.

Access Canberra—inspectors (Question No 483)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Regulatory Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Can the Minister provide an update to Question on Notice 22 on the number of inspectors currently employed by Access Canberra to undertake building enforcement procedures in Access Canberra inspectorates.

- (2) Can the Minister provide an update on the number of inspectors with specific skill-sets and qualifications for (a) electrical, (b) plumbing and gas and (c) construction (building trade and building surveying qualifications).
- (3) How many of the inspectors currently employed hold dual or multiple qualifications that enable them to work across different Access Canberra inspectorates.
- (4) How many inspectors have left Access Canberra to date in 2017.
- (5) For the inspectors who have left Access Canberra in part (4), what is the breakdown according to their specific skill-sets and qualifications for (a) electrical, (b) plumbing and gas and (c) construction (building trade and building surveying qualifications).
- (6) How many inspectors have been recruited to date in 2017.
- (7) Is there any intention to recruit additional inspectors in 2017; if so, (a) what specific skills-sets and qualifications are being sought, (b) how many inspectors will be sought and (c) what is the timeframe for the recruitment process.
- (8) How long can it take, on average, (a) to book an inspection and (b) for an inspection to take place once a booking has been made.
- (9) Has Access Canberra received any complaints about the time taken for an inspection to occur; if so, how many complaints have been received and what was the outcome of those complaints.

Mr Ramsay: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1)
 - Electrical – same numbers as the last time reported.
 - Plumbing and Gas – same numbers as the last time reported.
 - Construction Audit - same numbers as the last time reported.
 - Enforcement Unit (not included in the previous response) – 7 inspectors in 2017.
- (2) (a) Electrical – There are 14 licensed electricians, with two licensed for Type B gas appliance approvals.
- (b) Plumbing and Gas – There are 12 licensed Plumber/Gas fitters with two licensed for Type B gas appliance approvals.
- (c) i. The Construction Audit Team has officers with various skill-sets and qualifications including: licensable work related to building, building surveying and building assessors licences; trade qualifications (Certificate III) in building and construction, quality auditing, and building surveying (Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma and Degrees).
Other related qualifications and skill sets include:
 - industrial/product/materials/mechanical/electrical/fire engineering;
 - Diploma of Policing;
 - Diploma of Government Management & Leadership and Master of Business Administration;
 - Certificate IV Training and Assessing; and,
 - Ninety percent of audit inspectors have a minimum of a Certificate IV in Government Investigations.

- ii. Enforcement Unit inspectors have various skill-sets and qualifications including: building licences (Class B and C), carpentry (Certificate III in Carpentry), qualifications in building and construction (Certificate IV, Diplomas and Advanced Diploma). All inspectors have a minimum of a Certificate IV in Government Investigations.
- (3)
- (a) Electrical – two inspectors are licensed for Type B Gas Appliance approvals.
 - (b) Plumbing and Gas – two inspectors are licensed for Type B Gas Appliance approvals.
 - (c) i. Construction Audit Team have a range of skills which are transferable.
 - ii. Enforcement Unit inspectors have a range of skills which are transferable, including their qualifications in Government Investigations.
- (4) Nil inspectors from Electrical, Plumbing and Gas or Construction sections.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6)
- (a) Electrical – one inspector is on contract which was renewed in July 2017 for 12 months.
 - (b) Plumbing and Gas – one inspector recruited on a temporary transfer to cover an inspector on Long Service Leave.
 - (c) i. Construction Audit Team – nil
 - ii. Enforcement Unit – nil.
- (7) No.
- (8)
- (a) Electrical – less than 5 minutes to make a booking over the phone, with typical waiting time between 2 and 5 days from time of booking to inspection.
 - (b) Plumbing / Gas – less than 5 minutes to make a booking over the phone, with typical waiting time between 2 and 5 days from time of booking to inspection.
 - (c) i. Construction Audit Team – inspections/audits are not booked through this team. The unit manages programmed audits and inspections of building and construction/energy related issues.
 - ii. Enforcement Unit - inspections are not booked through this team. The Unit manages building and construction related complaints that are prioritised in line with Access Canberra’s Accountability Commitment.
- (9) No.

**Transport—traffic management
(Question No 485)**

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Can the Minister provide the total number of signalised traffic intersections in the ACT for (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17.
- (2) Can the Minister provide the number of coordinated traffic signals in the ACT for (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17.
- (3) Is any consideration being given to increasing the number of coordinated traffic signals to improve the flow of traffic; if so, what intersections will be affected and when will the coordinated traffic signal system be implemented.
- (4) What is the average dwell time for vehicles stopped at traffic signals in the ACT.
- (5) Is priority given to vehicles travelling along arterial roads by providing for a shorter dwell time than for vehicles attempting to enter an arterial road from a minor road.
- (6) What is the average repair time for failed or damaged traffic lights.
- (7) Is priority given to failed or damaged traffic lights which are located at major intersections.
- (8) Are the traffic signals on Commonwealth Avenue, near Albert Street, intended to operate on a permanent or temporary basis; if these traffic signals are temporary, what period or periods are the signals intended to operate.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

(1)

2013-14	262
2014-15	275
2015-16	284
2016-17	291

(2) (a) n/a, (b) n/a, (c) n/a, (d) 203.

Note: data for (2) (a), (b) and (c) is not readily available.

Of the 203 traffic signals that are currently coordinated not all are coordinated all of the time, for example, some are not coordinated during off peak periods when greater flexibility for side road and turning traffic is considered more desirable.

- (3) Yes consideration is being given to the implementation /extension of traffic signal coordination along arterial roads such as Horse Park Drive Gungahlin and John Gorton Drive Molonglo.
- (4) This statistic is not recorded or reported.
- (5) Phase green times at traffic signals are allocated in proportion to the highest traffic density (measured in vehicles per lane) of all vehicle movements that can proceed in the phase. This usually results in longer green phases for traffic on arterial roads.
- (6) The contract for traffic signals maintenance requires the contractor to attend the site within one hour of being notified of a major fault. The time taken for repairs varies depending on the nature of the fault.

- (7) If more than one fault occurs at any one time then priority is given to the fault at the intersection with the maximum traffic flow.
- (8) The National Capital Authority (NCA) is responsible for Commonwealth Avenue and these traffic signals.

**ACTION bus service—maintenance
(Question No 488)**

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Can the Minister provide the total cost of replacement tyres for Transport Canberra (ACTION) buses in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17.
- (2) What is the average mileage for new tyres on a Transport Canberra (ACTION) bus; if the average mileage varies between different models of bus what is the average mileage for each model.
- (3) Can the Minister provide the total cost of retreading tyres for Transport Canberra (ACTION) buses in (a) 2013-14, (b) 2014-15, (c) 2015-16 and (d) 2016-17.
- (4) What factors are considered before determining if a bus tyre should be replaced or is suitable for retreading.
- (5) What is the average mileage for retreaded tyres on a Transport Canberra (ACTION) bus; if the average mileage varies between different models of bus what is the average mileage for each model.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Total cost of replacement (new) tyres for TCCS ACTION Buses is as follows:
 - (a) 2013-2014 financial year - \$517,993.
 - (b) 2014-2015 financial year - \$425,775.
 - (c) 2015-2016 financial year - \$480,484.
 - (d) 2016-2017 financial year - \$484,728.
- (2) The average expected kilometres travelled before replacement of new (steer) tyres fitted to the current TCCS ACTION fleet is 70,000km. This figure varies between the different types of fleet with tyre size, fleet utilisation, weather and driving conditions being contributing factors in regard to tyre wear rates.
- (3) Total cost of retreaded (drive) tyres for TCCS ACTION Buses is as follows:
 - (a) 2013-2014 financial year - \$474,354.
 - (b) 2014-2015 financial year - \$481,028.
 - (c) 2015-2016 financial year - \$470,240.
 - (d) 2016-2017 financial year - \$508,743.
- (4) Vehicle tyres are inspected by the vehicle operator as part of the pre-service check carried out prior to the vehicle leaving the Depot. Tyres are also inspected during cyclic routine maintenance procedures carried out by Workshop Staff. Tyre

replacement is determined by visual inspection which accesses tread wear and other signs of physical damage.

Tyre cases are assessed as being suitable to undergo the retreading by visual inspection on removal from the road rim. The tyre case is subject to a 7 point inspection at the retreading facility prior to the retreading process. All TCCS ACTION tyre cases are subjected to the retreading process a maximum of 3 times before disposal.

- (5) The average expected kilometres travelled before replacement of retreaded (drive) tyres fitted to the current TCCS ACTION fleet is 58,000km. This figure varies between the different types of fleet with tyre size, fleet utilisation, weather and driving conditions being contributing factors in regard to tyre wear rates.

Transport—light rail (Question No 490)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) What date was Block 39, Section 6, Dickson first identified for inclusion as part of the Light Rail Stage 1 Project Agreement.
- (2) Was the licence and use of Block 39, Section 6, Dickson by the successful contractor included in the tender documents for Light Rail Stage 1; if not, on what date was it determined Block 39, Section 6, Dickson would be included in the Light Rail Stage 1 Project Agreement.
- (3) Has a similar property been identified for use by the successful contractor of Light Rail Stage 2; if so, can the Minister identify the property.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Block 39 was first identified for inclusion as part of the Project Agreement in December 2014.
- (2) The licence and use of Block 39, Section 6, Dickson by the successful contractor was included in the tender documents for Light Rail Stage 1 in April 2015.
- (3) At this point in time a property has not been identified for use by the successful contractor of Light Rail Stage 2.

ACT Public Cemeteries Authority—Gungahlin cemetery (Question No 493)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Is consideration being given to expanding the cemetery at Gungahlin.
- (2) Is consideration being given to developing a new cemetery at Gungahlin.

- (3) If so, will additional land be required for the purpose of either expanding the existing cemetery or establishing a new cemetery at Gungahlin.
- (4) Will the community be consulted on any proposals to either expand the existing cemetery or establish a new cemetery at Gungahlin; if so, what is the timing of that consultation process.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) No.
 - (2) No.
 - (3) Not applicable.
 - (4) No plans currently exist for acquiring additional land in Gungahlin.
-

**Taxation—reform
(Question No 494)**

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) When will the Government commission further research on the outcomes of the ACT Government's tax reform transition from stamp duty to rates.
- (2) What specific outcomes will be the subject of any further research.
- (3) Will the impact of the tax reform transition on low income and fixed income households be examined.
- (4) Will the research on the outcomes of the ACT Government's tax reform transition from stamp duty to rates be conducted by an independent organisation; if so, how will that organisation be selected.
- (5) What amount has been budgeted for the further research on the outcomes of the ACT Government's tax reform transition from stamp duty to rates.
- (6) Will members of the Canberra community be given the opportunity to contribute to the research on the outcomes of the ACT Government's tax reform transition from stamp duty to rates.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Treasury undertook an analysis of the impact of the first five years of tax reform to inform the package of stage two reforms. This analysis showed that in the first five years of reform:
 - inefficient taxes (conveyance and insurance duties) reduced from 24 per cent to 16 per cent of overall tax revenues.
 - Conveyance duty amounts reduced by more than 30 per cent for three-quarters of residential properties and half of commercial property transactions.

- Conveyance duty charged for most residential properties in the ACT is now significantly lower than the national average, and the lowest of all jurisdictions except Queensland's rate for owner occupier properties.
- Insurance duty is fully abolished, saving a household spending \$3,000 on insurance each year around \$300.
- Average general rates increased by \$452 on average over what they would otherwise have increased in the absence of tax reform.
- The increase in general rates was greater for houses than units over the first stage of tax reform because units have significantly lower average unimproved land values than houses.
- The second stage of tax reform was announced as part of the 2016-17 Budget. The Government will consider further analysis and the specific scope of this as the reforms continue to roll out.

(2) to (6) These matters are subject to future government decision-making.

Taxation—rates (Question No 495)

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) What was the ACT's taxation rate per capita in (a) 2014-15, (b) 2015-16 and (c) 2016-17.
- (2) What is the projected taxation rate per capita for the ACT in 2017-18.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Taxation per capita for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16 are published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (*Taxation Revenue, Australia* ABS Cat. No. 5506.0). The outcome for 2016-17 is yet to be published.
- (2) Taxation per capita for 2017-18 has not been published by the ABS.

Taxation per capita in the ACT over the years 2014-15 to 2015-16 is below or in line with the average for all of the State and Territories.

Transport—light rail stage 1 (Question No 497)

Mr Coe asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) What is the total number of people within the 800 metre catchment zone for each Light Rail stop in Stage 1 that are expected to use the service during (a) the first year of light rail, (b) 2020, (c) 2025, (d) 2030, (e) 2035 and (f) 2040.

- (2) What percentage of people within the 800 metre catchment zone for each Light Rail stop in Stage 1 are expected to use the service during (a) the first year of light rail, (b) 2020, (c) 2025, (d) 2030, (e) 2035 and (f) 2040.
- (3) Is there an overlap in the 800 metre catchment zones for any of the stops along the Light Rail Stage 1 corridor; if so, (a) what are the stops, (b) what is the total area of the overlap and (c) is there any double counting of potential passengers within the zones.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) As provided in the response to Notice Paper No. 7, 4 August 2017, Question No. 437—the patronage modelling used in the Light Rail Stage 1 Business Case estimated that for the entire Stage 1 corridor by 2031, between 44,000 and 67,000 people will live within 800 metres of a light rail stop.
- (2) The patronage forecasts for each stop includes access from areas outside the 800m catchment zone, therefore stop usage cannot be accurately compared to a percentage of the population living within 800m of a stop.
- (3) Where stops are less than 1600m apart there will be some overlap between 800m catchment areas. However, any overlap in 800m catchment areas does not influence the outcome of the transport modelling and does not lead to the double counting of any potential passengers.

**ACTION bus service—disability access
(Question No 504)**

Ms Le Couteur asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) How many times have refresher disability awareness and wheel chair access and safety training occurred for bus drivers.
- (2) When was this training provided.
- (3) How many bus drivers have been trained since 2013.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Public Transport Operations' two day Driver Continuity Training (DCT) commenced in 2015, covering a wide range of refresher training content such as dealing with disabled (and vulnerable) members of the community in several modules including, accidents and incidents, and Australian road rules and policies. To date there have been 45 DCT courses held since its introduction in 2015. Disability awareness training is covered specifically and in greater detail during Bus Driver Training (BDT), undertaken by all new driver recruits.
 - (2) DCT courses are run on a continual basis; (at least monthly).
 - (3) To date 347 drivers have completed the training DCT and there have been 318 new drivers provided with BDT since 2013.
-

**Transport Canberra and City Services—capital works program
(Question No 506)**

Ms Le Couteur asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) Can the Minister clarify the Government's policy on allowing the closure of footpaths and verges during (a) development and (b) capital works.
- (2) How does the Government weigh up the impacts of closure on walking and cycling against the cost savings to developers.
- (3) How does the Government ensure that closures for development do not result in no safe access along a street, e.g. if there are two developments approved on opposite sides of the one street.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Where it is safe and practical, it is the ACT Government's policy is to keep roads, footpaths and verges open for public use while encouraging and supporting safe and efficient construction. All developers and contractors intending to use any part of the public road or a road related area, such as a footpath, must apply to Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) for the authorisation of a Temporary Traffic Management Plan (TTM).
- (2) In considering footpath closures TCCS considers the following:
 - Safety for workers and the general public with particular consideration given to the more vulnerable road users such as cyclists, pedestrians and the mobility and visually impaired;
 - accessibility to essential goods and services is maintained for all road users;
 - amenity to ensure minimisation of delays to traffic (including pedestrians and cyclists) and, where practical, maintain the most direct and convenient route between destinations;
 - asset damage and the risk of damage to the Government assets including natural features such as landscaping and trees is minimised; and
 - constructability through consideration of the time and cost associated with closures and impact on public and the project.
- (3) TCCS manages the coordination of all temporary traffic management on all public unleased land for which the ACT Government is responsible. TCCS also facilitates coordination with relevant stakeholders.

Managing road closures is complex as the timing of developments and construction is subject to change. Where it is foreseeable that developments impacts will coincide, TCCS works with both developers to ensure safe and convenient road and footpath facilities are maintained.

**Planning—development applications
(Question No 508)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 18 August 2017:

- (1) On what date was the development application lodged for Block 22 Section 97 Charnwood following its auction in November 2016.
- (2) Were any comments received; if so, how many.
- (3) What were the concerns raised by the public relating to the development application.
- (4) What is the current status of the development application.
- (5) When will the outcome of the development application be announced.
- (6) When did the consultation period end.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Development Application (DA201731430) for Block 22 Section 97 Charnwood was lodged with the planning and land authority on 1 May 2017.
- (2) No submissions were received within the prescribed notification period.
- (3) No concerns were raised as no submissions were received.
- (4) The Development Application has been approved subject to conditions.
- (5) A decision was made on 3 August 2017 as attached at Attachment A with a further Correction of Description issued on 9 August 2017 at Attachment B in relation to childcare place numbers.
- (6) The notification period started on 8 May 2017 and ended on 26 May 2017.

(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).

**Budget—funding allocations
(Question No 535)**

Mr Coe asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 25 August 2017:

- (1) Further to question on notice E17-052 from the Select Committee on Estimates 2017-2018, can the Treasurer outline the decision-making process for Ministers to seek approval before any pre-Budget announcements were made regarding funding allocations.
- (2) Can the Treasurer list the non-executive Members who assisted Ministers with pre-Budget announcements.

- (3) Was assistance required from outside the ministry because Ministers were travelling overseas or on leave; if so, can the Treasurer list the Ministers who were either (a) travelling overseas or (b) on leave, when a pre-Budget announcement was made.
- (4) Was consideration given to an acting Minister making an announcement rather than a non-Executive Member.
- (5) Can the Treasurer provide a list of the organisations which were advised of funding allocations prior to the official release of the 2017-2018 Budget and the budget measures that each organisation received information about.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Decisions regarding all 2017-18 funded Budget initiatives were the subject of Cabinet deliberations.
- (2) Tara Cheyne, Bec Cody, Michael Pettersson, Suzanne Orr, Chris Steel and Joy Burch all accompanied Ministers for pre-Budget announcements relevant to their electorates.
- (2) No.
- (3) Not applicable, see above.
- (4) All organisations which were affected by pre-Budget announcements were informed at the time an announcement was made. Details of these individual announcements are contained in the media releases issued by Ministers, which can be found on the Open Government site:
http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/latest_minister_media_releases

Environment Protection Authority—commissioner (Question No 583)

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Regulatory Services, upon notice, on 25 August 2017:

- (1) What is the timeframe for the Environment Protection Authority Commissioner to be appointed.
- (2) What is the recruitment process for the appointment of the Environment Protection Authority Commissioner.
- (3) Who will determine who is appointed to the role of the Environment Protection Authority Commissioner.
- (4) What will be the powers and responsibilities of the Environment Protection Authority Commissioner.
- (5) How will the role of Environment Protection Authority Commissioner differ from that of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.
- (6) How will the role of Environment Protection Authority Commissioner differ from that of the current head of the Environmental Protection Authority.

Mr Ramsay: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Deputy Director, Environment Protection (who will be statutorily appointed as the Environment Protection Authority (EPA)) position was advertised on Wednesday, 23 August via the jobs.act.gov.au website. Applications are open for a period of two weeks. Appointment is subject to a number of variables, including an applicant having been assessed as suitable and their availability to commence in the role.
- (2) ACT Public Service recruitment guidelines will be followed. Heads of EPAs in other jurisdictions have also been made aware of the vacancy and advertisement.
- (3) The Chief Operating Officer, Access Canberra will be the delegate for the recruitment of the EPA.
- (4) The powers and responsibilities of the EPA are to administer the *Environment Protection Act 1997* (EPA Act) and any other functions given to them by the EPA Act or another Territory Law.
- (5) The responsibilities of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, having regard to the objects of the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*, are to:
 - Investigate complaints about the management of the environment by the Territory or a Territory authority, and issues relating to ecologically sustainable development in the ACT;
 - Conduct investigations as directed by the Minister;
 - Conduct on the Commissioner's own initiative, investigations into actions of an agency where those actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT; and
 - Deliver State of the Environment reports.

So the Commissioner's responsibility is to keep the Government accountable for its management of the environment and sustainable development; whereas the EPA in essence regulates pollution in the Territory.

- (6) The EPA is not a stand-alone agency and as such, does not have a head officer. The advertised position will hold the statutory office of the EPA, and be the Deputy-Director of Environment Protection, within Access Canberra.

Roads—licence plate recognition cameras (Question No 584)

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 25 August 2017 (*redirected to the Minister for Regulatory Services*):

- (1) Will the Pinforce Licence Plate Recognition cameras funded in the 2017-18 Budget be able to monitor motor vehicles parking in "No Parking" spaces.
- (2) Will the Pinforce cameras be able to enforce restrictions on drivers parking in disability parking spaces without a valid mobility parking permit.

Mr Ramsay: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Vehicles parking in disabled parking bays will be inspected by the LPR technology; however, until a system can be implemented to remotely detect parking mobility permits electronically, an inspector will alight the vehicle to conduct a visual check for a current mobility permit being displayed.

**Community services—grants
(Question No 596)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, upon notice, on 25 August 2017:

- (1) What date did applications for the Participation (Digital Communities) Grants Program open and what date did applications close.
- (2) What date were successful applicants notified.
- (3) What date were successful applicants announced to the public.
- (4) What was the total number of applicants for this grants program this year and for each of the past 3 years.
- (5) How many applicants were unsuccessful for this grants program this year and for each of the past 3 years and why was each applicant unsuccessful in their application.
- (6) What date were unsuccessful applicants notified of the outcome of their application to the grants program.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Participation (Digital Communities) Grants Program opened at 9:00am on 28 April 2017 and closed at Midnight on 28 May 2017.
- (2) Letters to successful applicants were mailed out on 21 August 2017.
- (3) Successful applicants were announced on 22 August 2017. The list of successful applicants is on the Community Services Directorate website at:
<http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/multicultural/programs/grants/participation-digital-communities-grants/2016-17-digital-grants-successful-applications>
- (4) The 2017-18 grants round has not yet opened for applications. There were a total of:
 - forty (40) applications received in 2016-17;
 - forty-five (45) applications received in 2015-16; and
 - sixty-eight (68) applications received in 2014-15.
- (5) Three (3) applications were unsuccessful in 2016-17. The three (3) applications did not meet the requirements of the grant as set out in the guidelines.

Ten (10) applications were unsuccessful in 2015-16. Eight (8) applications were unsuccessful based on the position of their application in the order of merit. Two (2) applications did not meet the requirements of the grant as set out in the guidelines.

Forty-five (45) applications were unsuccessful in 2014-15. Thirty-seven (37) applications were unsuccessful based on the position of their application in the order of merit. Eight (8) applications did not meet the requirements of the grant as set out in the guidelines.

(6) Letters to unsuccessful applicants were mailed out on 21 August 2017.

Community services—grants (Question No 597)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, upon notice, on 25 August 2017:

- (1) What date did applications for the Community Support and Infrastructure Grants Program open and what date did applications close.
- (2) What date were successful applicants notified.
- (3) What date were successful applicants announced to the public.
- (4) Who are all of the recipients for this year's grants, how much funding did they receive and what is the funding to be used for.
- (5) What was the total number of applicants for this grants program this year and for each of the past 3 years.
- (6) How many applicants were unsuccessful for this grants program this year and for each of the past 3 years and why was each applicant unsuccessful in their application.
- (7) What date were unsuccessful applicants notified of the outcome of their application to the grants program.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The 2016-17 Community Support and Infrastructure Grants Program opened at 9:00am on 28 April 2017 and closed at Midnight on 28 May 2017.
- (2) Letters to successful applicants were mailed out on 11 August 2017.
- (3) Successful applicants were announced on 18 August 2017. The list of successful applicants is on the Community Services Directorate website at: <http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/multicultural/programs/grants/community-support-and-infrastructure-grants/2016-17-csig-grant-recipients>.
- (4) Please refer to **Attachment A** for a list of successful applicants, funding amounts offered and the purpose of the grant.

- (5) The 2017-18 grants round has not yet opened for applications. There were a total of:
- fifty-five (55) applications received in 2016-17;
 - sixty-three (63) applications received in 2015-16; and
 - sixty-four (64) applications received in 2014-15.

- (6) Eighteen (18) applications were unsuccessful in 2016-17. Twelve (12) applications were unsuccessful based on the position of their application in the order of merit. Six (6) applications did not meet the requirements of the grant as set out in the guidelines.

Thirty (30) applications were unsuccessful in 2015-16. Twenty Six (26) applications were unsuccessful based on the position of their application in the order of merit. One (1) application was withdrawn and the remaining three (3) applications did not meet the requirements of the grant as set out in the guidelines.

Thirty-three (33) applications were unsuccessful in 2014-15. Thirty one (31) applications were unsuccessful based on the position of their application in the order of merit. Two (2) applications did not meet the requirements of the grant as set out in the guidelines.

- (7) Letters to unsuccessful applicants were mailed out on 14 August 2017.

Attachment A

Community Support and Infrastructure Grants Program 2016-17 Successful Applicants

	Organisation	Project	Funded Amount
1	Legal Aid ACT	The ACT Law Handbook	\$10,000.00
2	Beryl Women Inc.	Upgrade office communications	\$8,000.00
3	ACT Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group	Off-site services for cancer patients	\$9,280.80
4	United Nations Youth Australia Australian Capital Territory Inc.	Student scholarships program	\$2,000.00
5	Woden Seniors Inc.	New commercial dishwasher	\$5,291.00
6	Canberra Seniors Inc.	Replacement of 2 split systems (office upgrade)	\$6,875.00
7	Crace Community Association	Establishing membership first aid capacity	\$4,418.00
8	ADACAS	Disability Accessible Office Kitchen	\$7,000.00
9	Reid Early Childhood Centre	Facilities upgrade, staff training, and enhancement of children's education program	\$9,968.00
10	Companion House	Audio/communications upgrade	\$9,853.00
11	Wanniassa District Girl Guides	Hall equipment upgrade and ceiling installation	\$5,275.00
12	Epilepsy Association ACT Inc	Telecommunications Project to support effective communication with people with epilepsy	\$4,730.00
13	ACT Deafness Resource Centre	Replacement of air conditioning unit	\$1,210.00
14	Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre	Installation of commercial exhaust in kitchen	\$5,000.00
15	Canberra Dance Theatre Inc	Replacement of old equipment to improve safety and functionality	\$3,584.00
16	Physical Activity Association	Office furniture upgrade	\$2,078.00 (not fully funded)

	Organisation	Project	Funded Amount
17	CARE Inc	Green light for CARE (energy efficiency upgrade)	\$7,540.00
18	Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation	Software program to support Mentoring program for prisoners released from AMC	\$8,470.00 (not fully funded)
19	Valley FM Broadcasters Association	Enhance outdoor sound production capacity at community events In Tuggeranong	\$699.00 (not fully funded)
20	Spielwelt German Parents Association	Construct a storage shed at Turner Scout Hall	\$5,608.00
21	Standard Chinese School of Australia	Furniture and equipment purchase	\$3,862.00
22	Igbo Canberra	Domestic violence awareness and prevention project	\$10,000.00
23	Lyneham Primary School Parents and Citizens Association Inc	A Play Pod full of “loose parts” to Improve play-based activities for kinder to year 2	\$5,000.00 (not fully funded)
24	St Athanasius Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church inc	Purchase of public address system, laptop, projector, screen to support community activities	\$8,697.00
25	Lyneham Primary School Parents and Citizens Association Inc	A Play Pod full of “loose Parts” to Improve play-based activities for senior primary school students	\$5,000.00 (not fully funded)
26	Canberra Interfaith Forum	Further development of the Environment Meditation and Healing Garden	\$7,000.00
27	Volunteering and Contact ACT	Social Enterprise Retail Outlet	\$10,000.00
28	Nutrition Australia ACT	NAACT upskills	\$6,600.00
29	Charity Bounce	Stand Tall project – community basketball partnerships	\$8,700.00
30	Canberra Muslim Community Inc.	Gungahlin mosque – 20 kw solar panel system	\$10,000.00
31	Australian Air League City of Canberra Squadron	Camp Kitchen Trailer	\$5,000.00
32	YWCA Canberra	3 projects: improving community access, purchasing work safety equipment, and tree canopy reduction	\$10,000.00
33	Girl Guides Association ACT and SE NSW	Equipment for delivery of the Girl Guide program	\$1,822.00
34	French-Australian Preschool	Fete and event equipment	\$3,897.00 (not fully funded)
35	Fetherston Gardens	Outdoor banners	\$942.00
36	Eclaireurs de Canberra Incorporated	Scouting equipment	\$5,695.00
37	FINACT	Facilities funding (gazebo)	\$905.20

Health—annual reports (Question No 599)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, upon notice, on 25 August 2017:

- (1) Further to the answer to Question on Notice No. 298 which provided a link to the Marie Stopes International Australia website, did the link provided in the answer

provide annual reports on Marie Stopes International for the Pacific-Asia region, and not contain the details mentioned in the list contained in the answer.

- (2) Is the 2015/16 annual report for Marie Stopes International – Canberra available for public viewing; if so, where; if not, why not.
- (3) Are there any annual reports from previous years for Marie Stopes International – Canberra; if so, are they available for public viewing; if so, where; if not, why not.

Ms Fitzharris: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The link provided in Question on Notice No. 298 refers to the annual report for Marie Stopes International for the Pacific-Asia region. This was provided to show reporting requirements of other government agencies and to provide context for the practices of the clinic. ACT Health reporting requirements are as per the ACT *Health Care Facilities Code of Practice 2001* (Code of Practice).
2. The Code of Practice requires an annual report in relation to a Health Care Facility to be publically available. It is at the discretion of the Health Care Facility as to how they choose to make the report available for public viewing. Marie Stopes has advised that these annual reports are made publicly available on request. Persons wishing to view the report should contact Marie Stopes International – Canberra directly.
3. Refer to the answer to question 2 above.

Questions without notice taken on notice

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assault allegations

Mr Gentleman (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Kikkert on Tuesday, 1 August 2017*):

As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I am providing this answer as the question relates to ACT Policing.

I can advise that the investigation is ongoing and accordingly, it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assaults

Ms Stephen-Smith (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Wall on Tuesday, 1 August 2017*):

Of the eight young people assaulted in 2015-16, there were three young people for whom this was their first experience as a victim of assault in custody.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assaults

Ms Stephen-Smith (*in reply to a question and supplementary questions by Mrs Jones and Mrs Kikkert on Wednesday, 2 August 2017*):

1. Four of the eight incidents were referred to ACT Policing; the other four incidents young people declined to pursue charges.
2. Two of the eight assaults were committed by 18 year olds.
3. The *Children and Young People Act 2008* (s111) outlines the considerations for a transfer of a young person who is over the age of 18 years to an adult correctional facility. The Directorates' decision to transfer a young person over the age of 18 years to AMC is not taken lightly and due consideration is given to certain aspects, including:
 - the best interests of the young person;
 - the young person's views and wishes;
 - the young person's maturity, developmental capacity and vulnerability;
 - the behaviour of the young person; and
 - time remaining on their order(s) to be served.

Based on these considerations, in the past two years, two young people have been transferred to AMC at their own request. It should not be inferred from this that either of these young people had assaulted another young person or was determined to pose a threat.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—bush healing farm

Ms Fitzharris (*in reply to a question and supplementary questions by Mr Milligan and Mrs Dunne on Thursday, 3 August 2017*):

1. I refer the Member to the answer already provided in E17-551 (d).
2. I again refer the Member to the answer provided in E17-551 (d).
3. Yes.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—addiction treatment

Mr Rattenbury (*in reply to a question and supplementary questions by Mrs Jones and Mrs Dunne on Thursday, 3 August 2017*):

1. The Guidelines for prescribing, dispensing and administering Suboxone and Methadone at the Alexander Maconochie Centre are documented in the Justice Health Services Opioid Replacement Treatment Procedure.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide clinicians with information on safe opioid replacement treatment (ORT) dosing principles for adult clients of Justice Health Services (JHS). The procedure is based on the *National Guidelines for Medication Assisted Treatment of Opioid Dependence (2014)*. The Justice Health Service procedure includes the assessment by nursing and medical staff, patient's rights and responsibilities, dosing, treatment plans and ongoing monitoring.

2. The Justice Health Services Opioid Replacement Procedure stipulates that all opioid replacement treatment including Suboxone, are to be supervised by nursing staff. The administration of suboxone occurs within the Hume Health Centre and is supervised. The supervision of the administration of the suboxone includes:

- Checking the detainee's mouth to confirm there are no foreign bodies in the mouth, and dentures are to be removed;
- Nurses look inside the detainee's mouth every 30 seconds to check for absorption (Suboxone is absorbed sublingually within 2-7 minutes) and decrease the likelihood of diversion of the dose; and
- The detainee will remain under supervision until the film has dissolved and are instructed to drink a cup of water after the film has fully dissolved.

Prior to a person commencing on opioid treatment they must sign a treatment agreement, which indicates the person's consent to the treatment and their commitment to abide by the rules of the program. If a patient breaks the agreement and is found to be diverting their medication, the patient is counseled by senior JHS clinicians who attempt to ascertain the reasons for the diversion. Where diversion is suspected for a second time, discussion occurs with the Clinical Director and a decision is made about the person's place on the program.

3. In November 2016, a review of the process of the Justice Health Service's opiate treatment program commenced. In July 2017, the revised Clinical Procedure for Justice Health Service's opiate treatment program was endorsed and has been implemented. The changes include:

- Establishing a one day delay in commencing a detainee on methadone /suboxone following induction into the program, so that clinical issues can be appropriately identified, assessed and managed;
- Establishing a 2:00pm daily deadline for methadone /suboxone to be administered, so that Justice Health Services staff are available on site during the most common peak time of methadone /suboxone effect;
- Formalising the observation process undertaken by nursing staff before, during and after dosing, generally for all detainees and specifically for detainees in the first six days of commencing ORT; and
- Formal notification to ACT Corrective Services when a detainee is commenced on ORT (this information is shared with the consent of the detainee).

As of 8 August 2017, there are 4 detainees on suboxone.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—Human Rights Commission referral

Ms Stephen-Smith (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Kikkert on Wednesday, 16 August 2017*):

1. The matters the Human Rights Commission chooses to investigate are an issue for the Human Rights Commission.

Child and Youth Protection Services will continue to work with the Human Rights Commission to address any alleged misconduct or wrong doing until the matter has been fully investigated.

Crime—fuel theft

Mr Gentleman (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Jones on Wednesday, 16 August 2017*):

In 2016-17, 613 fuel theft offences were reported to ACT Policing.

Nine individuals were apprehended by ACT Policing in 2016-17 resulting in 16 charges for offences relating to fuel theft.

The remaining 597 offences reported to ACT Policing did not result in the apprehension of an offender.

Children and young people—foster care

Ms Stephen-Smith (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Kikkert on Tuesday, 22 August 2017*):

1. There are no children waiting for foster care.

ACT Together and Child and Youth Protection Services work together to ensure that the best possible placement is provided to meet the individual circumstances of the child. ACT Together have an aspirational goal of an additional 80 foster carers in the ACT. Any increase in foster carers assists to improve matching between foster carers and children, allows for very individualised carer arrangements for children who have particularly high and complex needs, and improves the ability to better support carers by reducing the numbers of children in any one carer household.