



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**NINTH ASSEMBLY**

**14 AUGUST 2018**

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**Tuesday, 14 August 2018**

**MADAM SPEAKER** (Ms J Burch) took the chair at 10 am, made a formal recognition that the Assembly was meeting on the lands of the traditional custodians, and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

## **Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee**

### **Out-of-order petition and reference—ACTION bus service**

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (10.01): I seek leave to table an out-of-order petition and move a motion, as circulated, to refer the matter to a committee.

Leave granted.

**MR COE:** I present the following paper:

Petition which does not conform with the standing orders—Retention of bus route 54 between Gungahlin and Belconnen—Mr Coe.

I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the significant response the petition to maintain the current Route 54 bus service between Gungahlin and Belconnen, via Crace; and
- (2) refers the petition and the impact of this specific change to the ACTION bus network to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services.

I would like to begin by thanking the 529 Crace residents and others that use that bus or are familiar with the cuts to route 54 for signing this petition. These residents, and of course others in Crace, Palmerston and other Gungahlin suburbs, deserve better from their public transport network. Under the government's proposed changes, the route 54 service will no longer operate between Gungahlin and Belconnen, and people in Crace and other suburbs will be worse off.

I bring to the Assembly's attention the many people, predominantly from Goodwin retirement village and its surrounds, and the work they did in gathering these signatures, and I acknowledge a couple of them who are in the chamber today. Of course, at Goodwin retirement village the average age of residents is around 70, with many people choosing to rely on public transport instead of driving. So they really do depend on bus services. For many, the quality of the local bus service—that is, the No 54—was one of the key reasons in choosing to reside at Goodwin at Crace.

These senior Canberrans will lose their regular option to travel to the Belconnen town centre from where they live. Instead they will be forced to catch the 20 or 21 through

to Gungahlin town centre and then catch another bus on to the Belconnen town centre. This transfer will add time, but, importantly, it will add considerable inconvenience, especially for people that are mobility-impaired.

I believe that senior Canberrans deserve better than to have their bus cut. Whilst there are growing amenities and services in the Gungahlin town centre, the reality is that many people in Gungahlin still depend on the services that are offered at the Belconnen town centre. The Belconnen health centre offers considerable services for people in Gungahlin as well as other parts of north Canberra. To lose the direct bus to Belconnen will have a severe impact on many people.

I think the idea that some people have proposed, that residents should either walk a kilometre or more down to Gundaroo Drive or catch a local bus for one kilometre and then transfer onto a rapid bus, is quite unreasonable. You should not have to get a connecting bus in order to travel nine or 10 kilometres to what is a major town centre in Canberra.

Instead of the existing direct service that operates every 30 minutes, and every hour on weekends, residents will now have to take one bus to Gungahlin and then change to another bus. What used to be a 20-minute trip will now be considerably longer and considerably more inconvenient. These changes will see not just Crace residents worse off but many other people as well. Of course, all suburbs in Gungahlin will lose their bus service to Belconnen.

Further to this, kids who depend on route 54 and other buses to get to school or university will also have to transfer. So the impact of this will be felt not just by elderly Canberrans but by parents, commuters and all people who patronise ACT buses from Gungahlin to Belconnen. They will be severely impacted.

The lengthy commute time, combined with having to constantly change bus services, turns what used to be a small hassle for elderly Canberrans into an extensive day trip, particularly on the weekends. Whilst the cost of living in Canberra continues to increase through taxes, fees, rates and charges, these proposed changes see a deterioration in value for those taxes. Crace residents will not get the direct benefits of light rail, as some other people in Gungahlin will, but they will still be forced to commute to Gungahlin in order to backtrack to Belconnen.

This simply is not good enough, and that is why so many people have seen fit to sign a petition calling on the government to reverse this proposed change. We very much hope that the ACT government sees sense and reverses this change. But in the interim, we hope that this motion referring the out-of-order petition to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services will be supported by the Assembly. The committee does not need to conduct an inquiry. We are simply asking for this to be treated as an in-order petition, and that, because it contains over 500 signatures of people, it goes to the committee. The committee can choose what it does with it, as per every other in-order petition.

The difference with this petition is that the petition is to Ms Fitzharris, as opposed to a petition to the ACT Legislative Assembly, which would make it in order. To that end

I hope the Assembly will support the referral. Again I commend those responsible for organising this petition, and the more than 500 people who signed the document.

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (10.08): I welcome the petition. I would have been well and truly available to have received it myself. I certainly know that the discussion about Canberra's future public transport network is alive and well in the city.

The government is investing significant resources in our bus network—more than doubling the number of rapid services, to be introduced next year. The consultation closed just last Sunday. There has been a lot of input, and I know the team at Transport Canberra has been out talking with community councils, and I understand it has visited the Goodwin residents in Crace and many other community organisations. It has spoken extensively with schools, with school communities and with parent representative organisations.

This is a significant change. It is a significant investment in more buses right across Canberra. It is stage 2 of this part of the consultation on the new transport network for the ACT. Past consultation has shown us that, broadly across Canberra, the message about the type of public transport network that Canberrans want to see is one that is seven days a week and that provides faster, more reliable services. That is what we will be delivering, with a more than doubling of the number of rapid bus services servicing our entire community.

The Labor government made a commitment to nine more rapid services, which it took to the 2016 election. We will more than deliver on that, with 10 rapid bus services, adding a new rapid service from the Molonglo Valley region. That means we have had the opportunity to look at the design of the whole network. We have included in that design what we know about bus services around Australia and around the world. What encourages more and more people to catch bus services is exactly what Canberrans have told us very consistently over the past few years that they want to see in a bus network. They want to see faster, more reliable buses, more often, on a seven-day-a-week network. The redesign of the network proposes just that. It fundamentally changes many bus routes right across the city, but it delivers far more bus services to far more Canberrans.

The very extensive consultation period on the proposed network that has been out in the community for the past eight weeks—and Transport Canberra, as I said earlier, has done extensive work right across the community—has been exactly that: to get feedback from the community; to understand how the Canberra community are currently using the bus network, based on significant previous consultation, and how they would use the proposed new network.

It is a genuine consultation. There have been many views put forward. We will genuinely listen to all of those views that have been put forward. There will be some changes made to the network, but I cannot tell you today, with the consultation closing just two days ago, exactly what all of those changes will look like.

It is really important to note that, at this stage, eight per cent of Canberrans currently use our bus network. Eight per cent walk or cycle, generally, to work. We really need to engage the other nearly 85 per cent of Canberrans who are not currently using our public transport network. We have probably heard a little bit less from them in the current consultation. We must listen to those that are currently using the network, but we also need to make sure that we have a network which can run efficient services that are good value for money and that move lots of people around our city, particularly as it grows. We really do need to encourage a much greater uptake in our bus services than we currently have.

The good news is that the introduction of the red rapid and the blue rapid some seven or eight years ago, and the introduction of the green and the black rapids last year, has seen very significant growth in all four of those services, particularly when those services have been offered more frequently on the weekends.

The consultation has been genuine; that is a really important point. There have been eight weeks of consultation, with considerable effort by Transport Canberra teams out there, talking to many groups in the community and genuinely hearing their concerns. We will be making some changes to the network. That is exactly why we went through this consultation. We do not yet know what some of those changes will be. We hope that, where we have heard from residents, like residents in Crace, particularly from the Goodwin village in Crace, if we cannot make the proposals they have put forward, we will let them know why and we will let them know what it means for the whole network.

The balance that we have to get right here is between current users and the over 80 per cent of Canberrans who are not current users. We have to run a more efficient bus network. We have to get more people on our buses. We have to make sure that we have real opportunities for people to use an alternative to the car. We will also be looking very closely at how we can much better use our community transport—our fleet, our network and our ability to provide community-based transport that is free and that can provide a more bespoke solution for many members of our community. That may be a good solution for many residents in our community.

I note that there are ups and downs in the public discussion around the public response to the bus consultation. There are some really good news stories in there. For example, The Grove retirement village in Ngunnawal, which did not previously have a bus stopping outside The Grove, will have this in the new network. So there are some really good news stories in this regard.

I had some discussions on the weekend in the Gungahlin town centre with a resident from Goodwin. He explained to me that one of the concerns that many residents have, including himself, was that they currently do not use the bus; he has never used the bus. What he wants to know is that when he does need to use the bus in the future—he foresees that perhaps in the next decade he will not be using his car as often—he has that option available to him. If that is an important point that is coming through in the consultation, that is exactly the sort of thing we need to know and exactly the sort of thing that we will be listening to.

I really look forward to the team from Transport Canberra getting all of this consultation, having all of the feedback, making some changes and discussing with the Canberra community what those changes mean, why we have made them and why we need to fundamentally redesign our bus network.

Underpinning all of this is a massive investment from the government in more bus travel right across the territory. This is a real opportunity to go from eight per cent of Canberrans using our bus network to many more people coming to rely on public transport as a reliable, fast and easy way to move around the city. You catch the same bus on a Friday as you do on a Sunday. You do not need to look at a timetable because you know that the bus will turn up, you know that it will take the same route and you know that there will be more and more people using the bus. That means fewer people on our roads, less investment in major road infrastructure, fewer carbon emissions into our community and more opportunity for people to get involved in public transport.

This is a real opportunity. I want to be clear that the consultation was absolutely genuine. We will be making changes. We do not know what all of those changes will be, but we look forward to continuing this conversation and looking at the feedback we have received. I look forward to the views of the committee on the petition that has been tabled.

**MR MILLIGAN** (Yerrabi) (10.17): I would also like to offer my support for this petition. As a member for Yerrabi, I attended the community protest on 25 July at Crace and heard many stories from the local residents. On the following weekend the residents had a community stall in Crace and collected many signatures from local residents, who all understood the concerns that were raised about this bus service being taken away from local residents.

Forcing our local residents to walk over a kilometre to catch a direct bus from Crace to Belconnen is really unacceptable. To force residents to go from Crace to Gungahlin, then from Gungahlin to Belconnen, is also unacceptable. To have to do this in order to do their shopping, to go to their medical appointments and so forth, is purely unreasonable.

I would like to thank the residents of Crace for petitioning and collecting signatures on this very important matter that directly affects them. I hope that this government takes this into consideration and provides a service that local residents in Crace so desperately need.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Petitions**

*The following petitions were lodged for presentation:*

### **Tuggeranong town centre masterplan—petition 11-18**

*By Ms J Burch, from 24 residents:*

**To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly that improvements to the Tuggeranong Town Centre are required, as in line with the Tuggeranong Masterplan, with special focus on the laneway between Anketell St and the lake. Chief among the needed work is the removal of the out-dated and dilapidated gazebo, which is both a hub for anti-social activity and an eyesore; impacting the amenity for Tuggeranong residents and business owners.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to focus on progressing the elements of the Tuggeranong Town Centre Masterplan between Anketell St and the lake, including by removing the gazebo.

**Charnwood group centre recycling bins—petition 16-18**

By Mrs Kikkert, from 207 residents:

**To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that, although there are currently nine public rubbish bins provided to users of the Charnwood Group Centre, no public recycling option exists at these shops.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to urge the ACT Government to provide a recycling bin (or bins) at the Charnwood Group Centre to help stop recyclable items being disposed of in rubbish bins and ending up in landfills.

*The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petitions would be recorded in Hansard and referred to the appropriate ministers for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petitions were received.*

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (10.19), by leave: I have presented a petition signed by 207 Canberra residents calling on this Assembly to urge the ACT government to provide a recycling bin or, even better, recycling bins at the Charnwood group centre. There are currently nine public rubbish bins provided to users of this shopping centre, yet there are currently no public recycling options at the Charnwood shops.

This is not an oversight, however. The ACT government acknowledged in March this year that there are no recycling options at any local shops and no plans to provide any in the future. This approach does not line up very well with the words that we so often hear from this government and from those opposite. The current ACT waste management strategy, for example, clearly states that the ACT government will establish public place recycling.

The goal, as this Assembly was reminded by Minister Fitzharris only three months ago, is to have a target of 90 per cent of waste being diverted from landfill by 2025. The resource recovery rate in the ACT has, however, been stalled at 70 per cent for

the last decade. According to the minister, lack of public recycling facilities may well be one of the reasons why.

ACT Labor, according to its party platform, claims to support a comprehensive waste minimisation policy for all public places in the ACT. This should include the provision of recycling facilities for glass, plastic, paper and metals. The petition that I have tabled this morning shows that over 200 Canberra residents from the west Belconnen area agree with these sentiments and want to remind the government to live up to its clear commitment to provide recycling facilities in public places.

The Charnwood group centre is a busy suburban shopping precinct. It includes a supermarket, a chemist, a newsagency, a drycleaner, a hairdresser, a dentist, a medical centre, a veterinary clinic, a fitness centre, a martial arts school, a bottle shop, a cafe, two variety shops and several restaurants and takeaways. It also includes a branch of the Labor Club, with its restaurant and bar. This is a buzzing shopping centre.

On a recent Saturday I observed hundreds of Canberra families and other residents patronizing these many establishments. Many of them looked around in vain for a bin where they could place recyclable items. As I have mentioned already, they had a choice of no fewer than nine rubbish bins but not a single receptacle in which to dispose of their recyclables. Instead they were forced to put paper, plastics, aluminium cans and glass bottles into the rubbish, which meant it all ended up needlessly going into landfill.

This government can stop this from happening by simply providing recycling bins. The good residents of west Belconnen are not asking for much in this petition. They want to be able to do their part to help the territory reach its goal of reducing waste to landfill, especially when they know that this waste can easily be recycled. They want their current government to provide the very basic facilities that people expect to find in well-maintained public places—something so basic, yet it enables people to choose and to care for our environment. I thank the residents of west Belconnen for this petition. On behalf of these residents, I commend this petition with its 207 signatures.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 20**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (10.24): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 20, dated 7 August 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

**MS LEE:** Scrutiny report 20 contains the committee's comments on 121 pieces of subordinate legislation, three regulatory impact statements and three government

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

## **Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Statement by chair**

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (10.24): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A. I wish to inform the Assembly that during the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018 the standing committee considered no statutory appointments.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Statement by chair**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (10.25): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety for the Ninth Assembly relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A.

Continuing resolution 5A requires standing committees that consider statutory appointments to report on a six-monthly basis and to present a schedule listing appointments considered during the applicable period. The schedule is required to include the statutory appointments considered and, for each appointment, the date the request from the responsible minister for consultation was received and the date the committee's feedback was provided.

For the applicable reporting period, 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018, the committee considered a total of 22 appointments to nine statutory bodies. In those cases, the committee advised the responsible minister it had no comment to make on the appointments proposed.

The committee does highlight that it dealt with several items of advice in relation to a number of appointments where standard information required by committees in assessing and advising the executive on appointment was not provided in initial advice to the committee. This led to the committee reminding the minister on several occasions that the committee requires that information to properly discharge its responsibilities.

In accordance with continuing resolution 5A, I therefore table the following paper:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee—Schedule of Statutory Appointments—9th Assembly—Period 1 January to 30 June 2018.

## **Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee Report—government response**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.26): Madam Speaker, for the information of members, I present the following papers:

Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee—Report—Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 and Appropriation (Office of the *Legislative Assembly*) Bill 2018-2019—Government response, dated August 2018.

Pegasus Economics report—*Review of the ACT Budget 2018-19*, dated June 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the Government response to the report of the Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019.

I present the government's response to the report of the Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019 on the appropriation bills for general government and the Office of the Legislative Assembly. I thank the committee for its report on the appropriation bills. The government appreciates the effort of the committee and the secretariat in producing this report.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my ministerial colleagues and their directorates for engaging constructively and in quite some depth with the committee's inquiries. The government respects the role played by the Select Committee on Estimates in scrutinising the budget. There is no doubt that the committee's report touches on the widest possible range of issues. This year it makes some 226 recommendations to government. I am advised that this is not quite an all-time record, but it is close.

I will discuss the government's response to these recommendations in a moment, but it is worth spending some time considering the context of the committee's work. The ACT budget is the annual statement of the government's priorities. There is no clearer indication of any government's values and priorities than how it chooses to spend public money.

With the 2018-19 budget we are seeking to grow services for our growing city. We are delivering on our commitment to return the territory budget to balance whilst at the same time stepping up our delivery of services and our investments in infrastructure across the territory.

We are building new schools and delivering more places for local students at our existing schools. We are investing more in elective and emergency surgery. There are more staff and resources for our emergency departments and more hospital beds so that Canberrans can access the high quality health care they need more quickly.

We are also working to deliver better public places right across the city and our suburbs, with new investment in road and pedestrian infrastructure, parks, waterways and local ovals. We are investing in services and infrastructure that will keep Canberra moving and protect our precious livability as our city grows.

The ACT government is positioned to step up this investment now because we have returned the territory budget to balance and the territory's economy has been growing at the fastest rate of any Australian jurisdiction. The government has worked hard to

buffer the territory economy from a range of economic and fiscal shocks and to diversify our economic base to support local businesses and industry to thrive.

Strong economic growth has continued to attract skilled workers to the secure, well-paying jobs on offer in our city. This is giving rise to sustained growth in our services exports, construction and household consumption sectors. This year's fiscal update confirms that the budget is back in balance and will remain there across the forward estimates. At the same time, it reinforces the government's commitment to job creation and the delivery of high quality services and long-term infrastructure investment that will meet our city's needs in the years to come.

Over the next couple of weeks the Assembly will debate the details of the budget. But taken as a whole it is one that delivers for Canberra today and invests to meet our community's needs in the years ahead. I certainly know that members on this side of the chamber are proud of the contribution the initiatives in this budget will make to delivering a better Canberra.

Turning now to the detail of the estimates committee report and its 226 recommendations, these cover a broad range of issues across the spectrum of ACT government service delivery, from big picture issues like health, education and transport infrastructure to perhaps more prosaic concerns about which doors members of the public should enter the Assembly building through.

I will not analyse each of the committee's recommendations individually today. I could spend the whole day reading out the government response, but it is there for members to see. We have responded to all 226 recommendations and the response has been tabled for everyone's reading pleasure.

Overall, the government has agreed to or noted the majority of recommendations included in the committee's report. Specifically, the government has agreed to 113 recommendations, agreed in principle to 44, agreed in part to eight recommendations, noted 55 and not agreed to just six recommendations. We have provided a response in relation to each individual recommendation.

In closing, it is clear that the report of the estimates committee, and its recommendations, does not raise any issues that would prevent the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 or the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019. So we look forward to the debate over the coming fortnight and to the passage of this very significant budget for the territory.

In closing, on behalf of the government I again thank the committee for its consideration of the appropriation bills and for its report. I am pleased to present the government's detailed response to all 226 recommendations to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Gentleman**) adjourned to a later hour.

## **Ministerial trade delegation to South-East Asia Ministerial statement**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.33): I am pleased to

report to the Assembly on the recent trade delegation I led to Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea. Consistent with the ACT government's economic development and international engagement strategies, this delegation was aimed at growing Canberra's international markets and promoting our city as a trade and investment destination to drive continued economic growth and diversification.

Madam Speaker, this recent international engagement was a significant undertaking, with almost 60 representatives from Canberra in market for the Singapore segment of the delegation involved in activities across a range of program streams, including financial bond market presentations; innovation and venture capital with growth stage companies; tourism destination marketing; screen production collaborations; urban renewal and property development; and aviation and freight infrastructure investment. With multiple streams of activity, the delegation was delivered as a team Canberra approach which was leveraged as a platform to build the CBR brand.

Apart from promoting ACT government bonds to the international finance sector and showcasing Canberra's property investment potential, activities in Singapore included attending the World Cities Summit on sustainable cities and launching the Canberra investment showcase targeting Singapore venture capital for growth stage companies.

In Hong Kong the program focused on bond market presentations, property development opportunities, international hotel investment and aviation.

In Seoul the program also included bond markets, as well as property development, renewable energy and sustainability, screen and film, and defence and transport.

I can advise the Assembly that, as an immediate consequence of the delegation, a Singapore-based investment group has already visited Canberra to look at a range of investment opportunities. A Hong Kong investor has contacted ACT commercial agents with a view to purchasing a Canberra hotel that is currently listed for sale. Discussions are underway between Screen Canberra, Screen Wellington and the Singapore Film Commission about a joint film development training course, with a view to culminating in an international film production project, and discussions have started about a possible joint film activity in South Korea.

I will now go into more detail about the activities undertaken during this delegation. In relation to bond investor meetings, the territory continues to enjoy Standard & Poor's AAA credit rating, the highest possible credit rating available for jurisdictions in Australia, given the Australian government's credit rating. We are one of three Australian governments, as well as one of only 26 non-US state or local governments in the world, to hold the AAA credit rating. This is a strong endorsement of this government's fiscal strategy.

Engagement with international bond markets showcases Canberra's economic opportunities to financial investors and seeks to better diversify our investor base and attract more investment to Canberra.

During this trade mission I met with 10 financial institutions in Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea to provide an update on the 2018-19 ACT budget and our

forward debt issuance plans. I continue to receive very positive feedback from our program of bond investor meetings, including improved understanding of the Australian Capital Territory and a positive view of the government's borrowing strategy and objectives.

The delegation also promoted Canberra's land release program to a diverse international audience. Property investment showcases were held in Singapore, Hong Kong and Seoul, where properties such as the Braddon and Turner on Northbourne projects, which have been just released to the market, were promoted. The government is committed to developing a diverse and vibrant Canberra with a distinctive urban identity, and there is a clear opportunity for international investment in development opportunities. As I have mentioned, this has already resulted in one potential investor coming to Canberra, and there is no doubt that there will be more investment interest in a number of prominent sites that are coming to market in the months ahead.

Building on the success of the investor showcase held in Singapore in April 2017, the CBR Innovation Network and ANU Connect Ventures staged a Canberra investment showcase providing a platform for Canberra start-ups to pitch for venture capital investment. I was delighted to launch the showcase with Australia's High Commissioner to Singapore, His Excellency Mr Bruce Gosper, and to attend the presentations by the Canberra start-up companies that covered industries as diverse as agritech, construction and sport technology. I can advise the Assembly that these presentations were warmly received by Singaporean investors.

Connected to this initiative, I also met with executives of the Singapore technology manufacturing firm VSI Industries, a prominent investor in Canberra companies Seeing Machines and Liquid Instruments. I was very pleased to be informed that following this meeting the VSI board signed off on a further \$3 million investment in the new Canberra venture capital fund Significant Capital Ventures.

Turning to aviation and freight, the commitment by Singapore Airlines to invest in daily services to Canberra, with an improved product offering between Canberra and Singapore only 18 months after commencing this route, has been a significant vote of confidence for the economy of Canberra and the broader region. The ACT government's relationship with Singapore Airlines is very strong, and I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Airlines, Mr Goh Choon Phong, once again. We discussed the success of the route and the practical measures that we can undertake to enhance the service.

There is no doubt that there is confidence across the board that this service will continue to grow, supported by the commitment of Singapore Airlines and the ACT government. A key outcome of this delegation was finalising arrangements with Tourism Australia for a full-time staff member to be based in Tourism Australia's Singapore office. The staff member will implement VisitCanberra's international distribution and partnership strategy and work in market to grow leisure visitation and expenditure for the Canberra economy in markets such as Singapore, Malaysia and India. They will also work directly with Singapore Airlines staff in those countries to

grow destination awareness under the Singapore Airlines and ACT government joint tourism marketing partnership.

As we continue to support the growth of international passenger travel, we also took the opportunity whilst in Singapore to tour two new freight distribution and logistics facilities. I visited Toll City, a next-generation warehousing facility designed to cater for growth industries such as pharmaceuticals, and we had an in-depth discussion around how the ACT government and Canberra Airport can work with Toll on opportunities in this area.

I also met with the YCH group, a significant importer of primary produce into Singapore, about the opportunities for the delivery of fresh produce and other products from the Canberra region. This continues to be an area of focus for the ACT government and the Canberra Airport, to capitalise on the opportunities these direct flights offer.

Going to the tourism sales program, VisitCanberra delivered a comprehensive sales program in Singapore during this delegation, and I was delighted that 19 Canberra tourism operators participated. The objectives included developing and strengthening business relationships with the key distribution partners and providing opportunities for tourism operators to network with customers. The significant support received by local operators demonstrates the increasing opportunities that Canberra businesses are seeing in the Singapore market. Further talks occurred between the Commissioner for International Engagement and representatives of Canberra's National Zoo and Aquarium to progress the linking of our zoo and aquarium with the Singapore Zoo and the Wellington Zoo through a memorandum of understanding.

Whilst in Singapore I also attended the opening of Screen Canberra's screen pod training course conducted with the Singapore Film Commission. Canberra has a growing film and entertainment industry that delivers many of the government's objectives around diversification of the economy, innovation and, of course, Canberra as a city of ambition. Screen pod links creatives with the market to co-develop commercial projects. Screen Canberra ran a taster of the screen pod training in Singapore and hopes that this will lead to talent exchange, Australian opportunities and co-productions between Canberra and Singapore.

Over the first weekend of the delegation, the World Cities Summit was held. This consisted of a number of activities attended by the Commissioner for International Engagement and me, including the Young Leaders Symposium, the Mayors Forum, a technology showcase meeting with Hewlett Packard and the Singapore business showcase. A hundred and sixty mayors from around the world attended the forum to discuss a range of issues facing local governments as the world becomes increasingly urbanised.

It would be fair to say that this weekend program was extensive, and I thank the government of Singapore, in particular the Centre for Liveable Cities, for organising this summit, and for the participation of both me and the Commissioner for International Engagement.

We left Singapore and moved to Hong Kong. Canberra has seen significant growth in both tourism and aviation over the last few years, and we have seen significant growth in hotel investment. Whilst in Hong Kong, I met with the chief executive officer of the Ovolo group. Members might be aware that the Ovolo group recently purchased the leasehold of Hotel Hotel, just over in New Acton, from the Molonglo Group. This purchase followed a meeting I had with the group about a year ago to encourage their investment in Canberra hotels. The Ovolo brand enhances Canberra's reputation as a globally connected city and also enables access to the international marketplace through the company's extensive distribution network. I was very pleased with the meeting and the success of the Ovolo group's investments in Canberra to date and look forward to further investments in our tourism sector from that hotel group.

Canberra's potential as a global aviation hub is growing, and we are looking to promote opportunities for new airlines to connect with Canberra. A connection with Hong Kong and other major cities in China will open Canberra to a range of new tourism trade and investment opportunities.

In Hong Kong I met with Mr John Zheng, the general manager of airline planning and commercial development, and his team at Hong Kong Airlines. This was the first meeting between the ACT government and Hong Kong Airlines and provided an opportunity to give an overview of Canberra's tourism market and its growing visitor economy and key economic drivers and to outline why our city presents an opportunity for future expansion for Hong Kong Airlines into the Australian market.

Moving to South Korea, my visit started with a meeting with the Australian ambassador, His Excellency Mr James Choi, who highlighted the vast range of opportunities for the ACT, particularly focused on renewable energy. Members may not be aware, but the South Korean government's current policy is to raise the use of renewable energy in their nation from two per cent to 20 per cent by 2030. Given the ACT's proven record of policy development in renewable energy, we are ideally placed to assist with and capitalise on this opportunity.

Whilst in South Korea I also met with Samsung, Hanwha and Hyundai. Discussions with Samsung quickly moved beyond the infrastructure of delivering renewable energy to greater use of the information generated. Samsung's work with other technologies like blockchain and advances in health was also discussed. We look forward to the development of a long-term relationship with Samsung in these and other areas.

Hanwha is another South Korean company with significant interests in renewable energy. Discussion with this group focused on the next generation of renewable energy generation and storage systems as well as the continuity of supply of electricity.

The meeting I held with Hyundai was at their Seoul Motorstudio, where we had the opportunity to ride in a hydrogen-powered Hyundai motor vehicle. Discussions focused on the company's delivery of hydrogen-powered cars, buses and trucks, and the intersection of this activity, as well as the ACT government's objective of

reducing fuel emissions. I would particularly like to thank Scott Nargar from Hyundai Australia, who organised the meeting.

In Seoul I also met with the chair of AustCham Korea, Chris Raciti, to discuss the scope and nature of Australian activity in South Korea, particularly in Seoul. AustCham Korea organised what turned out to be a sell-out “Renewable energy breakfast with the Chief Minister of the ACT”, where I spoke about the ACT government’s activities and policy leadership on renewable energy. I would particularly like to thank Chris and his staff at AustCham for assisting the delegation in South Korea.

Madam Speaker, the primary objective of this delegation was to further deepen our relationship with Singapore and Hong Kong and to explore a range of opportunities in the South Korean market. The relationships formed will promote opportunities to work together across a range of government and business connections.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the support provided to the delegation by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, particularly the Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korean representatives and their in-market teams. A particular thankyou to Austrade, again here in Canberra and more broadly in those destination markets. Thank you also to Canberra Airport, the CBR Innovation Network, the Australian National University, Screen Canberra, the team at the Canberra Business Chamber, and all of the representatives from the ACT, a very large delegation, who participated in the mission. Thank you for your time and commitment to seeing the ACT economy continue to grow. We look forward to building on these connections in the years ahead.

In conclusion, I think our future as a destination for international investment is very bright. We have a range of very significant technologies that we can now export into these markets. The connectivity we have through Singapore Airlines into South-East Asia is a very important part of this economic development opportunity for the ACT.

I present the following paper:

Asia Ministerial Trade Delegation—July 2018—Ministerial statement,  
14 August 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Asbestos-related works across Canberra Ministerial statement**

**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) (10.50): I am pleased to table the

annual statement on asbestos-related work in the territory. Over the past 12 months a significant amount of asbestos-related work has been undertaken in the territory to ensure the safety of residents, workers and those within our schools. In particular, the asbestos response task force, WorkSafe ACT and the Education Directorate have been at the forefront of this work.

The presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in our suburbs has had significant social, financial and emotional impacts on the owners, tenants and family and friends of the over 1,000 Mr Fluffy properties in the ACT. It has also presented unprecedented and unique challenges for the people of Canberra and the ACT government. I am pleased to report that the government, through the loose-fill asbestos insulation eradication scheme, is close to delivering its promised enduring solution to an issue that has touched the lives of so many Canberrans.

2018 will see the demolition of the vast majority of Mr Fluffy properties. Some 929 properties have already been demolished through the government's program, while a further 22 properties have been demolished privately. Collaborative planning and problem-solving, diligent monitoring and evaluation, the introduction of innovative processes, and ongoing community engagement have all contributed to the delivery of a safe, efficient, and effective demolition program.

Only 72 affected and impacted properties now remain, mainly those with settlement dates of up to June 2020 or those not participating in the scheme. There are also a number of properties that have their own unique circumstances to work through, particularly those in unit complexes.

The anticipated net cost of the scheme has fallen from its original estimate of some \$400 million to \$295 million, primarily due to reducing demolition costs and increased land values. The public sale of remediated land is now an established part of the local real estate scene, with revenue helping to defray the cost of the scheme and repay the \$1 billion commonwealth loan.

Sales have been strong and have seen interest from buyers looking for the opportunity to purchase cleared and remediated blocks of land in established suburbs, with nearly 700 blocks sold so far. New homes are springing up on these blocks, signalling the beginning of the community regrowth that has always been an intended outcome of the scheme. However, the story of Mr Fluffy has never been one just about land and houses. It is a story about people's lives—their fears and anger, their relief and hopes and, most importantly, their futures.

The key to the task force's success has been maintaining a focus throughout on people: providing compassionate support, clear guidance and meaningful assistance. The task force's role continues, focused on supporting the remaining residents, completing the remediation work and remaining focused on safety now and into the future. I commend the achievements of the asbestos response task force in helping to realise the government's commitment to a lasting solution to this most wicked of circumstances.

Alongside the work of the taskforce, WorkSafe ACT continues to work towards ensuring compliance with legislation relating to asbestos removal and eradication. The following activities have been undertaken for the reporting period 2017-18: 2,959 notifications were received for asbestos removal works in the ACT for both friable and non-friable asbestos, 139 of which related to the eradication scheme.

WorkSafe ACT has continued to maintain an asbestos team for the reporting period to ensure the regulatory compliance of the loose-fill asbestos insulation eradication scheme. WorkSafe ACT undertook 843 Mr Fluffy-related inspections for removal and demolitions for the end of financial year to June 2018. This included regulatory compliance of two private demolitions.

WorkSafe has engaged residents who remain in their affected properties to help them comply with WHS regulations to update asbestos contamination reports, or ACRs. Those residents have been sent guidance and information by post, along with follow-up by phone by a dedicated inspector. Currently 53 affected properties remain occupied in the ACT, and WorkSafe continues to work with the residents of those 53 properties to encourage self-compliance.

Unit 1 at the Ainslie Shops has undergone removal of the bulk loose-fill asbestos in the roof cavity without incident. The project was completed with minimal disruption to the business. The Ainslie shops has undergone a further environmental cleansing in the roof cavity at numbers 3 and 5, with a full roof replacement and refurbishment of the entire roof from number 1 to 7 inclusive. WorkSafe engaged with owners of the building during this process to ensure compliance with WHS regulations and asbestos removal codes of practice. WorkSafe continues to engage businesses in the Ainslie shopping precinct after the removal and refurbishment works.

WorkSafe has been actively involved in the removal works undertaken at Campbell and Narrabundah schools during the reporting period, providing regulatory guidance to the Education Directorate relating to asbestos eradication without incident.

WorkSafe successfully prosecuted a warehouse owner in Fyshwick for not following appropriate control measures during the high-pressure cleaning of a corrugate roof containing asbestos. The owner was ordered by the Industrial Magistrate to repay the ACT government costs of cleaning and remediation, totalling \$249,637.08, with a conviction recorded.

WorkSafe continues to engage with contractors on the NBN rollout to ensure the safe removal of asbestos pits is undertaken under agreed arrangements with the regulator. WorkSafe is currently overseeing the safe removal of asbestos meter boards during the power of choice program for electrical metering replacement and/or renewal.

As members know, asbestos was frequently used in building materials in Australia until the mid to late 1980s. The use of materials containing asbestos lessened after this time until it was banned in 2004. It has been used in ACT government schools, and the ACT government remains committed to the ongoing management and removal, as required, of materials containing asbestos in school buildings.

The safety of students, staff, contractors and the community is of paramount importance to the ACT government. If bonded asbestos material—for example, asbestos cement sheeting, or AC sheeting—is well maintained, undisturbed or inaccessible, it does not pose a health risk. There are 69 ACT public schools with a confirmed presence of asbestos-containing materials. Each of these public schools has a hazardous materials survey and management plan that includes an asbestos register. The survey and register are dual components of the same portfolio of information and, as such, must be read concurrently.

Any asbestos removal works are completed by a licensed asbestos removalist and are removed after hours when there are no students or staff in the school—for example, at night, on weekends and during school holidays. Demolition work in areas where it is possible that material containing asbestos may be exposed—for example, wet areas—must be undertaken after hours.

Regardless of the schedule of removal, mandatory exclusion zones are created on every occasion. Following the completion of the asbestos removal works, air monitoring is conducted before testing can be carried out by the National Association of Testing Authorities, or NATA, and registered laboratory and clearance certificates can be issued.

The type of asbestos is not the only factor which triggers removal. The eaves at Melba High School were replaced even though only bonded asbestos was found, as students kicking balls in the playground had been found to occasionally break the eaves, increasing an otherwise low risk situation.

Where schools require upgrades to floor coverings, the education support office provides funds to test and, if necessary, remove existing vinyl tiles which contain asbestos adhesive. Schools experiencing window breakages through accident or vandalism are also financially supported to test and, where necessary, remove all the black asbestos mastic prior to glass replacement. Where a bank of windows is identified adjacent to the broken one, all are repaired, often using energy efficient glazing.

One building at Campbell Primary School was demolished in January 2018 due to the presence of friable crocidolite asbestos within the wall cavities. This asbestos has been managed safely for a number of years. However, the building was at the end of life and the only long-term management measure was to demolish the building.

Three buildings at Narrabundah College contain friable crocidolite asbestos material. Alternative temporary classrooms are in the final stages of construction for occupation from day one of term three, with the demolition of three affected buildings being planned for the second half of 2018.

A great deal of asbestos-related work has been undertaken in the territory, and I commend all agencies and workers involved in the work to protect our residents, workers, and those within our schools from the risk posed by asbestos. I present a copy of the statement:

Asbestos related works across Canberra—Minister's annual statement—  
Ministerial statement, 14 August 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018**

### **Statement by minister**

**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) (11.01), by leave: I wish to correct the record in relation to a statement I made in the presentation speech for the Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018.

On 2 August I advised the Assembly that more than 1,500 companies currently hold certificates under the existing industrial relations and employment certification regime. This figure was based on a misreading of the ACT government procurement and capital works listing of compliant contractors, which has more than 1,500 entries but includes around 200 certificate numbers that do not have a business name attached to them. On further investigation via the ACT government open data portal, I found that the actual number of industrial relations and employment certificate holders, as of 3 August 2018 is 1,341, and I correct the record accordingly.

### **Standing orders—suspension**

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) agreed to, with the concurrence of an absolute majority:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent orders of the day, Assembly business, relating to the Report of the Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019 and the Government response, being called on and debated cognately with orders of the day Nos 1 and 2, Executive business, Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019.

### **Appropriation Bill 2018-2019**

[Cognate bill:

Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019

Cognate papers:

Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee—report

Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee—government response]

Debate resumed from 5 June 2018.

**Detail stage**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I remind members that in debating order of the day No 1, executive business, they may also address their remarks to executive business order of the day No 2 and Assembly business orders of the day relating to the report of the Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019 and the government response.

Standing order 180 sets down the order in which this bill will be considered—that is, in the detail stage any schedule expressing the services for which the appropriation is to be made must be considered before the clauses and, unless the Assembly otherwise orders, the schedules will be considered by the proposed expenditure in the order shown.

With the concurrence of the Assembly, I am proposing that the Assembly consider schedule 1 by each part, consisting of net cost of outputs, capital injection and payments on behalf of territory. Is that the wish of the Assembly? That being so, schedule 1 will be considered by each part, consisting of net cost of outputs, capital injection and payments on behalf of territory, then the clauses and the title.

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure.

ACT Local Hospital Network—Part 1.1

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (11.04): I am very pleased to rise today to talk to this government's investment in ACT Health and in the health and wellbeing of our community. As the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, I welcome this opportunity to outline the key initiatives contained in this year's budget for health and community care.

As we all know, we are a growing city, with more people moving to Canberra and the region and choosing to live here each year, and more babies being born each year. We have many opportunities and many challenges in our health system. We have opportunities and many challenges in the health of our population, but the government is making significant investments in the health and wellbeing of our community right across our city.

With Canberra a health centre not only locally but also for the nearby region, many of our services are also available for the growing needs of health consumers from across the border and into southern New South Wales. To meet these growing needs, this year's budget commits \$7.8 billion over four years to the health portfolio across both the ACT Health Directorate and the ACT local hospital network. This funding will continue to strengthen the capacity of the ACT health system and the wonderful ACT health workforce to deliver public health services to us all, with funding for health to rise to about \$2 billion a year by 2021-22.

Our investments will boost Canberra's public health care, with major new investments in our hospitals and local health services, right from the community level through to

the delivery of acute and emergency care. And this boost is focused on meeting the needs of our growing community and our ageing population and building a health system that puts patients at the centre of all the services that are delivered.

I am pleased to say that this year's budget provides a significant new investment of \$112 million in staff and services to enhance our core hospital community health services over the next four years. This investment is designed to meet the growing demand for hospital services and give greater flexibility for ACT Health to put more resources into emergency and critical care, more surgeries and more hospital beds. It will significantly improve the ability of both the Canberra and Calvary hospitals to manage patient demand and patient flow for emergency departments and surgical areas.

For the Canberra Hospital this funding represents a significant boost in the funding for essential emergency and critical care services, including the following new initiatives: \$64.7 million to increase the number of elective and emergency surgeries, \$25.9 million to resource more hospital beds and \$21.2 million for more resources to help cut waiting times at the Canberra Hospital emergency department.

In addition, this budget also invests in programs aimed at reducing pressure from front-line hospital services. This includes \$34.5 million being invested to expand the popular hospital in the home program so that around 3,000 patients each year can receive the care they need in their homes or in community health centres, to more quickly return to their lives and improve their recovery. This initiative delivers on an election commitment and is an initiative that builds on last year's budget to see this expansion come to fruition.

As minister I am also focused on ensuring we have high quality health infrastructure across the city to meet the needs of our growing community. As part of this I am very pleased to say we are now treating the first patients at the new University of Canberra Hospital, which officially opened in June this year. The opening of the new hospital has been a very exciting time for the local health sector and a major milestone for ACT Health which has been the culmination of years of planning and a lot of hard work.

I am also pleased to say that next month we will officially open the new Gungahlin walk-in centre, correlated with the Gungahlin community health centre in the Gungahlin town centre. Once open, it will be Canberra's third walk-in centre, extending the services that consumers highly regard at Belconnen and Tuggeranong to the expanding and newer suburbs in the north of Canberra.

But when it comes to how the government is continuing these long-term investments in the health facilities our city will need in the years ahead, the budget also includes \$2 million to continue the planning and delivery of Canberra's fourth walk-in centre, located in the Weston Creek region, and \$12 million to construct a new health centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans through staged payments to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services so that they can own and operate their own expanded health centre.

This budget also includes \$561 million in provisions for delivering major health infrastructure projects. This includes funding to progress the new surgical procedures interventional radiology and emergency centre, the SPIRE centre; the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children; and future hospital options for Canberra's north side.

We would not be able to deliver the range of specialised health services our community needs without strong community partnerships and service funding agreements with a number of non-government organisations who provide much-needed and innovative health services to people right across our community. Through this year's budget the government is proud to continue to support these organisations and the important services they provide Canberrans. This financial year over \$43 million will be provided to around 80 non-government community organisations. With this funding they will deliver a range of tailored healthcare services, from advocacy to treatment programs to respite care, in many cases reaching some of Canberra's most disadvantaged communities.

Another key element of the budget is the funding that is provided across our local hospital network for the delivery of services at Calvary Public Hospital, Clare Holland House and QEII. In 2017-18 the funding for these three services by our local hospital network totalled around \$200 million.

It is important to recognise the important and significant role that Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce has in the delivery of health services in the ACT, in particular as we continue to see increases in the health needs of our community. To manage this, we need the future of public healthcare delivery in the ACT to be truly territory wide. That is why the ACT government is currently in formal planning and discussions with the Little Company of Mary on the future of public health service delivery in the ACT. This involves negotiations for a new agreement for our ongoing collaboration in the delivery of public health services. The approach will be more contemporary and will ensure the continued provision of quality patient care. It will also support infrastructure for patients and staff both in the immediate future and in the years to come.

I am pleased to say that this year's budget also demonstrates our continued commitment to improving infrastructure at Calvary, with \$15 million for vital capital upgrades at Calvary Public Hospital. This new funding will deliver additional treatment spaces, improved access and triage arrangements, enhanced waiting areas and an expanded short-stay unit, including additional paediatric spaces within the Calvary public emergency department.

At the same time we will support the replacement and upgrade of essential equipment, including clinical and diagnostic equipment like patient monitoring equipment. This builds on our previous investment in Calvary, with a \$2.6 million upgrade of the maternity ward recently opened and looking magnificent, as well as the opening just recently of upgraded operating theatres at Calvary Public Hospital.

The government also spends over \$10 million each year to provide palliative care services in the ACT. Calvary is funded to provide the majority of palliative care

services in Canberra, with Clare Holland House the largest palliative care in-patient unit in the ACT. Demand for palliative care will continue to increase as our population ages and people live longer. We need to respond to this so that people receive the care and dignity they deserve at the end of their life. I welcome the conversations and evidence provided to the end of life inquiry and very much look forward to its recommendations to the government.

As I have recently said in the Assembly, in recognising some of the recent challenges in the health portfolio we have been working very hard on delivering the government's health priorities. As part of this we are making the funding decisions necessary through the budget process to ensure we are responding in a responsible and sustainable way to fund our health system into the future and targeting money to front-line healthcare services so that the system can respond to the needs of our community as appropriate. This is what we need for a modern health system and it is what the government is delivering through this budget.

Later this week and next week I will also be providing extensive updates on progress in maternity services on the ACT system-wide data review and, very importantly, an update on the accreditation process that ACT Health recently went through. I particularly note the accreditation process and was delighted for ACT Health to receive accreditation late last month. I would particularly like to note and thank the staff of ACT Health for their considerable efforts since March this year to come together as an organisation, proud of the high quality professional service that they deliver to Canberrans every day of the year, to receive such a positive response from the surveyors when they returned.

I will relate to the Assembly some of the comments from the surveyors in their return to ACT Health in July to provide ACT Health with full accreditation. These comments included:

Over the past few months the organisation has changed dramatically, implementing sustainable systems and processes that provide direction and strong governance from both a corporate and clinical governance perspective.

The surveyors would like to acknowledge the extensive work done by the staff across ACT Health, plus the leadership to achieve this result. They demonstrate commitment and focus to drive sustainable, positive change in the culture of the organisation. They have moved from a fragmented, divided organisation to one of cohesion, teamwork, focused on what is best for the patient and the organisation to achieve great outcomes for all Canberrans.

The corporate and clinical governance frameworks and supporting documents have provided staff, at all levels and designations, clear direction and accountabilities around their role in safety and quality.

The ACT Health leadership team are clear of the direction, their own roles and responsibilities and the expectations of the organisation. People are being held accountable but they are also recognised at all levels by the Director-General with a personalised phone call to acknowledge and thank them for their work. This has been very powerful in assisting with cultural change.

There is also a new workforce strategy under development which will include details of the workforce accountabilities and responsibilities in safety, quality and risk. There has been targeted education to ensure staff are aware of their roles in this new environment.

Again I would like to thank very much ACT Health for their tremendous work on behalf of the ACT community and the commitment that they have to delivering high quality health care to our community every day. I commend the health expenditure in the 2018-19 ACT budget to the Assembly.

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (11.16): In October 2014 the US-based entrepreneurship and business organisation Inc.com published an article about the brains behind the success that is Virgin, Sir Richard Branson. The article said:

Richard Branson was able to build Virgin into a global powerhouse by focusing on two key words: customer service.

But the piece went on to say that, in fact, it is employees that are Sir Richard Branson's top priority, not customers. The article notes:

That may sound counter to decades-old business wisdom, but it has worked so well for Virgin that Branson says he's surprised more companies haven't adopted an employee-centric management strategy.

He says:

"It should go without saying, if the person who works at your company is 100 percent proud of the brand and you give them the tools to do a good job and they are treated well, they're going to be happy" ... As Branson sees it, the formula is very simple: Happy employees equal happy customers.

Sir Richard Branson says:

Effectively, in the end shareholders do well, the customers do better, and your staff remains happy.

You might say that the ACT health system does not have shareholders, but it does have taxpayers. You might say that the ACT health system does not have customers, but it does have patients, as well as families and friends, who have a stake in it. And of course ACT Health does have staff. The Minister for Health and Wellbeing goes to regular and great pains to remind us that there are 7,000 people working in ACT Health. So the analogy is compelling. It can be summed up in the quote from Sir Richard Branson:

There's no magic formula for great company culture. The key is just to treat your staff how you would like to be treated.

This is not a new notion. Two thousand years ago Jesus of Nazareth was quoted in the Gospel of Mark as saying that there are two great commandments and the second of them is to "love thy neighbour as thyself". Your staff are as much your neighbour as the people who live next door to you.

As the shadow minister, the single most disturbing fact that comes before me every day, day after day, is the entrenched and toxic culture that is the ACT's health system. Two weeks ago, in proposing the establishment of a board of inquiry into the culture in the ACT health system, I spoke about this at length, including the story of a former worker in ACT Health whom I called Charlie. Charlie's is not the only story; there are many others.

Tomorrow in this place I will propose a motion that goes specifically to the culture in the medical imaging department of Canberra Hospital. The toxic culture of ACT Health is incarnate in the medical imaging department. Two weeks ago the Labor-Greens coalition government had the opportunity to diagnose a culture that has unhappy, bullied, overworked and poorly supported staff. Two weeks ago this ACT Labor-Greens coalition had the opportunity to diagnose the impact of this culture on patient care and safety. Two weeks ago this ACT Labor-Greens coalition had the opportunity to diagnose the issues that make the ACT's health system the heaviest burden on ACT taxpayers compared to those in any other jurisdiction in Australia.

But how did they respond? Minister Fitzharris and the Labor Party said it was a political stunt. I could not put a response to that more succinctly than did a correspondent to the *Canberra Times* last Friday, who said, "Of course she would. She would say that, wouldn't she?"

Mr Barr and Labor said it would cost tens of millions of dollars. He sought to compare the scope of an ACT-focused board of inquiry with national royal commissions and in doing so misjudged the situation entirely by telling the 7,000 ACT Health staff that they did not matter and that it was not important to spend money on fixing their culture. If the cost of an ACT board of inquiry were to be comparable with a national royal commission into trade unions or the financial services sector, it would do little more than corroborate the sheer magnitude of the problem in just one small jurisdiction.

Mr Rattenbury and the Greens said it was unnecessary because we have safe and respectful pathways available for dealing with bullying. It is a pity that those pathways are mythological. Indeed, Mr Rattenbury remarked to me after the debate two weeks ago that he did not know about the sorts of issues that I had raised. Even worse than the patronising and insulting tone of his remarks on this day, Mr Rattenbury later admitted that he was uninformed. Once again, Mr Rattenbury was prepared to make decisions based not on evidence but on going with his Labor mates.

Without giving Mr Rattenbury any comfort, I am told that staff were instructed not to speak with ministers when they visit our health facilities. I am told staff are instructed to keep their distance and that ministers are surrounded by a kind of executive security crush. God forbid that any real information might find its way into a minister's ear. God forbid that a minister might hear the truth about what is really happening in the ACT health system.

So the ACT health system will continue unabated on its bullying way. Its hierarchical, siloed structure will continue. In fact, it will worsen when the directorate is split in October. Its top-heavy, protect-its-own bureaucracy will continue to deliver its edicts from on high. Its process-driven, impossible and unnavigable system will continue and possibly worsen. It will continue to build its mountains of policy to underpin its bureaucratic processes that are not patient centred and will probably get worse. It will continue to put staff last on its list of priorities. It will continue to make it impossible for staff to air their grievances for fear of reprisal. The ACT health system will continue to ignore the succinct advice of Sir Richard Branson to treat your staff how you would like to be treated.

I have spent quite a lot of time in this speech talking about the culture within the ACT health system and the hospital system in particular. I have done this because I cannot understate the importance of this issue. Let me summarise it this way. If a good and positive culture can be promoted through the ACT health system, one that is respectful and willing to listen and act, we will say goodbye to the dysfunctional system that we have today. We will welcome a culture in which, to paraphrase Sir Richard Branson, taxpayers get value for their taxes, patients do better and staff remain happy.

I will continue to accept and act on stories about bullying and harassment in the ACT health system. I will continue to raise awareness of the negative impact it has on our front-line people who are expected to care for the people of Canberra professionally but without proper support. This issue is not going away—not until this Labor-Greens government coalition sits up and takes notice. Given their record, however, I am not holding my breath.

In the time remaining, I will touch on some of the issues that continue to fester in the ACT health system. Canberra Hospital is old and it continues to break down. It has been put to me that there are places in Canberra Hospital where if you turn on an electric hair dryer something will blow. Last year we had a small but serious fire in the main electrical switchboard in building 2. It was necessary to evacuate the building. Non-mobile patients were carried down the fire stairs, elective surgeries were put on hold and the emergency department was bypassed.

This Labor-Greens coalition had known about the state of the switchboard for years. It had been reported over and over, and they had done nothing. They had even got so far as putting out a request for tender, which miraculously was finalised days after the switchboard fire. The tender to fix the switchboard is publicly stated as reaching \$10 million. But we know that that there are now other works that have to be done in this space that were not originally identified.

We do not know how much the final outcome will be, because the government will not tell us. Initially I was told they could not tell us because it was commercial-in-confidence. But, when pressed, they said it was because they had not actually worked out the scope of the works and the costing for that work had not been finalised. It would have been useful if I had been told the right story the first time. We have a major assets upgrade program and I have not got a straight answer on the

blowout in cost. (*Second speaking period taken.*) It is unclear whether the blowout in cost in the switchboard will have an adverse impact on the current appropriation for UMAHA. We know that there is a stage 2 of UMAHA but we do not know what the cost of that will be.

The minister talked about SPIRE, because there are changes in the budget allocation for the SPIRE program. We have to remember that SPIRE was a “me too” promise where the Labor government had to play catch-up in the 2016 election. The minister used the word “progress” in her speech about SPIRE, saying that there was progress on the issue. But we know that that progress is actually slowing down and we will not see the completion of SPIRE until 2023 or maybe even 2024, which is well into the next term. We are told that it will take a lot of planning, and perhaps it will. But we also know that the government’s first financial priority is to build the tram.

The minister also talked about the election promise on the expansion of the Centenary hospital. That, of course, was also promised in the election process. But we know that that is another con and that we will not see the completion of the work on the women’s and children’s hospital, including the adolescent mental health unit, until 2021-22.

We have a maternity department in which staff are under, to quote from the *Hansard* of the estimates, “unrelenting pressure”. That pressure has got so great that it has resulted in an open letter from the staff talking about their plight. And what was the ACT government’s first response? It was to release a letter saying that there was nothing to see here. If that is not bullying, I do not know what is.

We have continually worsening emergency department and elective surgery waiting times, but the minister keeps telling us they are trending in the right direction. However, I think that since the budget has come down the minister has stopped saying that, because the figures in the budget have put the lie to the assertion that the figures are trending in the right direction.

We have the continuation of the data scandal that began under Minister Gallagher. A review was done, and a report was given to the minister in March. It was supposed to be finalised and presented to the Assembly in April. But then, seemingly as an afterthought or perhaps as a tactic to delay and change the report, it was decided that there should be staff consultation. We are still waiting for the report and we are waiting for the data.

The hospital failed its accreditation in March. The medical imaging department’s training accreditation was also significantly downgraded in March from a 25-year-long reign as an A-grade department to a D-grade department.

The Chief Minister unilaterally decided to restructure the Health Directorate last March. This was based on a submission from the Head of Service, made to the Chief Minister, which stated that there was no internal or external consultation. Treasury, much less anyone else, was not consulted. Cabinet was not consulted. We will have a back-to-the-future exercise, after a similar structure in the ACT was abandoned some years ago. The hospital will be answerable to the policy arm, whose focus will be on

process, policy and finances and not on delivering the best treatment outcomes for patients. Then, to cap it all off, ACT Health lost its director-general in March. It was an unplanned separation.

The ACT Labor-Greens coalition is not up to the task of running our hospitals. While front-line staff do the best job they can, they do so in the face of unrelenting bullying and harassment. They do so despite ageing, unreliable and sometimes dangerous equipment and infrastructure. They do so despite inadequate and overcrowded facilities. They do so despite the process-driven bureaucracy imposed on them from on high. They do so despite the lack of respect for them and the unwillingness to listen to and act on their grievances.

When we have a health system that puts staff as the number one priority, we will likely have a system that truly is delivering the best in quality care to the people of Canberra. But while we have a self-satisfied Labor-Greens coalition government that places glamour and glitz before happiness and health, we will likely never obtain that ideal.

There were a couple of issues the minister touched on in her speech that I think must be addressed. The minister spoke about the very important relationship ACT Health has with the Little Company of Mary, to the extent that more than \$200 million a year goes to the Little Company of Mary for the running of Calvary Public Hospital and the palliative care system, including Clare Holland House. I note the minister's comments in relation to the palliative care system. I also note, as a member of the end of life committee, that I think we will find that much will be said in the near future about palliative care. I think that it is an area where there is a need for improvement.

In relation to the contract for Calvary to run the hospital at Bruce, there are very important issues. It is an odd historical arrangement we have, where, in a sense, the government has a single select tender for the provision of a large proportion of our public hospital services through a private entity. It has been the case since 1975 or thereabouts and it is not a system that we would wish to tamper with too much. But it also means that we have a very difficult process to ensure that the ACT taxpayer is getting value for money.

I do not want to be critical of the process and the reality of our relationship with the Little Company of Mary, who operate Calvary Public Hospital. But I want to put on the record that we have to be wary. When we are effectively running a single select tender, we have to be quite vigilant as to whether we are getting the best value for money from the system and whether Calvary is providing the best service it possibly can.

I talked about bullying and harassment in the ACT hospital system. Calvary is not immune from this. I have not received as many complaints about it—but it is not as large an organisation—as I have in relation to ACT Health. I know that there have been public airings of these issues and I know that the minister has called for a review. I await that review with considerable anticipation.

I want to put on the record as well my concerns about the employment arrangements for former senator Gallagher at Calvary Hospital. It is unclear, and the minister was unclear, as to what Ms Gallagher's role was. I also put on the record that the minister needs to ensure that Ms Gallagher is not involved in the negotiation of the \$200 million single select tender contract with Calvary Hospital.

That is important because, through no fault of her own but because of her previous experience, Ms Gallagher's presence in those negotiations would create an uneven playing field which would tip the advantage in favour of the Little Company of Mary and Calvary Hospital and away from ACT Health, because people who Minister Gallagher would be negotiating with would be people who had, until a short while ago, been briefing her as the minister for health. I have heard by back channels that Ms Gallagher has been attending a range of meetings with ACT Health, and I have received the complaint that people are unhappy about that arrangement because of her previous relationship with ACT Health. It is something that the minister needs to be aware of. She cannot just say this is a matter for Calvary and the Little Company of Mary. If former minister Gallagher is negotiating on behalf of Calvary with ACT Health, it is her responsibility to ensure that it is done fairly and to the best advantage of ACT taxpayers.

I will have more to say about health in the next item. There is much to say and not a great deal to be proud of.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (11.36): I rise to speak in support of the health measures in the 2018-19 budget. The budget delivers the public healthcare services needed for our growing city: more doctors and more nurses providing the critical healthcare services Canberrans rely on; and investments to plan and build hospitals and walk-in centres so that as we grow we can continue to have high quality, accessible and affordable health care when it is needed.

Woden is the central hub of health in the ACT. We know we have both health policy departments there and, of course, it is also the centre of our acute and other healthcare services at the Canberra Hospital as well. The budget provides a significant investment in health care on the south side that benefits the whole of Canberra and, of course, our region.

Our budget provides an additional \$112 million in core public hospital services which will help ensure faster and additional critical and emergency care. The ACT government is delivering \$47.2 million for improved and additional acute care at the Canberra Hospital, much of which will go towards the emergency department, which has experienced a 23 per cent increase in visitations over the past three years.

Part of that funding will also go towards extra hospital beds, increasing the total number at the Canberra Hospital by up to 80 over the forward estimates helping to address the challenges of the winter season. Our investment of \$64.7 million is providing a permanent increase in the number of elective surgeries by 1,000 annually, reducing waiting times. This is permanently boosting the number of elective surgeries to 14,000 each year to cater for growing demand.

There could not be a more literal example of how our budget investments are supporting our growing population than our investments to expand maternity and birthing facilities. Our budget provides extra spaces for maternity services at the Centenary hospital which, of course, has been complemented by the recent upgrades to the maternity ward at Calvary Public Hospital. Along with the funding in the budget this provides women with more choice for maternity services as our city grows.

Our previous budget investments of \$2.6 million to refurbish the Calvary maternity ward have delivered a more modern facility with a capacity expanded to 18 beds, as well as offering 10 single rooms and four large twin rooms. Comfort has been improved with an intimate patient and family lounge and a spacious baby assessment room as well as facilities for partners who want to stay at the hospital.

As we continue to progress work on an expanded maternity services ward at the Centenary women's and children hospital this budget delivers investment in quality modern and accessible maternity and birthing facilities to more families across Canberra.

The new health measures in the budget build on the capital investments we are already making to expand the Canberra Hospital, investing in further work on the surgical procedures, interventional radiology and emergency centre that were funded in last year's budget. The SPIRE centre is a great opportunity to deliver modern health facilities in Canberra, including more operating theatres and a new emergency department in the forward years.

Of course, not all acute care is provided in a hospital setting. The budget also invests further in our hospital in the home service to cater for up to 3,000 more patients each year so they can get back to their lives and be cared for in their own homes and through community health centres where it is clinically appropriate. Of course, they will be supported by hospitals.

In this budget we are also investing in the information architecture to support a modern health system. The government is providing \$12 million in the budget over the forward estimates for information system upgrades for pathology laboratory services at the Canberra Hospital and an additional \$13.5 million in information and communication technology for ACT Health centred around the Canberra Hospital.

This \$27.5 million package of technology upgrades will not just streamline and improve administrative efficiency at the Canberra Hospital and ACT Health but also help to free up resources so we can focus on delivering quality health care to patients.

For the healthcare consumer primary health services need to be convenient and affordable. Nurse-led walk-in centres just make sense; they provide choice of a free service to provide clinical advice, treatment for minor illnesses and injuries, and even some prescriptions. It is no wonder our nurse-led walk-in centres in the ACT are so popular in the community. That popularity can be harnessed to help divert patients to the most appropriate health care before the need to book into see a general practitioner or even attend our emergency departments.

The budget delivers \$2 million to plan and construct a Weston Creek walk-in centre, delivering on our election commitment. I understand that ACT Health has been working hard to assess the possible locations for the centre and the final location will be announced soon. I also know it will be welcomed by Weston Creek and Molonglo residents and it will deliver real benefits, especially as we see this community growing substantially into the future.

It is a shame that every step of the way the opposition has stood up against our local walk-in centres, but we will continue to press ahead with delivering affordable health services in communities where they need it.

Health is at the heart of why Labor seeks government: to build a healthcare system that improves quality of life for all. Our revenue in this budget provides the most significant funding to our health system. We fundamentally believe that it is the community's and the public's responsibility to support decent health care, and we are prepared to fund the necessary investments to make sure that as our city grows the health of Canberrans is supported.

In every budget we are making the necessary health investments to ensure that every person can participate fully in our community, with investments in free local healthcare services right through to opening new hospitals. This is a very different path to cutting revenue and cutting health services, which is the approach of those opposite. Our budget path is to grow healthcare services for our growing community. I commend to the Assembly the health measures in the budget.

**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) (11.43): I am pleased to speak on the health output classes in the budget and talk about the initiatives in this year's budget that will provide greater support for Canberrans with different levels of mental illness and to take that particular focus given my portfolio responsibilities.

Members will have heard me say before in this place that around one-third of Canberrans will need mental health care at some stage in their lives. Increasingly, as the stigma around mental illness breaks down, more people are putting up their hand and asking for help. This is, of course, a positive development, but it means that our local services and facilities have to expand as our population grows and also as demand increases so that people can access the right care when they need it. When someone has the courage to put their hand up and say, "I need help," we need to do the very best we can to make sure that help is available.

Early intervention for mental illness and suicide prevention are key priorities for the ACT government. As part of this we are also committed to an integrated approach to mental wellbeing and working closely with our community sector partners. As Minister for Mental Health, I am proud of the initiatives in this year's budget. With \$646 million over four years for the delivery of mental health services, the budget truly demonstrates the focus that the ACT government has on this important area of our healthcare system.

What this means in real terms for 2018-19 is that our investment in mental health services for the Canberra community has grown to \$157 million, a five per cent funding increase this financial year.

One of the key initiatives I would like to highlight as part of this significant investment is the \$22.8 million in funding over four years that has been committed to provide more supported accommodation for people with complex mental health needs to recover and live in the community.

Complexities around mental illness are such that people have different levels and intensity of mental health issues and need different levels and types of treatment and support. As our city grows we are seeing more and more demand for mental health services, from early intervention and prevention measures through to emergency and intensive support. We know that our acute services simply cannot provide care for everyone with a mental health issue and that often an acute setting is not the best clinical option for many people.

With that in mind, significant work has been underway within ACT Health to develop community-based alternatives to inpatient mental health care. These alternatives are an important part of the stepped care model that is critical to the delivery of a safe, effective and integrated mental health service system.

The supported accommodation package featured in this budget is an important element of our community-based services and will include: establishing three new supported accommodation properties for up to 15 individuals experiencing mental illness who require long-term 24-hour support; building a south side community step up, step down short-term facility to help people stay out of hospital; and refurbishing the 10-bed extended care unit at Brian Hennessy Rehabilitation Centre to provide an upgraded secure facility where mental health patients can gradually transition into supported accommodation or back into the community.

The investment sees \$12.2 million in funding allocated for infrastructure costs and a further \$10.7 million to manage and run the facilities. That will significantly boost the front-line care that Canberrans can access when they or their loved ones are in need of support. The investment also complements the mental health rehabilitation services that have recently opened at the new University of Canberra Hospital, which are fit for purpose and include both an inpatient ward and an expanded day service for mental health consumers.

In addition to the investments we are making in providing appropriate supported accommodation, this year's budget also invests in more specialist community-based mental health services. These mental health services are not just about reactive treatment but proactive treatment through innovative services that help in the journey towards recovery.

We know that different groups in our community will need targeted and specific mental health supports. While we often speak about the impact of mental health on young people—and I will come back to this in a moment—I am pleased that this

budget also provides support for other vulnerable groups, including older Canberrans and those exiting the justice system. In particular, the budget includes \$3.1 million to expand the older persons mental health intensive treatment service, providing recurrent funding after one-off allocations in previous budgets. The program provides assertive case management and clinical care to support older persons in the community or on discharge from hospital.

The government is also committed to investing in suicide prevention supports and this budget provides an additional \$350,000 to continue the trial of the Way Back Support Service. Way back provides suicide after-care services at a time when people are at particularly high risk. This funding aligns with the expansion of this program in the federal budget, and we are in discussions with the commonwealth on what funding will mean for the ACT's way back service.

As I mentioned earlier, mental illness can be severe for anyone, but it can be particularly damaging for children and teenagers if left untreated. Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable stage where young people are going through significant neurological development and where mental illness can have a major impact. The research is also clear that early intervention is critically important to reduce the impact of mental illness on a young person's social, educational and vocational future, and investment early on also provides a broader benefit as young people are better able to contribute to our community as they develop.

That is why the government is continuing its focus on providing more support to young people with mental health concerns, and funding programs for children, adolescents and young people. As part of this, I am pleased to say we are investing \$2.2 million to establish a recovery-focused community outreach program for young Canberrans aged 12 to 18 year and \$1.3 million over the next three years to provide more clinical capacity at Headspace to support early intervention services for 12 to 25-year-olds and youth wellbeing programs.

While I have spoken about our commitment to building an adolescent inpatient ward, and planning for that facility is underway, our intention is to try to avoid hospital admission or readmission where possible and provide a clear path to recovery for young people and earlier intervention services where possible and appropriate. The youth-focused initiative in this year's budget will go a long way to achieve this, and it builds on the initiatives such as the expansion of child and adolescent mental health services that were part of the 2017-18 budget.

Another budget initiative I am pleased to highlight is the \$889,000 over three years to establish a mental health recovery college in the ACT. This is a great example of government working with the community to develop new and innovative approaches to mental health support. The recovery college will provide non-clinical mental health training and educational courses that will help facilitate early intervention, experience-based learning and peer support. It will not duplicate but will complement our existing clinical services. It will be based on models seen in other jurisdictions and will provide courses that are both mental health specific and holistic, encompassing broader topics that promote wellbeing. It is about providing people

with the knowledge and skills to better manage their own care, and it is about putting consumers and carers at the centre of our system.

In addition, as members would be aware, every year ACT Health partners with many non-government community service providers to provide specialist mental healthcare services. Our community partners are a critical part of the mental health sector providing prevention and treatment through recovery and ongoing support for those managing mental illness. Through this year's budget ACT Health will fund 21 community groups to provide mental health services with around \$10.4 million.

With my responsibilities for justice health I am also pleased to say that this year's budget delivers a \$6.3 million boost over four years to expand front-line health services at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. This funding will be used not only to provide more dental and more general practice services but also more mental health services to detainees.

In addition, \$406,000 has been provisioned over the next two years on top of its previously committed base funding to extend the mental health detention exit community outreach program to help people leaving detention in the ACT with a diagnosed mental illness to re-establish themselves in the community. Results to date have been very encouraging with data showing significant reductions in rates of reoffending and positive outcomes in participants' general health and wellbeing.

As I mentioned earlier, around a third of us living in the ACT will at some point in time reach out for help from a mental health service. A large proportion of these people will be family and friends who are supporting someone during a time of crisis or pain and who may need support of their own. I take this opportunity to recognise the significant role of both consumers and carers in our mental health system and reiterate the government's commitment to continuing to work with them to ensure that our services are informed by and designed for people with lived experience in mental illness.

The rollout of initiatives in this year's budget aligns with this commitment. With these initiatives, combined with the continuous improvements we are seeking to make to our services on an ongoing basis, we are ensuring that more Canberrans can access specialised high quality care when they or their loved ones are in need of support.

I want to particularly reflect on the role the community sector has played in shaping this year's budget. Whether it is as community partners or in the ideas they have given to both the directorate and me over time, we can see that reflected in this year's budget commitments. The recovery college is a particularly good example which will be led by the community. For me, this is a really important part of empowering both our community partners and also consumers and clients of the mental health system who bring that very important lived experience to these ideas. Through that they can help us to improve our services, to challenge what we are doing currently and to make sure we are offering the best possible services.

Before I close I must reflect on the comments Mrs Dunne made regarding a conversation we had outside the chamber following the recent debate on bullying in

ACT Health in the chamber. Firstly, in the chamber that day I was very clear to say that I made no dismissal of the concerns that were being raised; and that in such a large organisation there were inevitably, unfortunately, going to be staff issues that arise. I have stated my very clear public position that the Greens have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in the ACT, and I seek to work in my day-to-day job to bring that about as practically as possible through conveying a sense of transparency in making myself available to people where possible and being very clear with the leadership in the agency that I expect these matters to be dealt with in a fair, transparent way that staff can trust.

I continued the conversation with Mrs Dunne after we left the chamber as we walked up the stairs. I refute her characterisation of my comments that I was uninformed about the matters. I said to Mrs Dunne that I was unaware of some of the individual cases she had brought up in the Assembly, and I was concerned to hear about them. I then went on to have what I thought was a reasonable and mature conversation about the fact that we should perhaps discuss further that where cases are brought to Mrs Dunne's attention we might find ways for them to be passed on to either me or the minister for health, or some other mechanism, so that they can be dealt with. If they simply come to Mrs Dunne and are not passed on, there may be no mechanism to address them. I was seeking to convey to her in a responsible way some desire to find a way to deal with these matters and to take them seriously.

The way that Mrs Dunne represented that conversation in the Assembly today underlines the fact that she will never miss an opportunity to grab some skerrick of perceived political advantage when it comes to these matters. I find that regrettable. I reiterate the comments I made in the conversation outside the chamber to Mrs Dunne that I am very open to trying to find a way to deal with these matters seriously and substantively because I accept the negative impact they have on our staff. I am committed to trying to deal with them, and I am disappointed in the way that that conversation was characterised today.

That said, I am very upbeat about the initiatives funded in this year's budget in the mental health portfolio area. As I said earlier, they reflect inputs from the community, the expertise of the directorate and a very positive approach to dealing with the challenging issues of mental health that confront our community. I commend the investments in mental health in the 2018-19 ACT budget to the Assembly.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (11.57): Canberra is one of the healthiest cities in Australia. We enjoy one of the highest life expectancies in the world and we can expect to live many of those years in very good health. We have lower incidences of nearly all cancers, our kids have lower rates of obesity and our immunisation rates are well above the national averages. It is hardly a wonder that more people are moving here from interstate and overseas to study, work and raise their families, so much so that our population is set to increase by about 12,000 in the next three years.

The ACT government is ready. We are investing heavily in our health system now so that we can continue to deliver world-class health care for our growing population. Our doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health staff are the foundation of our health

system. Because of their indefatigable, compassionate work and extraordinary skill, Canberra can rest easy knowing that if we do get sick we will be well looked after.

This is not just lip-service. The ACT government invests a third of our budget in health care and health infrastructure for Canberrans. This year we will be investing as much as \$1.7 billion and by 2021-22 this amount is set to rise to \$2 billion a year. We will be allocating \$64.7 million of this amount to increase the number of elective and emergency surgeries. The funding will enable ACT Health to conduct about 14,000 elective surgeries, an additional 1,000 each year. This will significantly improve access to surgical care and reduce wait times.

The budget also injects funds into the emergency department and the intensive care unit and it increases bed capacity. An amount of \$21.2 million will be spent on more resources at the Canberra Hospital emergency department to reduce wait times and \$25.9 million will be spent on hospital beds: that is more beds to enable our hospitals to cope with things like the awful flu seasons that we have.

A further \$6.3 million will be used to fund dental, mental health and GP services and to expand health services at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. These investments all mean one thing, Mr Assistant Speaker: if we ever need to be admitted to a hospital, we will be treated to the highest possible standard by well qualified professionals with access to the very best facilities.

I am not a big fan of long hospital stays unless absolutely necessary. It can be difficult for many people to adjust to a hospital's routine and being away from the company of their loved ones. Hospital in the home allows patients whose conditions can effectively and safely be managed without staying in hospital to receive high-quality acute care in the comfort of their own home. Patients can eat their own food, sleep in their own bed and avoid the risk of infection. Meanwhile, the hospital will have beds available for patients who need to be in hospital for treatment. With \$34.5 million provided for hospital in the home, each year around 3,000 more patients will be able receive care at home or at community health centres.

Our health system is dependent on a strong network of health infrastructure. This infrastructure is crucial to making sure that all Canberrans have access to the medical care they need. I was delighted to join Minister Fitzharris ahead of the budget to announce our investment of \$15 million in capital upgrades at Calvary Public Hospital. This funding will deliver better services in the emergency department. It means more treatment spaces, better-quality access and triage arrangements, improved waiting times and a bigger short stay unit with more paediatric beds.

The budget also allocates \$561 million for continuing the progress on planning the three major projects that will enable the continued delivery of world-class health services as Canberra grows. These include the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, the determination of future hospital options for Canberra's north side and the new surgical procedures, interventional radiology and emergency centre, or SPIRE—thank goodness for that acronym. SPIRE will provide more hospital beds, more elective and day surgery spaces, and modern surgical, procedural and imaging facilities.

Mr Assistant Speaker, as you and others in this place have spoken about, Canberra is a city of busy people. But unfortunately falling sick is an unavoidable part of life. When we do feel unwell, or our kids scrape themselves on the playground, ACT Health provides easy access to effective and affordable health care. Nurse-led walk-in centres provide free, high quality, out-of-hours medical care for people who have cut their knee, who are down with the flu or who have an ear infection. These people can access fast and effective health care without an appointment, and do so closer to home.

The walk-in centres in Belconnen and Tuggeranong have proven exceptionally valuable. They provide the community with the health care it needs by filling the gap between first-aid treatment and GP consultation. By meeting the rising demand for free, convenient, and accessible health services, they also take the pressure off our GP clinics and hospitals.

Having had my own experience at the Belconnen walk-in centre a few times, I am now a loyal supporter. I am glad that this budget commits \$2 million to open another walk-in centre in the Weston Creek region. I know, Mr Assistant Speaker, how much you are looking forward to that as well. I am truly excited that more people in the ACT will have access to this extraordinarily good service.

Our mental health is an important part of our wellbeing. It is why the ACT government is improving access to specialised care for those in need of support. The budget will be investing \$157 million in mental health services, with \$22.8 million over four years to provide more supported accommodation to support different mental health needs. The funds will be used to establish three new supported accommodation places for Canberrans requiring long-term, 24-hour support and for refurbishing the extended care unit at Brian Hennessy Rehabilitation Centre for mental health patients transitioning into supported accommodation.

I absolutely support supported accommodation in our communities. I attended a consultation on a proposal for supported accommodation to be built in Florey a few months ago. I was delighted that the community by and large supported having supported accommodation in their street. I was incredibly touched by a story about some of the neighbours there. For privacy reasons, I probably will not go into it, but the need for this in our community is absolutely paramount and we are not ignoring that.

An amount of \$3.1 million will be provided to the older persons mental health treatment service to support older members of our community who are being discharged from hospital, leaving residential care or experiencing problems with housing. The mental health of our younger population is also important to us. The stresses and strains of adolescence can often leave our youth struggling. We are committed to providing them with the support they need to recover.

I think it is clear that the health of our community is something that is very important to me. This, of course, includes our sexual health. It is 2018 and still the topic of sexual health has many of us blushing and stammering. I believe we need to speak more boldly and openly about sexual health when considering health care more broadly.

We heard during the estimates process and since with the *Chief Health Officer's report* that the rates of sexually-transmitted infections are increasing in the ACT. This could be for a range of reasons but, given the prevalence of the disease, it is important that everyone who is sexually active gets themselves checked as a part of their regular healthcare routine and that they are also able to access the services that they require and products that they require as well.

ACT Health is doing some really important work in this field by offering free services at the sexual health clinic in the Canberra Hospital. But to combat the increasing rates of STIs, I believe we can do more to talk openly about safe sex and sexual health, to improve the affordability of condoms and to encourage more people to access the services at Canberra Hospital.

I hope the government will make sexual health a more obvious priority in future budgets. I am very pleased to see from the report tabled this morning, responding to our recommendations from the estimate's committee, that consideration will be given to what more we can be doing in this field and, in particular, whether condoms can be made more freely available at the walk-in centres. The government has committed to make the locations of free condoms available online so people know where to go.

As Canberra's population grows, so do our health needs. Our health system needs to be able to cater to these changing needs. That is why we are taking a proactive approach to investment in health care. We are upgrading our infrastructure and improving access to health care. We are addressing mental health. We are providing accessible and affordable health care to all Canberrans who need it.

The ACT government understands that it is of paramount importance that we invest in health care now. By building new, modern facilities and by considering new approaches to health care, I am proud to be part of a government working to provide the best quality health care that we can for our Canberrans now and into the future.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Health Directorate—Part 1.2

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (12.07): As has been said in this place before, the opposition no longer has confidence in the minister for health and in her capacity to deliver on health services. It was our view as expressed in this chamber in May and it has not changed. Health culture, as I have said before, is poor and there is poor staff health culture across ACT hospitals, mental health and right across the board. And these are issues which are of the utmost importance to members of the opposition.

I was going to use standing order 47 but I forgot; so I will reflect on the comments made by Mr Rattenbury and his characterisation of the conversation that we had. I do not want this to become a "he said, she said" sort of thing but Mr Rattenbury clearly said to me outside, as we were walking up the stairs, that people in ACT Health did not tell him the stories that we were being told.

Mr Rattenbury does say that he is concerned but he also made it perfectly clear to me that he was not hearing the stories that the opposition was hearing, and that is why I say that Mr Rattenbury, when he spoke about respectful pathways in this place, was speaking from ignorance. If he had been listening to the people in the way that the opposition has been listening and people felt confident to go to him in the way that they are starting to feel confident in coming to my office, he would know that there are not respectful pathways.

As I have said, the issue of culture is of paramount importance as far as I am concerned. The culture impacts on our ability to attract and retain staff, and this has a direct impact on patient care. I am very concerned at the number of people that I meet in my job as the shadow minister for health who actually say to me, "I regret coming to work for ACT Health. It was the worst career decision that I have made." And it not an isolated thing. There are many people in ACT Health who are strategising their way out of ACT Health. That is an extraordinary problem for us all, that we will lose valuable people with great experience because the culture does not support proper health care.

I would like to look at a couple of case studies. In 2015 urology lost its accreditation as a training centre and it lost its accreditation for two years. The impacts that this would have had on the urologists in training are hard to quantify but they would have had to go somewhere, find another institution where they would have training. And this has resulted in a shortage of urologists in the ACT.

In February this year we heard about a disability pensioner who waited 1,700 days, or nearly five years, to see a specialist before she even got on an elective surgery waiting list. The impact that that had on that individual and the other individuals who are waiting for extended periods on the urology waiting list to access services that otherwise they cannot afford is catastrophic. That woman's case was catastrophic, and they as a family had to resort to private health insurance or to have her looked at privately because they had no alternative.

The Labor Party federally is always very big on something that they had this sort of quote about during the medicare election campaign: that the provision of medical services should rely on your Medicare card and not the size of your credit card. But somebody who has to wait 1,700 days even to see a government-provided specialist has to rely on their credit card. Everything that Labor says about health and the provision of health services goes out the door when we look at the hidden waiting list in the ACT health system, which is the time it takes to see a specialist in the public system, which is the entry point for getting you onto the extended elective surgery waiting list. There is a hidden waiting list, which was most exemplified by somebody who had to wait 1,700 days, or nearly five years, to see a medical specialist.

There have been, as I have said before, victims of bullying in the ACT health system. They are heartily offended by Minister Fitzharris saying a fortnight ago that a call for an inquiry was a political stunt. They do not think it is a political stunt, and the people who have written to me and have begged me not to give up just because the Labor Party and the Greens voted against this inquiry do not think that this is a political stunt.

I kid you not: there are people who contact me regularly and who pass me in the street and say, “Keep it up. Keep giving them hell because we live in hell.”

The Auditor-General’s report that came out soon afterwards puts the lie to the claim that Minister Fitzharris and Minister Rattenbury have made that there are respectful pathways. The things that were outlined in the Auditor-General’s report show that in all cases that the Auditor-General looked at there were not respectful pathways.

I am very concerned about the restructure that is going to take place in Health because I do not believe that it will deliver better services to the people of the ACT. The restructure decision was taken by the Chief Minister on his own. It was a captain’s call. It did not go to cabinet. There is no evidence to support the decision. There is no paperwork anywhere. I have FOI-ed the Chief Minister, Minister Fitzharris and Mr Rattenbury, and there is no paperwork to support this brief. There is one brief from the Head of Service to the Chief Minister which says that no-one was consulted about the change in the structure, and there is no paperwork.

There is no record of a discussion, any discussion, between Mr Rattenbury and the minister for health, and there are no records of a discussion between the minister for health and the Chief Minister in relation to these issues. We are told of meetings between ministers and between ministers and senior officers, but there is no evidence for that. There is not a post-it note.

The lack of process in this space also led to the removal of the former director-general, and this issue does need scrutiny. Six weeks out from the start of the new restructure the community and this Assembly are in the dark about what it will look like and how it will work and who will be the chief officials in charge of this restructure.

We have touched on the health data review. The ACT does not have good health data and it has not for at least nine years. In 2009 and 2012 we have recorded data doctoring at the Canberra Hospital and we do know of one person who put their hand up for that. We know from the Auditor-General’s report that it was impossible for just one person to have done all the data doctoring and that data doctoring happened on days when that person was not at work so that there were other people involved, and we have never got to the bottom of that.

We have poor data management leading to missing time lines in reporting of data to the AIHW and the Productivity Commission in 2016. We have issues that were raised by the former shadow minister for health before the 2016 election about anomalies in elective surgery reporting, which was looked at by the Auditor-General and resulted in root and branch reviews. To my knowledge PricewaterhouseCoopers have been through ACT Health three times and Ernst & Young once. In addition, Mr Bob Sendt on behalf of the Auditor-General has looked at much of this reporting as well. We have a real problem in ACT Health data. *(Second speaking period taken.)*

We have spent millions of dollars on a health data review, and it is now four months overdue. We have gone more than 18 months without quarterly performance reporting, and I fear that taxpayers will end up having spent millions of dollars and still end up with poor health data.

As I said before, the minister has been telling us that emergency surgery waiting times are heading in the right direction. She has consistently said that, and I think that we have now seen that the figures in the budget put the lie to those assertions.

I am very concerned also about the issues of mental health. We have seen—and the minister answered questions in the last sitting period—the extreme risks identified in the adult mental health unit regarding ligature points. And I am very concerned at the slow process that is underway to finally remove all those ligature points. As of 1 August there were still a number of points that had not been addressed and the process for that is languishing.

I am also concerned about the accreditation review done by the Victorian mental health unit into the residential mental health units in the ACT which flagged a number of issues in relation to culture and training and the lack of appropriately trained staff and how we might go about addressing some of those issues. But the most concerning thing was the revelation that there is a nine per cent cut over two years in mental health funding.

We know that the mental health unit is running at 105 per cent capacity and that there are few or no full-time permanent psychiatrists working in the adult mental health unit. There was a period when there were no permanently appointed psychiatrists, and I think the last answer to a question on notice from April was that there is one out of 4½ FTEs. The rest of those are locums. I think that there is a willingness on behalf of visiting medical officers to assist with this crisis, but I understand from the Visiting Medical Officers Association that ACT Health does not want to talk to them about shortages at the adult mental health unit.

I am concerned also about the assaults on staff. It was reported recently that there had been over 10 assaults on staff at Dhulwa over the past few weeks. I am also concerned about the capacity of the office for mental health to really make a difference. There is \$782,000 set aside in this budget for the office for mental health, which really will cover the cost of a few staff. In fact, if you look at it, the \$785,000 is probably less than the staffing allocation given to Greens members in this place. It will not address the issues significantly, and I do not think that it has the capacity to address all the concerns of the people in the mental health unit. And I have substantial concerns about the way the mental health unit operates, the way that mental health communicates with its clients and people close to its clients.

I find the number of occasions on which I make representations, or have representations made to me by people who are carers of people with mental health issues and who are tearing their hair out because they cannot get even basic information out of the mental health services, is rising. I think it is ironic that if I turned up at hospital with one of my adult children who had a broken bone, hospital staff would willingly talk to me about what is wrong and the modality of treatment. But if I turned up in the same place with an adult child with mental health issues, immediately the shutters go up, they cannot talk to the parents or the carers about their treatment and they claim privacy.

I think that the way in which carers of people in the adult mental health system are treated is appalling, and I think that it leads to worse outcomes because of the lack of continuity of care, the lack of understanding of the circumstances and the lack of ability for people to make a real difference, usually in children's lives, because they just cannot get basic information.

On a personal note, I welcome the recommendations of the estimates committee regarding cystic fibrosis:

The Committee recommends the ACT Government undertake work to consider the viability of moving cystic fibrosis clinic to Canberra Hospital to ensure Canberrans with cystic fibrosis are able to access the full suite of tests and allied health professionals they require.

The Committee recommends the ACT Government continue to work with Cystic Fibrosis ACT to improve support for people in the ACT living with cystic fibrosis.

There is a clinical review of cystic fibrosis which has been bouncing around for some time but we have not seen it tabled and we have not seen a government response to that.

I do not want to denigrate the current cystic fibrosis clinic that is run but it is remote from the hospital. It must be very time consuming for the doctors and staff at those clinics that they have to come from the hospital to the Belconnen clinic and backwards and forwards. There are issues related to transport and the like which have been raised with me by the salaried medical officers about how difficult it is to access transport. It does actually cut significantly into people's time that they have to move from their offices in the hospital to an office in another facility.

In saying that, I do know that cystic fibrosis clinics have improved substantially over the past few years, and my children and others in this town are beneficiaries of those. But I would encourage a more streamlined system. That would apply to a whole range of clinics for chronic diseases.

One of the other issues that I constantly hear complaints about is outpatient clinics at the Canberra Hospital, the poor scheduling, the inappropriate waits that people have. Often people are told to turn up at 9 o'clock but the people that they are going to see, the doctors and allied health people, do not turn up at 9 o'clock. They might have to sit there for three or four hours more than they had planned. And often when people are told to turn up to outpatient clinics they are told to make sure that they park in the long stay park and expect that their stays will be a number of hours. "Make sure you park in the four-hour park because it'll take you that long, if you're lucky." This can be quite onerous on people who have poor health. The facilities at some of these outpatients clinics are somewhat run down and are very difficult for elderly and infirm people to negotiate.

As I said previously, the health budget covers the largest single contribution from ACT taxpayers. It is much higher than any other contribution from taxpayers

elsewhere. I am not convinced that ACT taxpayers are getting value for money. We are seeing year on year that we fail to come close to the national efficient price for the provision of medical services. We are not getting any better, and that is a symptom of the fact that we are not spending our money as wisely as we can.

Make no mistake about this: the Canberra Liberals do want to see health spending being carried out as efficiently as possible. If Mr Steel wants to characterise that as cutting health expenditure, knock yourself out. But when we fail, year after year, to come close to the national efficient price then we have a problem. It is a problem of this minister's making and her predecessors' making, and it is time that, as a community, we looked at these issues.

**MR MILLIGAN** (Yerrabi) (12.27): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this part of the appropriation bill on health. I will be addressing it in relation to the health facilities at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, which has many issues, and not just around the areas you would think in terms of justice and rehabilitation but health outcomes for inmates. Since it first started taking inmates in 2009 the facility has been plagued with high drug use, contraband, a huge percentage of inmates on methadone—much higher than in other states—and, of course, bashings and, sadly, deaths.

Too often it seems like the minister is at peace with the fact that there are illicit drugs flowing through our prison. We can never condone this and must always maintain a zero tolerance policy towards illegal drug use in our prison. We are pleased to see justice health move to a more time-efficient methadone dosing system—idose. It has freed up time for nurses to do other important work. However, we are yet to see any formal courses or programs for inmates on methadone who may wish to get off it. Instead, drug use seems to be an outcome of business as usual.

Between 30 and 40 per cent of the prison population is on an opioid treatment replacement. More work needs to be done to help the inmates who want to help themselves. But perhaps, sadly, this is the attitude that only members on this side of the chamber share. Instead, this government seems to take the path of least resistance, leaving inmates dosed up on drugs rather than doing the hard yards to reduce and remove them from our prison system.

This brings me to the specific elements of Indigenous health. Whilst I am happy to see that Winnunga has been awarded the contract to enter the prison and provide culturally appropriate care, the model of care and services to be offered is still to be determined.

This seems all too familiar as we have heard the same rhetoric and delays with establishing the Ngunnawal bush healing farm. As we all know, the missing opportunity on that site continues to unfold as we wait on an even basic model of care for this glorified day camp with no clinical treatment. I fear that the same fate awaits the AMC. Winnunga wants to get in there and start helping inmates. They are hopeful of treating non-Indigenous inmates if they have capacity and the inmates are willing.

Where we are at six months down the track from the minister's media release is that there is no further development. Inmates are still waiting. Winnunga is still not embedded at the AMC. ACT Health is still not sharing information. These lost opportunities would not need to happen if only this government would start showing some political will and passion for the people stuck in our justice system.

The Canberra Liberals will keep up the pressure on corrections. Given that Canberra has the most expensive prison in Australia one would expect more bang for our buck for taxpayers and better health outcomes for our inmates.

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

**Sitting suspended from 12.31 to 2.30 pm.**

## **Questions without notice**

### **Budget—deficit**

**MR COE:** I have a question for the Chief Minister and Treasurer. I refer to an article in the *Canberra Times* of 25 July written by former chief minister Jon Stanhope, Adrian Makeham-Kirchner and Khalid Ahmed. It states:

The surplus is, however, illusory. The underlying budget is in deep deficit, and its sustainability and, indeed, the sustainability of priority services is problematic.

Treasurer, why has funding for health care not taken into account growth in costs associated with health cost inflation, population increases, ageing and new technologies?

**MR BARR:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and, yes, confirmation that he is, indeed, at the driest of the dry end of Liberal Party politics. But let me be clear that we reject the analysis of the former chief minister in relation to—

**Mr Parton:** Was he on the dry end or not?

**MR BARR:** I do not think Jon was ever famous for his understanding or grasp of economics. He had many strengths, Madam Speaker—

**Mr Coe:** But he delivered surpluses, Andrew. You are yet to deliver one yourself.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Chief Minister.

**MR BARR:** We might just wait until after question time, Madam Speaker. But there are, of course, many errors contained in that analysis that was published in the newspaper. Regardless, the government remains focused on investing in the services that our growing community needs. That has included record investments in areas like

health, education, transport and community services. We continue to invest in the needs of our growing community. We do so whilst returning the territory budget to balance.

**MR COE:** Treasurer, why does the ACT continue to have an underlying budget in deep deficit, a fiscal deficit, despite massive increases in rates, taxes and charges?

**MR BARR:** The territory does not. The territory operates with a balanced budget.

**MRS DUNNE:** Chief Minister, why is the sustainability of priority services such as health care problematic under your budget?

**MR BARR:** It is not. We are investing record amounts in health, and ensuring that we are investing in both new infrastructure and in providing new services to communities right across the Australian Capital Territory. We are ensuring that our investments are targeted to meet emerging needs. We are also focusing, with our work in terms of federal-state relations, on ensuring that we have good, ongoing funding partnerships between our level of government and the Australian government. We are ensuring that the future health needs of our community are met, as well as playing our part to ensure that the future health needs of all Australians are met.

The hypocrisy of the Liberal Party, the party that has cut funding from health right across this nation, courtesy of your federal colleagues, is laid bare today. Once again, with respect to the 2014 Abbott-Hockey budget, there has not been the funding that was contained prior to that. It was stripped away by Abbott and Hockey, and it has not been restored by Prime Minister Turnbull and Treasurer Morrison. There is still a reduction in health funding from your federal colleagues.

## Visitors

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before I call you, Ms Le Couteur, may I acknowledge that in the gallery we have students from the Canberra Institute of Technology, the English language certificate IV, as I understand you are studying. Welcome to your Assembly.

**Members:** Hear, hear!

## Questions without notice

### Planning—Curtin shops

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management and relates to the current reconsideration process for the controversial DA for the Curtin shops. Minister, the developer's spokeswoman was reported in last Wednesday's *Canberra Times* as saying that the new plans are considerably different from the axed proposal. How can plans that are considerably different be accepted for reconsideration rather than a new DA?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. The Planning and Development Act 2007 provides any proponent with recourse to apply for the reconsideration of a decision previously made by the independent Planning and Land

Authority. The act does not contain any power for the Planning and Land Authority to reject a consideration application unless the proposed development is in a prohibited category.

The proposal for 44 Curtin Place will be considered against the current provisions applicable to the site, which allows the development for a mixed use apartment building. Due to the considerable interest in this proposed development, the application has been notified by ACTPLA for public consultation for an extended period. Regardless of whether the development proposal has been notified for the first time or as a reconsideration, the rules of the Territory Plan still apply. There is no difference. The independent Planning and Land Authority will undertake the same assessment.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Minister, given your answer, will you be reviewing the reconsideration process in the Planning and Development Act, which currently requires no public consultation and appears to allow new plans that are totally different from the old ones?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The Planning and Development Act does require the authority to consult with all parties that have previously made representations to the development application. Furthermore, in following the process set out in the act, the independent Planning and Land Authority has publicly notified the reconsideration application for an extended period. Finally, the whole point of a reconsideration is for the plans to have changed. A development proposal that had not changed would likely not be successful if it had already been rejected.

### **Canberra Hospital—radiology department**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, have you been advised of the recent—I have read the wrong question; my apologies.

My question is still to the minister for health, though. Evidence given during estimates, on 21 June 2018, revealed that the training and accreditation of the medical imaging department at the Canberra Hospital was recommended to be downgraded from an A status to a D status. Minister, what are the reasons for the recommended downgrade from an A status to a D status?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Hanson for asking the right question. Late last week, ACT Health received the final accreditation report, which they have three months to respond to. In broad terms, I understand that much of this accreditation downgrade was due to matters relating to the working environment and relationships amongst staff but, in the meantime, since the college of radiologists were at ACT Health, a number of actions have been taken.

These include that Canberra Hospital has appointed two new directors of training who are prepared to work well together to meet the college recommendations. ACT Health has also advertised widely for two new radiologists at a national and local level. The directors of training have implemented a formal teaching program which will align with the curriculum, and the four first-year trainees have commenced completion of

all the key conditions. A departmental orientation program has been completed and distributed to all radiologists and trainees within the department. A formalised regular teaching schedule has been scheduled and reinvigorated and will continue to be provided as per the college's guidelines. The college will, as requested, be advised of the installation of new equipment. The new directors of training have guaranteed that trainees will be supported to attend training workshops. All trainees have been offered two and three-year contracts to align with their training schedule.

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Minister, resume your seat.

**Mr Hanson:** The question was specifically about the reasons for the downgrade from A status to D status, rather than what is being done to address that issue. Why has it been downgraded?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I said that right at the very beginning.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I think at the very beginning she made reference to relationships and working conditions and then went on to say what actions have occurred since. You have six seconds left, minister.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No, thank you.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, what representations or information have you received about the problems with the culture in the medical imaging department at the Canberra Hospital?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I have received a briefing from ACT Health about the accreditation process and, I believe, one letter regarding one member of staff in that department.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, will you table the preliminary accreditation report and the final accreditation report that you mentioned in question time in relation to the Canberra Hospital medical imaging department by the close of business this sitting week?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I will seek advice and take that question on notice.

### **Canberra Hospital—radiology department**

**MRS DUNNE:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, have you been advised of a recent death in the neonatal intensive care unit at the Canberra Hospital that highlighted procedural inefficiencies in the medical imaging department?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No, I have not.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, could I ask you to seek a briefing on this? In doing so, could you find out whether this case has been referred to the mortality and morbidity committee of the hospital; if not, why not?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I would note, in relation to my previous answer, that I have had leave in recent times. In the previous week I was in New Zealand for work purposes and prior to that I was on an extended four-week period of personal leave. Advice may have come to my office in that period. I will take on notice Mrs Dunne's question. I also encourage her to directly contact my office about such a serious matter. Of course, it is also appropriate to raise it in question time, but I remind her again that these particularly sensitive matters can also be followed up with some urgency by my office.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, has the case been or will it be referred to the coroner? If so, will you undertake to ensure that the coroner's report is tabled in the Assembly?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That is a hypothetical but I will take the question on notice.

### **Federal government—territory rights**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you please advise the Assembly on what action the ACT government has taken to support the democratic rights of ACT residents to repeal the Andrews bill?

**MR BARR:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. I acknowledge her significant interest in and hard work on this particular issue. The repeal of this legislation is indeed the only way to restore the full democratic rights of residents of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

I think we all understand that voluntary assisted dying is an incredibly difficult issue and that there will be a diverse range of views in the community, in this place and in the federal parliament, but I know that I and my colleagues refuse to accept that Canberrans should be stopped from discussing this matter, something that their friends and family who live only 20 minutes away in Queanbeyan, or indeed in other Australian states, can discuss. We are absolutely capable of having a mature and respectful conversation in our community and in this parliament on this important issue.

Last year I signed a memorandum of understanding with the Northern Territory Chief Minister to pursue a number of issues associated with territory rights and we have joined forces to campaign on this issue for the rights of our territory residents. Members would be aware that I have personally written to senators and MPs urging them to restore the rights of their fellow Australians.

I have in my advocacy made it very clear that voting for the bill currently before the Senate does not mean that there will be assisted dying in the ACT. It will simply give territory residents the same rights that all other Australians have to decide on this issue through their democratically elected representatives in this parliament. There are

nearly 700,000 Australians who reside in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. They deserve equal rights. (*Time expired.*)

**MS CHEYNE:** Chief Minister, what has been the response by members, senators and the wider community to this campaign?

**MR BARR:** I can advise that the response to the joint campaign between the ACT and the Northern Territory has been very positive. I have received a large number of responses from senators and members agreeing with our position and that which this Assembly supported by way of resolution previously.

My office continues to receive very significant feedback from Canberrans from all walks of life for whom this issue is incredibly important. I am also hearing that people from around the country are contacting their federal representatives demanding that their friends and families living in Canberra and living in the Northern Territory should have an equal right to debate and legislate in this area.

People do realise that this debate is about territory rights and the fact that there are nearly 700,000 Australians who have lesser rights than those who live in states to conduct their own affairs. This is not fair and it is even more absurd now that the state of Victoria has passed laws in this regard. So, when New South Wales passes laws, when other Australian states pass laws, will the territories be the only places in this nation unable to determine what the law will be for our people?

**MR PETTERSSON:** Chief Minister, what is the current status of the repeal bill?

**MR BARR:** I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. As members are aware, debate on the bill has now commenced in the Senate. The vote will be close, but it does look positive at this stage. Of course if it does pass the Senate the bill will also need to be debated in the House of Representatives. It is disappointing that the Prime Minister appears to have reneged on his agreement with the Senate crossbench to allow the bill to come on for a free vote in the house. There is an opportunity for the Prime Minister to show some leadership and stand up against Kevin Andrews and the far right wing of his party room. Apparently, he has done so today on the national energy guarantee. He found a way through on marriage equality. Hopefully, this issue will also see a free vote in the House of Representatives.

### **Canberra Hospital—radiology department**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the minister for health. Minister, I refer to media reports on 23 July that the Canberra Hospital medical imaging department failed 28 of 32 criteria to keep training radiologists. The preliminary accreditation report states that the training program caused “an unacceptable level of risk to the trainees’ training and wellbeing”. Minister, why did the standard of the radiology training program cause an unacceptable level of risk to the trainees’ training and wellbeing?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for the question. I note that there is a motion on the notice paper for this issue to be discussed and debated in the chamber tomorrow. I refer Mrs Kikkert to my previous answer. I reiterate, as I have done

previously, that this is a concern. It is certainly a concern that ACT Health have followed up with urgency. I outlined in my previous answer the actions that ACT Health have taken to address these concerns. I also note that Mrs Dunne noted this morning that ACT Health had failed accreditation in relation to the broader ACT Health accreditation. That was not the case. It was never the case. It is not the case that they have failed accreditation for training. They certainly have been downgraded. That is disappointing. But it is not the case, and it is not correct to assert, that ACT Health has failed accreditation in any recent accreditation process.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, why was the medical imaging department ever at risk of being downgraded as a training site?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** For the reasons I outlined earlier.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, how can you say that this was addressed with urgency when we know that these matters were raised with the director of medicine as early as February last year?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Certainly, since they came to my attention during the recent radiology accreditation for training, they have been acted upon with urgency, as evidenced by the two new directors of training who have already been recruited.

### **Light rail—safety**

**MISS C BURCH:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, in April this year you were asked whether you had coordinated with emergency services before launching the rail-ready program. Since that time we have heard concerns from the firefighters union as to the lack of specialist equipment for use in the case of a collision between a light rail vehicle and a road vehicle. What specific actions have you taken to ensure that emergency services will be ready to handle all emergencies involving light rail?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Madam Speaker, it is probably appropriate that I take the question, as minister for emergency services. I can advise the Assembly that our emergency services Fire & Rescue officers are fully prepared for all circumstances across the ACT. They are going through a great deal of training during these preparations. In fact we even send them overseas for particular training for these sorts of situations. I have personally been involved, at the Hume training base, in training for extractions of personnel and vehicles out of large multistorey car parks, for example. It is a really good example of how they can work with modern machinery to support the safety of all Canberrans.

**MISS C BURCH:** Minister, what specific actions will be taken in the event of collisions between light rail vehicles and other road users, and do emergency services have the specialised equipment that they require?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank the member for her question. More equipment, of course, is being purchased as we move forward to supply our Fire & Rescue staff with the necessary operational equipment to do this sort of work. They have specialised

equipment. Indeed, they are able to access equipment from New South Wales on a very fast basis when there are other needs that occur.

We have large storage containers of equipment for this sort of use, both in the ACT and in New South Wales as well. And of course we have operational procedures in plan ready to take action on such occasions.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, how can you assure the public that this is safe, given that there is no specific allocation in the budget to address this safety issue?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** We invest heavily in our police and emergency services personnel and equipment. Whilst we do not allocate specifics to these sorts of items in the budget, they are purchased for many uses across the ACT. So Fire & Rescue have a great many resources available to them to deal with these sorts of situations.

### **Energy—national energy guarantee**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. Minister, could you please update the Assembly on the COAG Energy Council meeting last week and tell us why the ACT is not supporting the national energy guarantee as it is currently proposed?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Yes, the COAG Energy Council meeting did take place on Friday. This was a meeting of the state and territory governments and the commonwealth. It would be fair to say that that meeting did not endorse the national energy guarantee and that the ACT explicitly declined to sign up to the national energy guarantee in principle.

We were joined in that stance by Victoria and Queensland, and those three state and territory governments expressed a number of ongoing concerns with the national energy guarantee. These take a number of different forms. Predominantly, the jurisdictions continue to be deeply concerned by the limited emissions reduction target in the national energy guarantee. We are of the view that this will ensure that Australia does not meet its Paris climate change commitments and will also place a heavier burden on other sectors such as agriculture and transport because we know that the electricity sector is the cheapest, most effective and most technologically possible place to reduce emissions.

We were also concerned about jurisdictions that have done work to transition to a clean energy future and are not getting credit for that and are seeing other jurisdictions essentially free riding on those efforts. Certainly in the case of the ACT we continue to work with the commonwealth to resolve the issue to ensure that the ACT's 100 per cent renewable energy commitment by 2020 is adequately recognised under the scheme and that the ACT is appropriately rewarded and recognised for having put that work in place.

It is fair to say that a significant number of external commentators continue to have concerns with the national energy guarantee as well. What we have said is that we will remain at the table and will continue to work with the commonwealth to try to get

an outcome on this but we need the commonwealth to actually come to the table in a spirit of negotiation.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Can the minister update the Assembly on what the outcome of the federal coalition party room meeting on the NEG this morning may mean for the ACT?

**MR RATTENBURY:** There have been a number of significant developments in the federal parliament today regarding the national energy guarantee. The first is that a motion was passed yesterday calling for the documents that modelled the alleged price impacts of the national energy guarantee. That motion was passed by the Senate and the documents were due to be produced this morning at 9 am. I am disappointed to report to the Assembly that there are in fact no new documents. The only modelling—so-called modelling, really—that has been made available is a one-page Excel sheet which is claimed to be the basis on which the \$550 energy saving is modelled.

Frank Jotzo, from the Australian National University, in a Fairfax article off the back of that, described it as very bad practice to release a major national policy without modelling. He went on to note that even the ACT's interim emissions target was more detailed, with six accompanying technical reports.

Similarly, there has been the discussion in the federal coalition party room today. I am relying on media reports at this stage, but they do seem to indicate that at least four members of the party room have indicated that they will cross the floor on this; at least four members. I think it now raises the question of whether the Prime Minister will in fact be able to get this legislation through the House of Representatives.

The ACT will be joining a phone link-up with the federal energy minister tonight, at which we expect to have further details on the next steps from the commonwealth government's perspective.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, when is the draft legislation planned to be released? How will the ACT constructively engage in the consultation?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Whilst the ACT did not agree to the NEG in principle on Friday, we did agree that the proposed legislation could be released. I think this is worth while in terms of giving members of the public and key stakeholder groups, as well as state and territory governments, the opportunity to scrutinise the legislation. That release, I presume, will be formalised in the teleconference tonight. Certainly, the ACT will be closely scrutinising that legislation.

The other thing we will continue to do over the coming weeks is seek to engage with the federal government to find a way through on this. I believe a policy outcome is achievable on this but it requires the federal government to actually take on board some of the concerns that have been raised both by state and territory governments and by key commentators and analysts who have looked very closely and carefully at this policy.

I note comments today by the head of the Climate Council, Greg Bourne. He has described the national energy guarantee as locking in woefully inadequate electricity sector emissions. He notes that we can no longer expect the electricity sector to play its role in cutting pollution through transitioning to clean, affordable, low cost renewable energy. That is a pretty damning indictment of this model and I think it points to the fact that further improvements need to be made to the policy.

### **ACTION bus service—consultation**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. During estimates, in relation to the new transport network, the Deputy Director-General of TCCS stated:

There will be a much shorter, effectively, third phase of consultation after this consultation where we will be putting the timetable out ...

Minister, given the deputy director-general's follow-up comments, that bus timetables are "big and complex beasts" which may need to be tweaked to make the system work better, why will this consultation process be much shorter than the last?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I look forward to having this debate again on another issue that I notice on the notice paper for tomorrow. I am pleased to see such significant input into the second phase of consultation, which closed on Sunday. We very much look forward to analysing the feedback from that, and look forward to updating the community on next steps following that analysis.

**MS LEE:** Minister, when will this phase of consultation commence; for how long will it run; will you make those results public; and, if so, when?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I think there were four questions in there. But I look forward to updating the Assembly about the results of the second phase of consultation, which closed on Sunday.

**MISS C BURCH:** Minister, does the government plan to actually take into account the community concerns raised throughout the consultation process or are the yet-to-be-released timetables a foregone conclusion?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I note that there were two questions in the supplementary. I am really happy to answer more questions, Madam Speaker. Yes, as I outlined this morning, when there was the presentation of a petition, there have been a number of rounds of consultation about what Canberrans want to see out of their bus network. This is one of a number of rounds. I would note, of course, that currently only around eight per cent of Canberrans use our bus network. We absolutely must get more Canberrans using the bus network. We will, of course, take on board all the feedback that we have received. That does not necessarily mean that we will be able to respond to every concern raised. We have to make sure that we have a bus service that is rapid, that is frequent, that is reliable, and that is a seven-day-a-week network. We have to make sure that we provide equitable bus services across the territory. We have to get people from A to B more quickly.

It is consistent, in the feedback from Canberrans in previous consultations, and from every efficient, well-operated bus service in Australia and around the world, that we need to head down a path of more frequent, more reliable and faster services. That is what the proposed 2019 network delivers. We will be taking on board the consultation feedback that we have received. There is a lot of it. It is being analysed at the moment, and we look forward to sharing that further with the Canberra community when that process is completed.

### **Roads—Gundaroo Drive**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, stage 1 of the Gundaroo Drive duplication was announced in March 2016 following a petition from the community with more than 1,000 signatures. The cost of this project was estimated at \$31.1 million, with completion expected in mid-2017. Minister, why is the community of Gungahlin still suffering through stage 1 roadworks and the disruption of this expensive and overdue project?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Milligan for the question and note that this project is a standing item on the agenda that I have with Transport Canberra and City Services. As I have mentioned previously and publicly, I am immensely frustrated by the delays in this project, of which there have been many. Currently the project is struggling. I myself tabled that petition to Minister Gentleman when he was the minister for roads. I know full well—I travel this road virtually every day—what a significant impost this is on Gungahlin residents. I am doing everything I can to make sure that this project is delivered as swiftly and as safely as possible.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, when will the disruption for Gungahlin commuters end? What are you doing to engage with the residents who live next to this non-stop construction?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The most recent advice was that it was the end of September. There are currently discussions underway about whether that time frame can be met. I do not have an update yet but I expect to have one later in the week. Transport Canberra and the contractors on site are keeping in touch with local residents.

I would note that I do absolutely appreciate the disruption to them. Many years ago I lived on the street adjacent to this. I know what it must be like and I know what it is like for the tens of thousands of Gungahlin residents in particular who have to use this road. It is immensely frustrating. I am incredibly frustrated. I want to see the project completed as soon as possible.

**MR COE:** Minister, why are there gaps in the sound wall backing onto the houses in Ngunnawal and are there any problems that have been discovered for stage 2?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I am happy to answer two more questions contained in the third on this topic. There are gaps in the—I am not sure which parts of the road Mr Coe is referring to—Margany Close retaining wall as well as in the Kurrama Close wall. Those gaps are so that pedestrians can enter and exit onto the shared path along Gundaroo Drive, if those are the gaps to which Mr Coe is referring.

I note that stage 2 Gundaroo Drive has begun. A significant amount of planning work for stage 2 was part of the stage 1 works, particularly regarding the relocation of utilities. As far as I am aware, there are no issues with Gundaroo Drive stage 2. Many lessons have been learnt and much significant work was done in the stage 1 project to prepare for stage 2. I will be making sure that all efforts are being put into the completion of stage 1 as soon as possible.

**Budget—education**

**MR STEEL:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, how is the 2018 budget supporting high quality school education for ACT children?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Steel for his question. The 2018 budget continues the government's delivery of our election platform in education. Education is a key priority for the government and an area where the government consistently makes a large investment through our budgets. Some \$5 billion over four years has been allocated to support the ACT's education system. The ACT government directly provides education to close to 48,000 students studying in ACT public schools from preschool to college who are supported on their learning journey by over 5,000 public school teachers and support staff.

The 2018 budget will deliver new and expanded schools for our growing suburbs and recruit more teachers to bolster our world-class education system. The budget invests in delivering priority outcomes from the future of education community conversation to improve teaching and learning in every local school and see that our kids reach their potential. It provides funding for continued work on the ACT early childhood strategy, which will aim to set up every child for success.

More school psychologists are provided to support better mental health and wellbeing among students. The government's election commitment of 20 additional psychologists is now fully funded. There is also \$31.1 million for teachers and support staff to deliver schooling to more than 1,000 additional students as our school population grows. This is equivalent to 66 full-time learning professionals and support staff. This budget shows the ACT government's commitment to a world-class education system for our future generations.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, what school infrastructure investment is included in the 2018 budget?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Steel for the supplementary. The 2018 budget will deliver new and expanded schools for Canberra's growing suburbs. Forty seven million dollars has been allocated to construct a new P-6 school in Molonglo, and planning will begin for a year 7 to 10 campus so that families in this community can have confidence that high-quality public education in modern learning facilities will be available. The school will be ready to accept students from the start of the 2021 year, with places for 600 students from kindergarten to year 6, and 44 places for preschool children.

The government will continue to support growth in enrolments across Gungahlin, with nearly \$24 million adding a further 500 places at Amaroo, Gold Creek primary and Neville Bonner schools, and providing for an initial expansion of the Franklin Early Childhood School. The government will also complete feasibility and planning for another new school in Gungahlin and for permanent expansion of the Franklin Early Childhood School to become a P-6 school.

Right across the ACT there are ageing schools, some of which are 40, 50 and 60 years old. The government is investing in the renewal of these schools, for example, through the \$18 million roof replacement program. The budget also continues the modernisation of Campbell Primary School and Narrabundah College, refurbishing these buildings to provide better learning environments and modern facilities, investing a further \$20 million in these projects.

**MS CODY:** Minister, how will the 2018 budget support great teaching in every classroom?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. The ACT continues to provide one of the best public education systems in Australia. This budget maintains our investment in teachers so that students can access excellent learning opportunities. The future skills academy will be established with a \$5.6 million investment that will allow creation of a centre for excellence in teaching and learning based at the University of Canberra Lake Ginninderra Senior Secondary College in the north and in the south at the Centre for Innovation and Learning, Caroline Chisholm School.

A key component of the academy is to ensure that as many Canberra students as possible have access to the vital learning opportunities offered by the academy, so it has a focus on teacher professional learning, and engagement with industry, government agencies and tertiary education and training providers.

The academy's expert teachers will provide instructional leadership and mentoring to colleagues across the ACT school system and access to strong industry, government and tertiary sector partnerships not otherwise available to individual schools. Each initiative from the future of education strategy will also support great teaching through an allocation of \$9.2 million.

The government is investing in teacher capability in literacy and numeracy and building better links with the University of Canberra where many ACT teachers gain their initial and post-graduate qualifications. The ACT government will also implement a new teacher mentor program where school leaders will be provided with better training in mentoring and supporting teachers who are at the beginning of their careers in one of the ACT's public schools.

### **Animals—dangerous dogs**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, yesterday Justice Mossop in his handing down of *Meyers v Commissioner for Social Housing* stated:

Neither the difficulties of designing an appropriate legislative scheme, nor the importance of the respect for private property or the autonomy of dog owners, requires a legislative regime which permits residents of Canberra to be put at risk by aggressive dogs owned by others.

Minister, given the long history of the issue of dangerous dogs and the comments of Justice Mossop, will you now acknowledge the need to work on a legislative response to the issue of dangerous dogs?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Parton for the question and note the judgment handed down yesterday and the usual practice of ministers not commenting on those. But my understanding, based on media reporting, is that the incident in question happened many years ago. As members know, an entirely new piece of legislation was extensively debated and passed in this chamber last year.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, will you now admit that you were wrong to water down that bill that was introduced last year by the opposition in relation to dangerous dogs?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** It was not watered down. It was considerably strengthened, and debated extensively. Many of the amendments were indeed passed by the opposition.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, will you now meet with me to discuss how we can pass legislation together to ensure that dangerous dogs are taken off the streets?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Ms Lawder's question implies that she has asked to meet with me. I am certainly not aware of a request being received. If it has, I will follow up on that. There was considerable work done last year; I had lengthy discussions with the late Mr Doszpot about this matter. We have also canvassed these matters more extensively recently in an estimates committee. I am confident that the legislation last year and the extensive work done by Transport Canberra and City Services, particularly in the past 18 months, have significantly improved the legislation and the operations of domestic animal services.

I think that where we do have further work to do is in the broad community campaign—which has been underway and which will be extended—on ensuring that everyone in our community who owns a dog is fully aware of their own responsibilities in making sure that their dogs behave appropriately, are appropriately on a lead, and are safely fenced in a yard. There are many issues in our community, I know. There is only so much governments can do with legislation to make sure that people behave responsibly. There is very strong legislation in place. We will do more on community awareness and education.

### **Minister for Health and Wellbeing—government confidence**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, given the litany of failures under the watch of Minister Fitzharris, including failing more than 30 criteria in the draft hospital accreditation, only 50 per cent of patients being seen on time in Canberra Hospital during 2017-18, extensive blowouts in elective surgery

waiting times, a culture of bullying in ACT Health, the imaging department failing 28 of 32 criteria, the numerous dog attacks that have occurred in Canberra in the past 12 months, Justice Mossop's scathing criticism yesterday on the lack of action on dangerous dogs, significant cuts to school buses, cuts to Xpresso bus services, massive cuts to local bus services—

**Ms Berry:** This is taking a long time.

**MS LAWDER:** I could keep going for quite some time—and a sham bus consultation that has left a bitter feeling in the public towards the minister, do you still have confidence in the minister for health, transport and city services?

**MR BARR:** Yes, very strong confidence.

**MS LAWDER:** Chief Minister, how secure is the position of the minister for health, transport and city services, given the defection of Mr Petterson from the right faction?

**MR BARR:** Secure, Madam Speaker.

**MRS DUNNE:** Chief Minister, why won't you reduce the workload of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and Minister for Transport and City Services so that she can get at least something done right?

**MR BARR:** Of course I am constantly looking at issues of workload across territory government and this is something that has been brought to my attention not just by your question, Mrs Dunne, but indeed through conversation with colleagues and looking at the government's forward priorities. It does of course remain within the purview of the Chief Minister to undertake consideration of the administrative orders and of course I can do that at any time. I take these matters seriously.

Minister Fitzharris continues to do an outstanding job in each of those portfolio areas and as I indicated in my response to the first two questions—

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, enough. We have nearly got to the end of question time.

**MR BARR:** Minister Fitzharris retains my confidence, the confidence of all her colleagues and the confidence of the people of the ACT.

### **Government—rural assistance**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Minister, can you outline to the Assembly how the ACT government is supporting farmers in the ACT during the extended dry conditions currently being experienced?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Cody for her interest in and support for our agriculture sector. I was pleased today, along with the Chief Minister, to announce an assistance package for farmers in the ACT. The announcement of this package follows on from the work that the ACT government has done with farmers in recent years to build their resilience in dealing with the increasing likelihood of dry conditions due to climate change. The package is designed to support farmers in need and further prepare them for the future.

The ACT farmers support package will provide freight subsidies for ACT farmers who are being forced to source expensive feed for their stock. This is in line with the support being offered in New South Wales. The ACT farmers support package also comprises a new grant program for eligible rural landholders to undertake drought resilience activities. Applications could be from individuals or groups of landholders.

I thank the ACT Rural Landholders' Association for their productive approach. I met the association last week. The government has now brought forward a package that provides financial support as well as a number of other measures the government will continue to explore in the weeks ahead.

**MS CODY:** Minister, can you further outline the impact of the extended dry conditions on the ACT's farmers, and how the assistance package will help them through this current period as well as build resilience for future dry periods.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The ACT is experiencing extended dry conditions similar to surrounding areas in New South Wales. The first six months of this year have seen 34 per cent less rainfall and a one degree warmer temperature than the long-term average. This follows last year, which saw 21 per cent less rainfall than the long-term average.

Rural landholders are concerned about the lack of feed for farm stock and have significantly reduced stock numbers and are supplementary feeding remaining stock. So they have done quite a bit of work already. As the season progresses, the demand for stockfeed will grow and reports are already widespread of shortages necessitating purchases from as far afield as South Australia, at very high premiums.

The government will put in place several assistance measures, including a 50 per cent freight transport subsidy scheme based on the recently announced New South Wales model. This will provide a subsidy of up to \$20,000 on transport of fodder and/or water to a property, as well as the movement of stock. The subsidy will be from July this year for a period of 12 months. There will be a new ACT rural resilience grants program, totalling \$150,000 in 2018-19, that farmers can apply for to co-fund drought-related property management plans and on-ground works. There will be the collation of an inventory of unleased territory land that may be suitable for relief grazing.

We have worked extensively with farmers in recent years to build their resilience when dealing with dry conditions due to climate change. It is clear, though, that the current conditions require extra action. I am confident that these new measures will

help our farmers to get through this difficult time and to further prepare for the future.

**MS ORR:** Minister, how can the ACT's farmers access the assistance you have described?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Orr for the question. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has put together a new web page outlining the assistance. That is available at [environment.act.gov.au](http://environment.act.gov.au). Farmers interested in applying for the new ACT rural assistance grant can make contact with ACT natural resource management via email at [actlandcare@act.gov.au](mailto:actlandcare@act.gov.au). The team at ACT natural resource management is available to discuss the program with interested farmers.

Further, with regard to the new freight subsidy, application guidelines and a form will be available online from Monday, 20 August. Interested farmers who would like to discuss a potential application can contact the directorate via email at [act.ruralservices@act.gov.au](mailto:act.ruralservices@act.gov.au).

Finally, it is worth noting that the Australian government provides a variety of assistance programs to farmers. This information can also be helpfully accessed via the assistance web page part of the EPSDD website.

### **Arts—funding**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for the Arts and Community Events. Can the minister please outline for the Assembly the government's investment in arts infrastructure in the territory.

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Orr for the question and for her clear interest in community arts and festivals in her electorate of Yerrabi. For 2018-19, the arts budget for activities and organisations is over \$10 million across a number of funding categories, including key arts organisations; program organisations; arts activities; book of the year; arts residencies; community outreach, including with the ANU; sector development; and Aboriginal arts and culture.

What underpins the accessibility of the arts and the diversity and vibrancy of our cultural offering here in Canberra are our many wonderful government-owned arts facilities in which we continue to invest. The ACT government manages 13 community arts facilities in addition to the Canberra Theatre Centre, the Canberra Museum and Gallery and our three beautiful historic homes.

Noting the importance of ensuring that arts and culture in our city are inclusive, we are funding numerous accessibility upgrades to the theatre, including the installation of a lift and new wheelchair accessible seating; and upgrading the captioning equipment, allowing people with hearing impairments to fully engage with live theatre. At Lanyon Homestead we are buying an electric people mover to help people with mobility issues to more fully enjoy the historic precinct. We will also be making a range of work health and safety, security, utility and communications improvements across these facilities in addition to work that is already underway to make upgrades

to the Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres, Strathnairn, the Tuggeranong Arts Centre and the Watson Arts Centre; and the expansion of the Belconnen Arts Centre.

These are all ways in which we are ensuring that the arts are accessible to everyone and properly valued for their role in building community, expressing identity and fostering wellbeing.

**MS ORR:** How will the government's investment in the Belconnen Arts Centre benefit the arts and wider communities?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary question. As I was pleased to announce a few weeks ago, a Canberra-based company has been appointed to build stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre, in accordance with the government's 2016 election commitment to expand the facility. To give our growing and diverse community more options to engage with our wonderful local artists and to participate in the arts we are investing \$15 million in a new multi-use performance space and associated back-of-house areas, new gallery spaces, an improved administration area, an additional dance studio and more toilet facilities. The building extensions will continue the high standards of accessibility established in stage 1 of the BAC, making the facility user friendly and open to all.

artsACT has been working closely with the Belconnen Arts Centre management on the final design of stage 2. We expect construction to commence in October 2018, with completion late next year. The BAC has established itself as an essential and proactive arts organisation offering a fantastic range of programs and events including dance classes, art exhibitions, workshops and performances. The expansion of the centre will continue growing these creative opportunities for the Canberra community.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, how will the government's investment in events in Woden and Gungahlin help to support the growth of the arts in these communities?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question and for her strong interest in the arts, including not only the Belconnen Arts Centre but also developing community in the arts beyond that. Arts and culture are an integral part of the lives of all Canberrans. A thriving arts scene is one of the things that make our city such a great place to live. It is important that access to and celebration of the arts can happen right across the Canberra community, not just in the city or the inner suburbs.

That is why the government is funding pop-up arts festivals in Gungahlin and Woden, starting later this year, to provide collaborative opportunities for artists and the community more widely in these regions to come together and explore creatively what community looks like in those places and to find out what arts practices and audiences exist in those communities. Opportunities like this will start to lay the groundwork for identifying and assessing future arts infrastructure needs in Woden and Gungahlin.

artsACT is currently developing a tender process to seek a suitably qualified organisation to deliver the project. The pop-ups will be based on a community arts and cultural development framework that expresses, celebrates and promotes locally

created arts and culture. Tender documentation is being finalised and will be listed on the ACT government tender website shortly.

We are aiming to achieve artistically active and connected communities right across Canberra that will continue to position the capital as a significant centre of arts and culture as we better achieve our vision of a stronger Canberra offering well-supported community facilities for the arts here and beyond.

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

## Papers

**Madam Speaker** presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General's Report No 10/2018—Annual Report 2017-18, dated 3 August 2018.

Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee—Report—*Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019*—Speaker's response to Recommendation 5, dated 13 August 2018.

Commissioner for Standards—Annual report 2017-2018, dated 1 July 2018.

Standing order 191—Amendments to the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2018, dated 10 and 13 August 2018.

## **Financial Management Act—consolidated financial report Paper and statement by minister**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3.29): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report—Financial quarter ending 30 June 2018.

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

Leave granted.

**MR BARR:** I present to the Assembly the June quarter 2018 consolidated financial report for the territory. This report is required under section 26 of the Financial Management Act 1996.

I can advise the Assembly that the June interim outcome headline net operating balance for the general government sector was a surplus of \$86.2 million. This result was \$54.4 million higher than the estimated outcome of \$31.9 million.

This improvement to the territory's fiscal position reflects lower expenses associated with a change in the demolition process under the public housing renewal task force,

whereby the developer will now complete demolition over two coming fiscal years, 2018-19 and 2019-20. The improvement also reflects the timing of project expenditure and that the Treasurer's advance was not fully called upon.

Net debt of the general government sector as at 30 June 2018 was \$1,301.9 million, which was a decrease of \$151 million from the 30 June 2017 result of \$1.452 billion, and a decrease of \$55 million from the 2017-18 estimated outcome. The net decrease in net debt for the general government sector is mainly due to the headline net operating balance surplus of \$86.2 million and lower capital works expenditure by agencies which will occur in later years.

Net financial liabilities increased compared to June 2017 by \$714.8 million, largely reflecting a change in the defined benefit superannuation liability estimate for 30 June 2018, based on a discount rate of 3.11 per cent, compared to 3.51 per cent at 30 June 2017. I commend the June quarterly report to the Assembly.

## **Paper**

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following paper:

Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme—Implementation—Report—  
1 January to 30 June 2018.

### **Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Report 3—government response**

**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) (3.32): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee—Report 3—*Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 344 Woden Town Centre: Zone Changes and Amendments to the Phillip Precinct Map and Code*—Government response.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Planning and Development Act—variation No 329 to the Territory Plan Paper and statement by minister**

**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) (3.32): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No 329 to the Territory Plan—Weston group centre and surrounding community and leisure and accommodation lands: Zone changes and amendments to the Weston precinct map and code, dated 6 August 2018, including associated documents.

In accordance with the provisions of the act, this variation is presented with the background papers and copies of the summaries and reports. I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I would like to speak to variation No 329, the Weston group centre Territory Plan variation. This variation incorporates the recommendations of the approved Weston group centre master plan, introducing changes to zones as well as amendments to the Weston precinct map and code contained in the Territory Plan.

The main changes that the variation introduces to the Territory Plan include zone changes to land adjacent to Cooleman Court to allow a moderate expansion of the shopping centre to the east; rezoning part of the centrally located open space at the corner of Brierly Street and Parkinson Street to community facility land; increases in building heights within the central commercial and community facility area from two storeys up to four and six storeys; and requirements for new development along main pedestrian areas to provide awnings and interesting building frontages to improve the pedestrian experience.

One departure in the draft variation from the approved master plan was in relation to the site at the corner of Brierly Street and Parkinson Street. In the master plan this site was identified as being suitable for a range of community uses, including community activity centre. In the preparation of the draft variation, however, the Environment Protection Authority, or EPA, advised that potentially noisy uses such as a community activity centre and indoor recreation could not be supported due to potential impacts on the adjoining residents. As such these uses were prohibited on the site.

DV329 was released for public consultation from January to March 2015. The variation attracted nine written submissions from local residents and businesses. The community provided thoughtful and considered approaches and responses to the draft variation, with the main concerns raised relating to the replacement of the existing community hall and the rezoning of the open space at the corner of Brierly and Parkinson streets. The DV was amended in response to a number of the issues raised by reducing the maximum height of development on the rezoned block at the corner of Brierly and Parkinson streets from four storeys to two storeys.

After the close of public consultation the Community Services Directorate, CSD, requested a minor amendment to the draft variation. CSD noted that by prohibiting “community activity centre” on the rezoned site, it would also remove the ability to utilise the site for public health, welfare or information services, as these were described in the Territory Plan as uses under the “community activity centre” umbrella term. This prohibition on community activity centre was amended to ensure

that the related use could be undertaken on the site. The EPA endorsed this amendment as it would not likely impact on the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring residents.

The draft variation was put on hold while contamination studies were undertaken to satisfy concerns by the EPA that the sites proposed to be rezoned as part of the variation would be suitable for the uses permitted in the new zones. The studies were completed early last year and endorsed by the EPA, allowing the variation process to continue.

The draft variation was referred to me for consideration. I referred DV329 to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal in August 2017 to provide them with the opportunity of holding an inquiry into the draft variation. The standing committee held an inquiry into DV329, receiving three written submissions and hearing from two community members in November 2017. The standing committee released report No 4 in February this year, containing 11 recommendations in relation to the draft variation.

The ACT government agreed with five recommendations, agreed in part with one recommendation and noted a further five recommendations. The majority of the recommendations noted and agreed to relate to Territory Plan processes generally and will inform the preparation of future variations.

In response to the recommendations, DV329 was amended to specify building heights in metres as well as storeys for development along Parkinson Street to provide greater certainty for the community. A further amendment was made to the variation to clarify that provisions controlling development on the rezoned site at the corner of Brierly and Parkinson streets did not impact on development elsewhere in the section. I directed the planning authority to make the necessary changes to DV329, which I have now approved, and I am pleased to be able to table that approved variation.

## **Planning and Development Act—variation No 344 to the Territory Plan**

### **Paper and statement by minister**

**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) (3.38): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No 344 to the Territory Plan—Woden Town Centre: Zone changes and amendments to the Phillip precinct map and code, dated 8 August 2018, including associated documents.

In accordance with the provisions of the act, this variation is presented with the background papers and copies of the summaries and reports. I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Variation 344 to the Territory Plan, Woden town centre, incorporates the planning recommendations of the Woden town centre master plan to guide new development within the centre over the next 10 to 20 years. The variation rezones a number of sites within the town centre and amends the Woden precinct map and code to restrict building heights, provide guidance on the built form and improve the pedestrian experience within the centre.

The zoning changes consist of rezoning a portion of Arabanoo Park for community facilities, changing part of the residential land within Woden east from medium density to commercial and high density residential, and changing land along Athllon Drive from suburban core residential and transport corridor to open space and high density residential uses. These changes are in accordance with the approved 2015 Woden town centre master plan. A further change to zoning has been introduced through a recommendation to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal to rezone a pocket park formed from the realignment of Corinna Street from commercial to urban open space.

An initiative of the ACT government, the master plan and variation encourage and provide direction for the future rejuvenation of the town centre that we see is starting to take shape today. The changes also reflect the intended outcomes of the ACT planning strategy 2012 by facilitating high density mixed-use development within commercial centres and locations close to main public transport routes.

The draft variation was released for public consultation, initially for six weeks between March and April 2017. This was extended by a further six weeks to June 2017 due to the level of interest received and to accommodate a roundtable discussion between the ACT government, community members and representatives from business with interests in the centre. The consultation attracted a total of 28 written submissions from the community, including local residents, business owners and community organisations. A range of matters were raised in the course of the consultation on DV 344, including both support for and concern with the proposed building heights within the centre, the potential population density within the town centre, retaining solar access to dwellings and open spaces, and the provision of community facilities within the centre.

The planning authority amended the variation in response to submissions made and the amended variation was referred to me for consideration. I referred DV 344 to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal to allow them the opportunity to consider the proposal.

The standing committee held an inquiry into DV 344, releasing a report containing 31 recommendations, including a recommendation that the variation be approved. The government is grateful for the input of the standing committee into the planning process for the future of this important town centre, which is reflected in the responses to the standing committee report. The report was carefully considered. Of the 31 recommendations, the government agreed wholly or in part with 15 recommendations, noted a further 15 recommendations and declined to agree with only one recommendation.

A large proportion of the recommendations that were noted related to planning processes and matters that, while not specifically relevant to variation 344, will prove valuable in considering future Territory Plan variations. A number of the agreed recommendations have resulted in changes to the variation, including rezoning a pocket park within the centre to urban open space and prohibiting a number of health, religious and residential uses for the newly zoned community facility land in Arabanoo Park.

The single recommendation not agreed to was to cancel the community facility rezoning within Arabanoo Park, as this was a recommendation of the Woden town centre master plan. The rezoning from urban open space to community facility land will provide additional community land collocated with other existing community facilities and close to the main Woden public transport hub.

A further amendment was made to the restriction on building size introduced in the recommended version of DV 344. This restriction on floor plate size for the market buildings east of Callum Street was introduced to control the bulk and scale of taller buildings but was found to be overly restrictive and would make development unviable. I directed the planning authority to rectify this to ensure that appropriate levels of development could be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Woden town centre master plan while considering that development would not significantly impact on the amenity of the surrounding area.

I directed the planning authority to make the necessary changes to variation 344, which I have now approved. I am pleased to table that variation and the government responses to the standing committee report into DV 344.

## Papers

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

### **Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)**

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—

Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2018 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-221 (LR, 2 August 2018).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2018 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-222 (LR, 2 August 2018).

Domestic Animals Act—Domestic Animals (Cat Containment) Declaration 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-220 (LR, 23 July 2018).

Litter Act—Litter Regulation 2018—Subordinate Law SL2018-13 (LR, 30 July 2018).

Official Visitor Act—Official Visitor (Children and Young People Services) Visit and Complaint Guidelines 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-218 (LR, 25 July 2018).

Plant Diseases Act—Plant Diseases (Importation Restriction Area) Declaration 2018 (No 2), including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-217 (LR, 23 July 2018).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Taylor) Determination 2018 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-219 (LR, 30 July 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act—Road Transport (Offences) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2018-14 (LR, 2 August 2018).

## Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Wall for today through to Thursday, 16 August 2018 for personal reasons.

## Appropriation Bill 2018-2019

[Cognate bill:

Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019

Cognate papers:

Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee report

Estimates 2018-2019—Select Committee—government response]

Debate resumed.

Health Directorate—Part 1.2

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (3.44): Mental health is one of the most important issues facing young people. Suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 24 in Australia. It is therefore disappointing to hear that the government plans to cut funding for inpatient mental health services by nine per cent over two years. Our inpatient mental health services are already stretched, with the adult mental health unit at 105 per cent capacity for the year. These cuts will have a negative impact on the mental health of many young Canberrans.

The demand for mental health care is increasing, not falling. We are already hearing parents raising concerns about the lack of mental healthcare services for their children. The estimates committee recommended that the ACT government address the needs for a centralised facility or an adolescent step up, step down program. That is a good idea, but I understand this government will not be funding such a service for four to five years. The ACT government should urgently consider its plans to cut inpatient mental health services by nine per cent over two years.

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (3.46): I take this opportunity to speak on the Health Directorate appropriations, particularly on how it impacts on my portfolio area of disability. In early June Mr Rattenbury, in his capacity as a cabinet member and as Minister for Mental Health, was asked why the decision to restructure ACT Health did not go to cabinet. He replied:

I felt comfortable that if there were any broader government-wide implications the Chief or the head of service would have picked them up.

Contrary to Minister Rattenbury's view, I believe there are obvious government-wide implications from the decision to restructure ACT Health. For example, there are clear implications for disability services in the ACT. People with a disability use health services more regularly than ordinary Canberrans. Many people with mental health and health issues have received or sought funding from the NDIS.

We know from groups such as Cystic Fibrosis ACT, Epilepsy ACT and Arthritis ACT that there is little real communication between disability advocacy and health advocacy groups. Both Cystic Fibrosis ACT and Epilepsy ACT took the opportunity on the community interest day to meet with the estimates committee to outline their frustrations.

Epilepsy ACT have been assisting people in Canberra for over 30 years. They told the committee that statistics show that two to four per cent of the population manage epilepsy at home at some time in their lives. Epilepsy ACT provides accessible support, case management, information and education for people living with epilepsy. Epilepsy ACT is yet another victim of the transition to the NDIS—another orphan in the system that provides a valuable service at little cost to government but now does not seem to fit the new formula. Disability says they ought to look to the Health Directorate. The Health Directorate does not know what to do with them, and we are left with an organisation that has assisted Canberrans for so long being left in limbo.

The committee recommended that the government develop a policy around peppercorn rents and assistance being continued within this context in the future. I note the Chief Minister has advised this morning that the government has agreed to that.

Cystic Fibrosis ACT is a locally based not-for-profit and sole support provider to about 100 individuals living with cystic fibrosis. Most are treated by specialist teams at the Canberra Hospital, and CFACT works closely with those teams. The adult cystic fibrosis clinic is held off site at the west Belconnen health centre. Like Epilepsy ACT, CFACT is not funded through the NDIS.

The committee recommended that the government undertake work to consider the viability of moving the cystic fibrosis clinic to Canberra Hospital to ensure all Canberrans with cystic fibrosis are able to access the full suite of tests and allied professionals they require. Again, I note the government has agreed to undertake work to consider this. I trust this is an objective assessment and not just lip-service. I note that, Madam Deputy Speaker, you spoke on the importance of this service.

Arthritis sufferers and seniors who used the hydrotherapy pool at Canberra Hospital were another group of forgotten people when a decision was announced in early June that the pool was to close at the end of that month, with services relocated to the University of Canberra rehabilitation hospital. Users apparently heard through the grapevine about the closure and were not formally told by ACT Health before the announcement appeared in the media.

Arthritis and Osteoporosis ACT had used the hydrotherapy pool at the Canberra Hospital for many years, and I am advised that classes were well attended by seniors and younger people suffering from chronic, debilitating medical conditions, as well as by those preparing for further rehabilitation. This is yet another example of this government failing to consult and failing to consider the impacts of its decisions on the everyday life of Canberrans. We have seen it with health changes, we have seen it with bus routes and we have seen it with schools.

While the new pool at Bruce is welcomed, there was no consideration of what impact it might have for people living on the south side. The committee asked that information on the proposed hydrotherapy pool at Mount Stromlo be provided, but the government has only noted the request. It will be up to hydrotherapy service providers to negotiate with whoever wins the operating rights.

Other agencies work closely with health services daily and they are also impacted by these changes, including police and emergency services, and especially the Ambulance Service. The decision to separate ACT Health and Canberra Hospital and health services was the biggest decision taken in the context of the 2018-19 budget, yet treasury was apparently not consulted, nor was anyone else, before the Chief Minister took his decision. The Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health say they discussed it regularly, but there is no documentary evidence to support their claims.

Health services are of interest to everyone in the community. There is Indigenous health, children's health, women's health, seniors' health and, as I have already referred to, disability-related health, yet none of the relevant ministers was consulted. It appears to have been a sneaky process to force out the former Director-General of Health without due process.

If someone from ACT Health had been advised, they would have recommended holding off on the restructure of ACT Health until after the restructure had been completed. This would have been good advice. On 5 June the Chief Minister said:

The administrative arrangements are a matter for the Chief Minister to determine.

We heard him repeat those comments earlier today. Of course, the administrative orders have not changed. The Chief Minister is, in effect, saying he can do what he pleases when it comes to government administration. This is a foolish position, and the problems encountered in the accreditation of the Canberra Hospital are due to this ill-timed change.

The decision to restructure ACT Health without going to cabinet or consulting with staff was a dysfunctional decision, and I call on this government to ensure that all Canberrans, particularly in the disability community, are not further adversely impacted.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

## Education Directorate—Part 1.3

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (3.52): The education portfolio is not only significant in terms of the size of the financial outlay but of critical importance in what it sets out to do and the responsibility it undertakes in preparing young Canberrans for life. In monetary terms we spend upwards of \$2 billion a year on education in the ACT, second only to the health portfolio. On that basis, if for no other reason, it is incumbent on all members of the Legislative Assembly to critically assess the value of that investment to ensure that it is money well spent.

The budget papers tell us that the purpose of the education directorate is to deliver “high quality early childhood education and public school education in an accessible and inclusive environment”. The estimates committee report informs us that the education directorate gives access to quality teaching and specialised learning programs and wellbeing supports, and that it regulates and registers home education and early childhood and non-government schools. That is a broadbrush outline of the functions of the education directorate, and during the hearings all of those issues were touched upon. However, if the intent of the estimates process is to get behind the budget line items and delve deeper into the rationale for decision-making and policy announcements, and to get an understanding of where the directorate or the minister might be heading in future years, it certainly failed to do that.

I fear the estimates process is becoming more what we are not told than what we are told about. For example, the minister and her officers were at pains to talk about “investment underpinning strategic direction” and “leadership strategy”. But did we get the detail behind these phrases? We heard about the “conversations”—and I have to put that in quotation marks—around the future of education and the phases of engagement, whatever any of that really means. And we heard about what is rapidly becoming the most overused phrase in the ACT education lexicon: “equity in education”.

What does equity in education mean? To the ACT minister for education, it apparently means every high school student having a laptop. But what does the evidence tell us? Equity in education is often viewed as equivalence or sameness. A more useful way to view equity is through the lens of fairness. The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines equity as “the situation in which everyone is treated fairly and equally”. The implication is that equity depends on equality of treatment. But an interesting 2017 article by Yale researchers Stamans, Sheskin and Bloom points to evidence that in general people value fairness over equivalence. There are situations in which people view equal treatment as fair, but other situations in which they view unequal treatment as fair. This suggests that when it comes to equity, fairness trumps equality.

In school education, an equitable system could be defined as one in which all students are treated equally; for example, a system in which all students are given the same opportunities, exposed to the same school curriculum, taught by teachers with equivalent expertise, held to the same learning expectations and provided with equivalent levels of resourcing and support. I assume that is the interpretation the minister has chosen to take.

However, students in the same year of school differ widely in their stages of learning and development. The most advanced students typically begin and end the school year five to six years ahead of the least advanced students. In this sense, students are not equal; they have very different levels of attainment and so benefit from different learning opportunities and challenges.

If the rationale for spending \$17 million on laptops was to ensure equity, the minister has missed an opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of disadvantaged students here in the ACT. Equality of resources is not the same as equity of educational outcomes, and it can never be, for the very reason that every child is different and every student has a different starting point.

The latest Gonski paper provides a more meaningful measure. Dr Gonski suggested that the aim in education should be to ensure that every child had a year's growth in learning each year. That does not mean each child starting at the same point at the beginning of the school year, with or without a laptop; it means that wherever they start from, they should have at least 12 months growth in learning over the school year.

The ACT has a right to be proud of its education system. It has delivered quality education to generations of students. However, it is not perfect. I fear that under this government we are becoming complacent, reliant on our good fortune in having the right circumstances to boast a good education system, compared to the rest of the country, no matter what this government does or fails to do.

The minister is quick to accuse members on this side of the chamber of talking down our schools if ever we dare to highlight her and her government's shortcomings. However, Trevor Cobbold, from Save Our Schools, an unashamedly pro-government, anti-non-government school advocate, in an article in the lead-up to the 2016 election, had no such reticence. He highlighted the fact that many disadvantaged students in the ACT were not achieving national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy. He pointed out that in 2015 over 25 per cent of year 9 students from low-educated parents did not achieve the national minimum writing standard; about 20 per cent did not achieve the spelling and grammar and punctuation standards; and 14 to 15 per cent did not achieve the reading and numeracy standards. Over 40 per cent of year 9 Indigenous students did not achieve the writing standard; about 20 per cent did not achieve the spelling and grammar and punctuation standards; 15 per cent did not achieve the numeracy standard; and 13 per cent did not achieve the reading standard.

There are very large achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Year 9 students from low-educated parents are about two to three years behind students from highly educated parents in all subjects, and Indigenous students are about 3½ to four years behind students from highly educated parents in all subjects. So the one-size-fits-all approach that appears to underpin current thinking will not work.

What do we do about it? Chromebooks for students are but one resource, just as a desk, a chair and a place to put them might be. It does not deliver education equity

and, for too many in our system, currently it is not delivering education excellence either.

We need to understand why we are slipping. At a time when we should be having serious researched conversations about what ails ACT education, we instead focus on NAPLAN and a concerted effort by some ACT union members to rubbish it. We argue about the use of phonics rather than examining the evidence in other jurisdictions about their use and success factors and whether it is the right tool for ACT to explore. When all that fails, we resort to the tried and tested ALP-Greens approach of claiming it would all be so much better if we just had more federal funding.

In relation to NAPLAN, the Grattan Institute in May this year highlighted five things that we would not know if it were not for NAPLAN testing. They are: achievement gaps for Indigenous students; progress gaps for disadvantaged students; comparisons between the states and territories; changes over time in results at a particular school; and high achieving schools. All of these are valuable pieces of information, information that we would not have had without NAPLAN, but clearly they are not important to NAPLAN naysayers.

This is not to say that NAPLAN, or indeed any standardised testing, is the be-all and end-all of improving academic outcomes. We have had some concerns raised about how the NAPLAN data is being used, and those concerns are indeed issues that we need to look into.

Instead of ruzzishing NAPLAN, warts and all, I implore the government to take leadership and have the hard conversations about NAPLAN: whether it is meeting the objective that it was intended for—namely, to equip teachers and parents with important information to support our students to improve their academic outcomes—and why and how the data is being misused. That is a more appropriate approach, and that is the conversation that this government should be having on NAPLAN.

The minister cannot tell me how many four-year-olds might require a preschool placement next year, but she is already letting balloons go up about opening up opportunities for three-year-olds. We asked about four-year-olds in the estimates process, and the minister first alluded to and then denied any consideration of the four-year-old preschool year becoming compulsory.

There is any amount of evidence to show and demonstrate the value of three-year-olds having a quality preschool education. But we have learned that only in the coming months will the minister be having yet another “conversation” with parents in the early childhood education sector, schools and the wider community about how, and therefore when, the government will be able to make this vital education opportunity universally available.

I note that the committee recommendation that a feasibility study be undertaken has only received a “noted” response. This is a significant policy direction, but was it discussed in estimates, where there could have been an informed debate about the hows, the whys and the when? (*Second speaking period taken.*) No. The response was

that it was among a range of initiatives being considered in the development of an ACT early childhood strategy. Only days later, a shiny announcement was provided to the *Canberra Times*.

Interestingly, in response to a recommendation that the government create an early childhood educator professional development fund to support the ongoing need for training of specialist educators in the area, the government's response was yet another non-committal "noted". While they say they support professional development in the early childhood sector, the government response went on to argue that it is up to employers to meet the cost of training. This is really demonstrating commitment and recognition of the importance of early childhood education—not!

If it is anything like the rollout of the 20 school psychologists, the three-year-olds who will benefit from this initiative have not even been born yet. The minister does not know how many gifted and talented classes are currently in operation in our primary schools but insists that a local government school education is absolutely the best fit for any child.

Recent research published in ACER's *Teacher* bulletin shows that, in its most recent report examining teacher policies and practices, the OECD has found that Australia is the only OECD country that does not make an attempt to compensate for disadvantage in schools with smaller classes and/or lower student to teacher ratios. Further, disadvantaged schools in Australia tend to have larger classes than advantaged schools.

It also found that principals of disadvantaged schools were more likely than their colleagues in advantaged schools to be staffing science classes with teachers that did not have the appropriate qualifications. And Australia was the only OECD country to report that disadvantaged schools had both fewer teachers per student and a smaller proportion of fully certified teachers with a major in science than advantaged schools. Good schools and good educational outcomes start with good teachers, and the OECD report highlights that.

Are our Canberra teachers the best that they can be? Are we providing sufficient development opportunities for them? Are disadvantaged schools struggling with larger classes? It is in these areas that addressing inequality will have meaningful and measurable outcomes, not giving every child the same-coloured pencil.

Different students and different schools require different responses. We need to ensure our government school system has the flexibility and the capacity to accommodate the breadth of different circumstances. For example, if a parent believes their late primary schoolchild has particular talents, can they only be directed to their local high school? And what if they are out of zone for a school that best fits their child's needs and that school is already at capacity?

We have already seen how demountables are increasingly becoming used to overcome overcrowding. Another descriptor could be short-term vision and lack of planning. Where once such constructions were seen as temporary stopgap measures, we now learn that many have been in place for years, if not decades. The committee

recommended that the government undertake an audit of all demountables to assess whether their continued use is best practice and the best, most cost-efficient solution to changing enrolment demands. The government's response to that was also a predictable non-committal "noted". Clearly, the use of demountables will remain an ongoing part of the enrolment pressure dilemma.

A recommendation that the government develop more accurate assessment tools to determine future enrolments elicited the response that the ACT government undertakes enrolment projection modelling and that modelling is regularly updated. Yes, but given the apparent surprises in enrolment pressures at so many schools and the declining enrolments at others, perhaps—just perhaps—the current tools are not effective. Perhaps—just perhaps—the government can take on board the recommendation from the committee to at least realise that perhaps—just perhaps—there could be other ways.

I also highlight that the committee's recommendation to conduct an audit of existing government preschool and primary school accommodation to determine future capacity was only agreed to in principle. The use of demountables and increased adherence to limited priority enrolment areas are two levers being used to direct students to schools which cannot be considered best practice in education delivery. The recent example of Molly Browne, who requires a special needs setting, is just one such example of the rigid policy solution being forced on parents due to a lack of planning and flexibility by successive Labor governments.

In examining issues like overcrowding in schools, what efforts are being made to understand why some schools are popular while others are not? And if work is not being done on such things, how do we know what the future demand might be for teachers in particular subjects or particular sectors?

The estimates committee discussed the ever-present and growing dilemma of mental health in our schools and how our teachers, school communities and the wider education sector deal with students with challenging needs and complex behaviours.

The committee heard from officials that the ACT is experiencing an increase in demand for mental health and psychology services—and, we heard, in the general health sense as well. There is increasing evidence of younger students requiring support. This has been confirmed to me when I have visited non-government and government schools, and I have no doubt that the issues are apparent in both sectors. Some non-government school principals have expressed frustration that there is too often a segmented, silo approach to mental health issues when a whole-of-government, whole-of-agency approach to dealing with troubled young people would have a much better impact and much better outcomes.

The Shaddock report in 2015 highlighted a range of issues. The education minister at the time, Ms Burch, was quick to adopt, or adopt in principle, each of the recommendations, including the recommendation on the appointment of school psychologists. It is disappointing—more than disappointing—that after three years, only five have been appointed and the full 20 will not be engaged until 2021.

Following questions I put on notice, we learnt that in 2019 the student to psychologist ratio will be one in 638, and in 2020 it will be one in 622, a slight improvement on the current ratio of one in 676. However, you have to include every allied health professional that may spend any amount of time dealing with students with mental health or challenging behavioural issues to meet the recommended one in 500 ratio, and then only by 2020. By then, if the current trends continue, growing enrolments will throw that ratio out once again.

We already know that this will not be enough to meet desired levels. The committee's recommendation that the government consider more reflects that. The government response to that is "agreed in principle". Stand by for a surprise 2020 election promise that would no doubt take another decade to come to fruition if they were to get back into government. The adage of fooling some of the people some of the time comes to mind on many government promises.

The committee has also recommended that the ACT government work with a wide range of appropriately trained professional staff, including psychologists and allied health experts, to meet the increased demand for these services in our schools. The government has said that it agrees to do this. Given that they believe they are doing all they need to do, I will await any additional efforts in this space with interest.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important that schools provide the safest physical and emotional environment for all students and all staff. Without a genuine commitment to providing such services, the 2015 Shaddock work will have been in vain.

Education is a large budget item, but it is so much more than that. Like health, it has the ability to impact the lives of many people and change many futures. We cannot sit back and suggest we are doing okay. We cannot accept that fair, average quality is where all our schools should be and that our parents should be content with that.

We should at all times, and in all schools, be striving for excellence. As I have said before, we hear a lot from the education minister about equity but little about excellence. Let us focus less on government versus non-government and concentrate more on flexible choice and best fit for our students and families, whether that be home schooling, a small, local Catholic school or a large, multi-grade government school. The world is not equitable, and Chromebooks are not going to make it so. Let us focus on excellence instead, and push our schools, our teachers and our students to be the very best they can be and to achieve more than they ever thought possible.

**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) (4.12): I am happy to talk about education in the Legislative Assembly today, and the government's commitments to delivering quality, accessible education and early childhood learning through local schools so that Canberrans can have the best start in life.

The 2018 budget will deliver new and expanded schools for our growing suburbs and recruit more teachers to bolster our world-class education system. The budget also

invests in delivering priority outcomes from the future of education community conversation to improve teaching and learning in every local school and see our kids reach their potential.

We are meeting the growth challenge. The 2018 budget will deliver new and expanded schools for Canberra's growing suburbs, as well as recruiting more teachers and enhancing learning opportunities to continue strengthening our city's world-class education system.

There is \$31.1 million for teachers and support staff to deliver schooling to more than 1,000 additional students as our school population grows. This is equivalent to 66 full-time learning professionals and support staff. \$47 million has been allocated to construct a new P-6 school in Molonglo, and planning will begin for a year 7 to 10 campus so that families in that community can have the confidence that high quality public education in modern learning facilities will be available. The school will be ready to accept students from the start of the 2021 year, with places for 600 students from kindergarten to year 6 and 44 places for preschool children.

The government will continue to support growth in enrolments across Gungahlin, adding a further 500 spaces by expanding existing capacity at Amaroo, Gold Creek primary and the Franklin early childhood schools. The government will also complete feasibility and planning for another new school in Gungahlin, and for permanent expansion of the Franklin Early Childhood School to become a P-6 school.

Right across the ACT there are ageing schools, some of which are 40, 50 and 60 years old. The government is investing in these schools. The budget also continues its work on the modernisation of Campbell Primary School, as well as Narrabundah College, refurbishing these buildings to provide better learning environments and modern facilities, investing a further \$20 million in these projects.

This government has recognised the importance of early childhood education in lifelong learning outcomes, and over four years will provide \$6.7 million to continue work on a comprehensive early childhood strategy to promote equity and quality in ACT schools. The aim of the strategy is for children to participate in quality early childhood education and care prior to their starting school. The strategy will focus on four key elements: increasing access, equity and affordability; enhancing workforce and qualifications; ensuring seamless transitions from education and care; and maximising the benefit to children from money spent.

Consultation is being held with the early childhood education and care sectors, through the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and with the community at large, through the ACT government your say website. On 31 July I announced that work was commencing to introduce the phased implementation of 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year, of free, quality early childhood education for three-year-old children in the ACT.

On the future of education, since February 2017 I have been talking with the community about what they want for the future of schools and education in the ACT. We have heard from over 4,500 individuals, from school communities, including

parents and carers, teachers, students and community organisations, as well as the broader community. We conducted a second round of consultation to test the feedback through a series of workshops held in March 2018. These workshops have helped to shape the strategy. The ultimate outcome will be to achieve greater equity in learning outcomes within all our schools.

To achieve greater equity, the future of education will concentrate on: placing students at the centre—recognising the broad range of gifts, talents, interests, challenges and unique personalities of our children, and developing their individual learning supports in a student-centred, student-led approach; investing in teacher excellence—responding effectively to the diversity that exists in Canberra by building learner capabilities and content knowledge, creating environments where students can exercise agency and be engaged, and the consideration of positive relationships and wellbeing underpinning all decision-making; and recognising the role of access to early childhood education in promoting greater equity in learning outcomes. \$9.2 million is available to progress measures arising out of the future of education conversation.

The ACT continues to provide one of the best education systems in Australia. The budget maintains our investment in teachers and provides more support for students with complex needs to ensure that our local schools keep getting even better.

Canberra students will also get the chance to learn the skills they need for the jobs of the future, with the budget establishing the future skills academy for local public schools to deepen learning in science, technology, engineering and maths-related disciplines. The academy will be established with a \$5.76 million investment that will allow the creation of a centre of excellence in teaching and learning, based at University of Canberra Lake Ginninderra Senior Secondary College in the north and in the south at the Centre for Innovation and Learning at the Caroline Chisholm School.

Our community values the increasingly strong, inclusive culture in ACT government schools. It is an area of focus because, of course, all children, regardless of background and circumstance, are entitled to a great education and the life chances that come from it. The government has allocated \$18.2 million in needs-based funding to support students with a disability so that they have the support to be included in and be part of school life, and \$5 million to support students with complex needs.

I will take the chance now to respond to a few of the comments that the opposition has made with regard to education in the ACT. The implication from the opposition is that they will take away the free Chromebooks that have been provided by the ACT government. They will take away the word “equity”, or equality more generally, because they just do not like the word “equality” and what it stands for.

The opposition spoke about a couple of things that they want to implement next year, and they include what looks like a phonics test. It is good that I have Ms Lee’s support for my leading role amongst education ministers to review how NAPLAN is reported and that if it is causing more harm than benefit then it should stop.

I am glad that the opposition have drawn attention to school psychologists. They might recall that the Australian Education Union asked for 15 additional school psychologists during the last election. The ACT government committed to and is delivering 20. The Canberra Liberals promised none.

The government will continue to ensure that equal access to a high-quality education is provided to every student in the ACT and that every student has the chance to have an equitable learning outcome regardless of their background. We will provide them with the tools, like free Chromebooks, to ensure that they get the best possible equal start. I commend the education budget to the Assembly.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (4.20): I am pleased to rise to speak on this important aspect of the 2018-19 budget. The Greens believe that high quality, free education is a keystone of our democracy and a basic human right. I have made that observation here before, and it is one to reflect on as we look at the budget. We want to ensure that every student, no matter where they are educated, has access to an education that meets their needs and aspirations and gives them the skills and the capacity to meaningfully participate in society.

It is the responsibility of government to ensure the provision of high quality, well-resourced and safe learning environments that are open to all students, and this budget makes some important investments to progress this aim. As Minister for Mental Health, I am particularly pleased with the investment this government is making in employing more school psychologists to better support student wellbeing and mental health. As we saw in the most recent Mission Australia youth survey, mental health is a critical issue for young people. The current trend of increasing demand for mental health services will likely continue as we work to break down the stigma on this issue so that more young people feel comfortable to come forward and ask for help.

The stresses that our young people face today are completely different from when many of us were growing up. The introduction of social media and the 24-hour news cycle are just part of the social landscape that we did not have to deal with. That is why the government has made mental health a priority and why we have committed to expanding our services in this area.

In addition to the many mental health initiatives I spoke about earlier today, the introduction of an additional 15 full-time school psychologists will be an important part of our mental health service system. It is also a key item under the parliamentary agreement. As the minister just touched on, the Labor Party made a commitment at the election to providing additional school psychologists, as did the Greens, to improve this capability. We are following through on that, and I am pleased that the minister has been so effective in putting this into the budget each year and ensuring that we get this additional investment. The commitment in this year's budget follows through on the previous budget, which committed to an additional five school psychologists.

While I note that there have been some recent criticisms of this initiative—and Ms Lee repeated that in the chamber today—it is important to point out that the investment in school psychologists is just one part of a broader suite of mental health services available to children and young people in the ACT. As I spoke about earlier, this government has provided more funding for headspace, introduced a dedicated youth assertive outreach service, expanded the CAMHS consultation and liaison service to operate seven days a week, and provided funding for Menslink to expand their services to boys aged 10 to 12, because that was identified as a new and emerging area of need. We are listening to the community about where there are gaps and areas of need, and we are responding by delivering more mental health services for children and young people across the ACT.

While I am speaking of mental health services, I want to take the opportunity to invite Mrs Kikkert to come back to the chamber and explain the figures she gave during the previous debate. She alleged there had been a nine per cent cut to inpatient mental health services in the ACT. That is not a decision that I took and it is not in the budget. I accept that in the chamber we do not always hear things correctly, so I am very happy for her to come back here, and I will give her leave to explain how she came to that analysis, because there is no basis for it. In fact, as I outlined in my remarks earlier today, mental health expenditure has increased by five per cent this year across the board, including many of those new services that I have just spoken about. If Mrs Kikkert cannot explain that, she needs to withdraw it, because it has no basis in fact.

In addition to these significant mental health investments that I just spoke about, I also recognise that there is more work to do on this issue as our population grows and we see increasing demand. This has come up in the context of Ms Lee's comments about ratios. I invite Ms Lee to perhaps go and do some research and reflect on where that ratio came from that she cited as being recommended.

My recollection, having spent time looking at this, is that it came from a coroner's recommendation—one coroner in New South Wales, in response to one specific incident. I do not think there is a significant base of evidence or research that indicates that that is the right ratio. I think it is more important than getting hooked on some number like that which has a fairly limited basis—if I remember rightly, one coroner in New South Wales, one time. Let us not get too hung up on that and let us look at the whole service support system.

I certainly look forward to continuing to work with Minister Berry as we seek to coordinate and link up the referral pathways between mental health and wellbeing supports in our schools, including school psychologists, and our community mental health services. School psychologists provide great support for many of our students, but for those who need help during school holidays or after hours, or who require more advanced clinical care, we must make sure that the transition from one system to another is as seamless as possible for students and their parents.

This brings me back to the one in 500 recommendation. Let us bear in mind that school psychologists are only available during term, on the whole. You can have one

in 500, but what happens in the school holidays? That is why we are doing other things, such as investing in services like Menslink and headspace across this city, to make sure that our young people can get support from services through a range of channels. The school psychologist can play a really important role, but they are not the be-all and end-all.

I was also pleased to see that the budget provides more resources for student growth, with a particular focus on needs-based funding for students with a disability. As our population grows, we must provide our teachers and schools with enough resources to cope with the growing demand that naturally flows from this. This budget responds to this need and, in particular, will ensure that students with complex needs are not being left behind. Our schools must be safe, accessible and supportive environments that embrace diversity and ensure that all students can achieve their potential.

This budget makes important investments in student welfare and support services and recognises the need for our schools to keep pace with our growing population. The Greens are pleased to support the education initiatives in the 2018-19 budget.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (4.27): I rise today to speak in support of the education budget measures and expenditure. Our government is proudly progressive. The budget reflects our priorities, with a focus on renewing our schools, planning and building the new schools that our growing city needs, funding more teachers and counsellors to support children's learning and wellbeing, and providing an investment of \$5 billion over the next four years in a modern education system.

As our city grows, our public schooling system is becoming more popular. With close to 48,000 students learning in our public schools, more and more are welcomed each term. It is important that we invest in public education infrastructure with new and expanded schools, more teachers and support for students.

The latest data collected from this year's ACT schools census reveals an exceptionally strong enrolment rate that has persisted since 2016, with a growth rate of four per cent per annum. The 2018 budget is providing investments and the necessary steps to ensure that a high standard of education is provided to all young people across the territory.

To help meet this growth we are funding additional teaching staff. This year's budget provides for 66 full-time learning professionals and support staff to help all students in their learning. This \$31 million investment in our education system will go where it is needed most and ensure that our schools' resources grow along with our student population.

The ACT government is committed to inclusive, accessible and high quality education for all students. As our public school enrolment has increased, so too has the enrolment of children that require inclusion support, increasing by 56 students to 2,293 students this year. This represents a 2.5 per cent increase. In our budget we are investing to support students with disability and complex health needs in ACT public schools. An additional \$18 million in needs-based funding is provided to ensure growth in enrolments and inclusive education of a high standard.

The Molonglo Valley has more young families moving in every day. Many children living in Molonglo are enrolled in our fantastic new P-6 Charles Weston School in Coombs. Our government is taking responsible steps to plan and prepare for the future growth of the area, with funding in the budget for new and expanded schools.

Our commitment at the election was to build the P-10 school in Molonglo in two stages, with the high school stage completed in 2022. That is exactly what we are doing. The budget funds \$47 million to build a new P-6 school and funding is also provided for the planning of a high school at the same campus that will cater for the future cohort of high school aged students across Molonglo.

High schools require a certain number of students in order to offer the diverse range of programs that are expected of them. That is why there is funding for the necessary planning work to ensure that the high school will be built commensurate with population growth.

As outlined in the 2018 budget, the new Molonglo primary school will be located in Denman Prospect. It will provide places for 600 students from preschool to year 6, as well as 44 preschoolers. I joined minister for education Yvette Berry on site for the announcement. I can say that the school is perched on a hill with amazing views across the whole of the Molonglo Valley.

Murrumbidgee's newest modern and sustainable school will join our world-leading education system and will provide high quality, modern learning environments that combine the use of both indoor and outdoor learning areas. The school will also include integrated spaces to help support students with special needs.

It is expected that the primary school at Denman Prospect will be ready to accept students from the start of the 2020-21 school year. The new site will also incorporate space for expansion into the future as the Molonglo Valley continues to grow. Of course, it will also be complemented by the release of a non-government school site in Molonglo in future years.

Our government understands that one of the most vital investments that our budget delivers is greater support for the wellbeing of Canberra students. At the election we committed to providing more school psychologists. We funded five last year and I am pleased that in this year's budget we will employ a further 15 full-time psychologists by the start of the 2020 school year to ensure that young people's mental health and wellbeing continue to be supported.

This commitment, of course, followed the 2015 schools report. Although it identified a recommended 1 to 500 ratio, it also noted that rather than simply recruiting psychologists it may be helpful to complement the existing numbers of psychologists with social workers and other allied health professionals in the school counselling roles to build a multidisciplinary team approach and to meet recommended ratios. I note that, if you combine all of those multidisciplinary roles together, by 2020 we will have a ratio of about 1 to 483 students.

Our budget investment to deliver psychologists amounts to \$7.3 million over the next four years. It will help students during what can be quite a challenging period of their lives by providing trained professionals who are experts in adolescent health and wellbeing.

This year's budget also seeks to enhance the government's substantial investment in the future of schools and learning. The ACT government's continuing future of education conversation has been an incredibly useful process as we aim to ensure that the ACT's education system performs as highly as possible.

The future of education strategy will become the guiding blueprint for the next 10 years of education in the ACT. It will be funded through an investment of \$9 million in the budget. Teachers have the greatest impact on children's outcomes. The strategy will place an emphasis on strengthening and supporting the pedagogical capabilities of our teachers, especially those who are beginning their careers, through leadership mentoring.

Education investment is so important to building Canberra's future prosperity and ensuring that each child can reach their full potential. The budget investments that we are making now will support student learning and wellbeing in high quality and expanded modern education facilities that are needed in our growing city and by equipping the next generation for the challenges and opportunities that the future holds by investing in great teachers.

These 2018-19 budget measures support the ongoing future of education blueprint, which I am confident will provide the best possible direction for education in the territory. I commend the education measures in the budget to the Assembly.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate—Part 1.4

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (4.35): I welcome the opportunity today to discuss the very important work the government is doing in relation to the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the transport and city services portfolio, and the commitments the government has made through the 2018-19 budget.

This budget continues to strengthen our commitment to provide the community with a city-wide, integrated public transport network that can move people around the city quickly and efficiently. The government is delivering a public transport system that provides Canberrans with a real alternative to driving a car. The ACT government is focused on delivering what the community has asked for, which includes faster trips, more direct routes, more frequent and reliable services and increased services at peak and off-peak times. The government has listened, and this can be seen through Canberra's changing public transport network.

In 2017 two new rapid routes commenced operation. By 2019 the rapid bus routes will be expanding to nine. This initiative is two years ahead of schedule and will provide a better connected, seven-day network for Canberrans, with construction of the ACT's tenth rapid route, light rail stage 1, also to be completed by the end of this year.

As an outcome of consultation with the community, the ACT government will undertake preliminary planning and network analysis with a view to establishing a light rail stop in Mitchell once light rail stage 1 is operational. Funding is provided in this budget to support contract review and detailed design of a light rail stop at Mitchell, with provision for additional construction and operational costs in later years.

Despite the significant work already done by TCCS through the enhanced rapid routes, the government knows there is still more work required to meet the transport needs of its residents. As we have frequently heard in the Assembly, by 2033 Canberra's population is expected to grow to over half a million people. To service the growing and diverse mix of residents and visitors, the government is committed to improving how people move around Canberra. That is why this budget continues to support the development of light rail by continuing to invest in the planning, design and enabling works for the city to Woden light rail route.

The ACT government has identified a preferred route, and planning processes are underway with the commonwealth government and the commonwealth parliament to progress light rail to Woden. In addition, the flexible transport coordination centre has successfully aligned with the priorities of government by providing a specialised bus service to address social inclusion for many in our community who are unable to access other transport options, which can make them vulnerable to social isolation.

As the public transport network evolves, the government will ensure that demand-responsive and flexible transport services continue to meet the needs of Canberra's travellers. These important services are for people who experience difficulty using fixed route buses and light rail services and who also cannot access travel services under the national disability insurance scheme.

The government is also making major investments to improve walking and cycling across the territory. Providing better walking and cycling facilities in Canberra improves not only amenity but also the health of our community. Through this budget Canberrans will be provided with new cyclepaths, footpaths and shared paths. The government will also improve and expand pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to ensure it is safe, sustainable, attractive to the community and easy to use.

Importantly, this budget provides funding for the construction of the Belconnen bikeway and improved pedestrian and cycling access in the Tuggeranong town centre. Works will also include streetscape improvements and additional landscaping. In addition, in the Belconnen town centre we are thrilled that the Belconnen bikeway will also provide a final connection along the frontage of Lake Ginninderra, particularly to complement the expansion of the Belconnen Arts Centre. The funding

overall will also provide \$2 million over two years for increased signage and connections for our off-road bikeway network.

The government is committed to continuing investment in active travel initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of all Canberrans. Canberra is Australia's most active community, with a larger share of Canberrans commuting by walking or cycling than anywhere else in the country. We have committed to invest an additional \$30 million in active travel infrastructure over the life of this parliamentary term, and this year's budget delivers on the government's promise. The budget will also allow the popular active streets for schools program to expand to an additional 50 schools over the next five years and will complete the Heysen Drive, Lyons, to Weston Creek cyclepath link, a vital link in the region.

As those across from me would be aware, the government seeks to become a world leader in animal welfare and management. The government has put in place the necessary arrangements to achieve this through updated and contemporary legislation, extra staffing resources, comprehensive and rigorous governance processes and a process to build the capacity and capability of the domestic animal services team.

The budget further supports this by providing additional funding for two more rangers, ensuring we achieve our goal of becoming a leader in animal welfare. It will also help fund the delivery of a pet census and survey to estimate the ACT's pet population and the expansion of the voucher system to subsidise cat desexing, and support the existing service funding agreement with the RSPCA for the provision of animal welfare services and the RSPCA's important inspectorate services.

Identified as a key priority of the Woden town centre master plan, funding has been provided in this budget to undertake pedestrian and cycling accessibility improvements in the Woden town centre. This will include the design and construction of a new separated cycleway and verge improvements along Corinna Street, a new shared path ramp, path widening, and wayfinding signage on networks and connections in the area.

The government acknowledges the importance of investing in the renewal of all our town centres and in community-led activations to create livelier public spaces. The government is also paying particular attention to delivering better city services by delivering tidier suburbs with more trees and parks, playgrounds and public spaces for our community to enjoy.

Not only are we focusing on providing better city services across our existing suburbs; we are also funding new city services in newer suburbs to help the needs of our growing population. Each year as our city grows, the ACT increases its urban footprint with new suburbs and redevelopments. In the previous financial year significant development occurred in the suburbs of Lawson, Denman Prospect and Throsby and along the Northbourne Avenue corridor. Funding of \$10.27 million has been provided in this budget to support the maintenance of assets associated with the growth of our city. Assets typically created as a result of greenfield development include road pavements, stormwater, street lighting, traffic signals, road markings and

signs, community paths, road verges and medians, shopping precincts, parklands and open space, playgrounds, public toilets and barbecues.

Through this budget the government will also deliver on our election commitment to plant an additional 1,330 trees across residential areas. Planting more trees is an efficient way to reduce the urban heat island effect, making us more resilient to climate change as well as ensuring Canberra remains one of the most livable cities.

The budget continues to provide funding to maintain around 7,000 kilometres of road. We will invest in the upgrade of the intersections between Ginninderra Drive and Tillyard Drive, Tillyard Drive and Lhotsky Street, and Kuringa Drive and Owen Dixon Drive, with traffic lights and other safety improvements to improve traffic flow and road safety. We will also construct a shared path along Kuringa Drive to connect to the Barton Highway, significantly improving safety for pedestrians and particularly cyclists.

Design and construction planning for the duplication of William Slim Drive from the Barton Highway to Ginninderra Drive will be undertaken in this financial year. The design of the upgrade will include the duplication of approximately 3.2 kilometres of road. The project will also include new on-road cycle lanes, new off-road shared paths, new traffic lights at the Dumas Street intersection and a new bridge over Ginninderra Creek, as well as new bus bays. The project will improve safety and public transport travel, ease congestion and improve the arterial road links, particularly between Gungahlin and Belconnen.

These are some of the great initiatives the 2018-19 budget provides to build a better city and provide better community-focused services.

We are also delighted to be nearing the end of the better suburbs initiative. I thank very much those citizens who have participated in this very in-depth process. I look forward to joining them this weekend as they finalise their deliberations and provide to me a statement on how we can continue to provide better city services for our growing city.

Once again, I welcome the opportunity to speak about the important work the ACT government is doing through Transport Canberra and City Services, a directorate whose staff touch the lives of Canberrans every day. No matter where they live, no matter what they do in our great city, TCCS staff are there to help them. They interact and are on the front line of the ACT government in many instances. They do a very diverse and a very good job. I would like to thank them, as always, for their tremendous commitment to the work that they do and their dedication to the ACT community. Through this budget we look to support them and the work that they do. I am pleased to highlight the benefits these investments will provide to Canberrans as they live in and move about our great city.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (4.45): The Greens welcome a number of wins for our policy agenda in this part of the budget. The Greens obviously have a strong commitment to a more sustainable city, and we are very pleased with some of the clear green wins in transport. We are very pleased that there is funding towards the

\$30 million commitment for active travel, which means that the parliamentary agreement item is now largely funded.

I would like to highlight a couple of these. I will choose ones in my electorate: the substantial funding of over \$5 million in the Woden town centre, which is a key element of the master plan; and the Heysen Drive cycle link, which is making the shoulder a lot safer for bike riders. While I am talking about Murrumbidgee, the budget also includes substantial funding for the early planning work for light rail stage 2.

One bit I am particularly pleased about is the business case for upgrading the Woden bus interchange, which will be done to tie in with the light rail. This is something which has been promised for many years. In the Seventh Assembly there was a totally different proposal, in conjunction with Westfield, which did not happen as Westfield did not expand. I have spoken here many times about the need for an upgrade. I sincerely hope the business case is done soon and that we get on with upgrading the interchange. I will say more about that, I suspect, tomorrow, on Miss Burch's motion about buses. Fixing the Woden interchange will be a big step forward for Woden.

I also note that the budget contains over \$1 million for bus stop infrastructure for the expanded rapid bus network. I am sure that every cent of that is going to be needed, particularly in my electorate in Weston, which is becoming a bus interchange where it previously was not. I note with pleasure that the expanded bus network is a parliamentary agreement item.

Something else I am very pleased about is that there is going to be a 12-month extension of the trial of free off-peak public transport for concession card holders. This was a parliamentary agreement item. It has been well received by low income Canberrans. I note that expanding this to no longer be a trial but to become permanent was a recommendation of the estimates committee.

There is obviously in the ACT, as everywhere else, a high demand for expenditure on public open space upgrades. The problem is, of course, that there is only limited funding for that. There are a number of ways we could address this.

One of those is participatory budgeting. This is a way in which we get the community to help prioritise spending. This is something we should be looking to do more of: to get the community to help us make decisions, plan and prioritise. I am very pleased to see the government's better suburbs process working with the community on this. It is engaging residents and aiming to improve city services. Next weekend, I believe, there is a day which is focusing on play spaces. I am hoping to be able to attend some of that as an observer. Better suburbs looks like a good example of community consultation, although it is not exactly participatory budgeting. My hope is that participatory budgeting will naturally follow on from better suburbs. I note that last year the Assembly was kind enough to pass my motion on a trial for participatory budgeting.

The second solution is some process to enable local communities to get involved. Communities sometimes are happy to organise working bees and to fundraise.

TCCS could have an involvement where they approve plans and check safety. Unfortunately this has not worked out in the past. TCCS has basically been a blocker. But I was very pleased to see adopt a park included in the better suburbs budget initiatives. If implemented well, this could cut through these problems.

There are two issues the Greens are concerned about in the TCCS budget. One is waste. We would like to see a lot less waste going to landfill. The green waste bins that are rolled out should include food waste, again an estimates recommendation. The waste feasibility study should have ruled out incineration, because waste incineration is definitely not a form of renewable energy. There are sustainable and viable waste processing technologies that we should be exploring rather than incineration, especially for organic waste, such as large-scale composting and anaerobic digestion. I bring everyone's attention to the last episodes of *War on Waste*, which covered this quite well.

Lastly there are trees. We know that all Canberra people love trees. They have wonderful benefits, ameliorating urban temperatures in summer and reducing the heat island effect; they have ecological value; and they are what make our bush capital. Our urban areas include over 750,000 ACT government managed trees. But this budget includes funds for only 1,330 more, which is a 0.18 per cent increase, which is seriously not enough.

In conclusion, I am pleased about some items here and some wins for my electorate, but we really do need to do a lot more on waste and trees, and we will talk more about public transport tomorrow.

**MISS C BURCH** (Kurrajong) (4.51): The government's transport plans are characterised by a lack of transparency and a lack of genuine consultation. The government continues to tell us that construction on light rail stage 1 will be completed by the end of the year. However, as the end of the year quickly draws near, it is still not clear when it will be fully operational and carrying fare-paying passengers.

The government's own budget papers acknowledge that the project has missed many internal milestones, some by up to five months. And, of course, the government's proposed new bus network is due to commence in January 2019 and relies on light rail being operational. So if light rail is not up and running by then, the whole network looks like it will fall apart.

It is not just the timing of light rail that is still in question; the government is yet to publish up-to-date figures on what the whole project is going to cost. Notes in the budget papers state that the spending estimates for light rail are derived from the original program set out in the contract, and the government maintains that the project cost for light rail stage 1, as at January 2016, was \$939 million. When will the government reveal the actual project cost evolving under the contract? How much is that in today's dollars, and how much will it be when light rail is finally up and running?

There is still no commitment from the Labor-Greens government to compensate local businesses for the months of disruption and damage that light rail construction has caused. The livelihoods of small business owners and their employees are still in the balance. After finally bowing to pressure from this side of the chamber, the government announced it would investigate the effects of light rail construction on businesses along the route. But like so much of what this government calls consultation, it looks like little more than a box-ticking exercise.

Now we find out that the study will only cover the Gungahlin town centre and only for the first two weeks of August. The government still has not told businesses who they need to contact or how. There will also be a very short window of time for owners to let the government know just how badly their businesses have been damaged and how badly their employees will be affected by light rail construction. A street party at the end of construction will be cold comfort for local business owners who have had to cut back and to the staff who have lost their jobs as customers have gone elsewhere.

Canberrans have still not seen a detailed business case for stage 2 of light rail. The government continues to ask us to trust that stage 2 will bring economic benefits, but it has not provided anything to back up these claims. The Pegasus Economics review of the 2018-19 budget called for further information on the potential expense and capital implications of stage 2 for future budgets. In other words, the government has not yet told the public the full story about what stage 2 is going to cost.

One thing we can be sure of is that if stage 2 goes ahead it will mean longer travel times from the south to the city. If light rail stage 2 goes through the parliamentary triangle, the city to Woden journey will take longer than current bus routes. When the government has been asked about what light rail stage 2 will mean for southern residents the government has fudged the answer: "It is a different route. The light rail route does different things. It's not just about Woden to the city." Just be honest—the trip is going to take longer. Just like its proposed changes to the bus network, it is going to mean longer journeys and more time away from home for families.

The other major transport project is the government's current redesign of the bus network. The centrepiece of the redesign is more frequent rapid services throughout the day, but this appears to have been pursued with a single-minded intent, stripping away anything that does not suit that goal. Express services will go. School services will go. Suburban services used by the elderly, mobility impaired and those facing disadvantage will all go.

The minister spoke about active travel, which is great for those who can be active. However, people with limited mobility will be amongst the hardest hit by the government's changes to the transport network. Seniors and people living with disability rely on easy access to regular public transport to maintain their independence and engagement with the community.

The government has been selling its changes based on the idea that 55 per cent of people will be within walking distance of the nearest rapid stop. What is walking

distance, according to the minister? Walking distance is 800 metres. Eight hundred metres is much too far for many people; 800 metres is an additional 10 or one-minute commute for the average person. Of course, for those with mobility issues it will be incredibly difficult to handle an 800-metre walk on cold winter days or hot summer days, particularly when carrying shopping bags.

Taking away easy access to regular public transport takes away independence and choice from the people who need it the most. I have heard from many seniors who have moved into retirement villages and given up driving because they did not feel confident on the roads anymore but knew that they could rely on having a bus stop nearby. Public transport is their lifeline to shops, doctors, hospitals, and community services. This is being taken away from them.

While community buses provide a valuable service, they do not completely bridge this gap. Accessing community buses requires planning two days in advance, travelling between 9 am and 1 pm, and wanting to go where the bus takes you. It does not offer seniors and people with limited mobility the independence and dignity they need and deserve.

The Xpresso buses are another area where the government is slashing services that are highly valued by the people who use them. If we are going to increase patronage on public transport, we need to look more closely at what might attract people to using public transport. For commuters, this is a fairly simple calculation: how can I get to and from work quickly and reliably?

The proposed new network appears to sacrifice one for the other—it may get you there, but it will not get you there as quickly as your current services. Taking away the Xpresso services will mean that for most current users it will be quicker to drive to work, and that is what they are telling us they will do. They are not going to take three buses; they are not going to wait at interchanges. They are going to drive. They are willing to sit in traffic every morning and every afternoon and they are willing to pay for parking rather than spend an additional 7.5 hours a week on the bus. This will reduce public transport patronage, not increase it. This will result in fewer Canberrans catching the bus, more cars on our roads, more congestion, and more inconvenience for Canberra families.

Perhaps the most unpopular change to the new network is the fact that the government has chosen to prioritise rapid bus services over children's safety. Families with school children will bear the brunt of the government's changes as they slash dedicated school buses across our city: 109 routes are being cut to 47, with 59 schools and 49 primary schools to be without dedicated buses. Like so many aspects of the government's so-called consultation, it has not been up-front with schools about these cuts.

We have heard from school principals in the public, Catholic and independent sectors who became aware of the cuts only very late in the consultation period. We have heard from principals who have been told that their school buses would not be cut, only to find out the truth much later. Parents, principals and teachers alike are worried about the safety of children on the general public network.

What is this going to mean for many Canberra families? It will mean they will stop putting their kids on the bus and instead drive them to school. This is discouraging the use of public transport, not promoting it. This will also have a damaging effect on employment and productivity and will mean that many parents will have to disrupt their work days or change their hours just to make sure that their kids get to and from school safely. This, again, will result in fewer Canberrans catching the bus, more cars on our roads, more congestion, and more inconvenience for Canberra families.

The government's transport plans are not transparent and are not based on genuine consultation. This is not honest government and it is not open government. The government owes it to Canberrans to be transparent about light rail, stage 1 and stage 2, by releasing up-to-date budget figures for stage 1 and a full business case for stage 2 so that Canberrans know the actual cost to them.

The government owes it to Canberrans to release proposed timetables so that they can make an informed judgement on how the new network will impact them—how long it will take them to get to work and how long their children will be waiting at interchanges before and after school.

If the government were serious about increasing patronage across our integrated public transport network it would be making it easier, not more difficult, for Canberrans to catch public transport. If the government were serious about increasing public transport patronage it would enhance commuter services as well as community services, not at the expense of it. It is, of course, the community and suburban aspects of the network that make it a public transport network.

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (5.00): I know the appropriation bill debate can get very bogged down in detail, so I want to take a different approach here. I know the ABC's ears may have pricked up, but rest assured I am not about to read a children's book. I do want to paint a picture for you. Imagine it is the year 2020 and you are making your way around my electorate of Yerrabi. Whether you are driving, taking the bus, catching the light rail or cycling, you find it easier than ever to get where you are going.

I want you to think ahead because I know that right now Yerrabi is a hub of activity. It is because the Gungahlin town centre is soon to become one of the first hubs of the ACT's integrated public transport system, when the light rail comes online later this year. As a resident of east Gungahlin, I know as well as anyone that there has been a lot happening. However, by 2020 the residents of Yerrabi will be enjoying all the benefits of an integrated public transport system.

This government has a long history of delivering an extensive transformation of the road network across Yerrabi, and when you are the second fastest growing region in the country it is impossible to ignore the need for improving the capacity of roads, cyclepaths and the public transport system.

Previous budgets provided funding for the duplication of Gundaroo Drive through to the Barton Highway and signalling the intersection with Mirrabai Drive. This year's

budget offers a further extension, with funding for the duplication of William Slim Drive. This will include 3.2 kilometres of new carriageway. This extension provides a dual carriageway connecting the Belconnen and Gungahlin town centres. The William Slim Drive extension also includes 6.4 kilometres of new on-road cycle lanes and a new bridge over Ginninderra Creek. Cyclists traveling along the corridor connecting Belconnen and Gungahlin will also benefit from investments being made to cyclepaths in and around the Belconnen town centre.

Stage 2 of the duplication of Horse Park Drive continues to near completion. Having already completed stage 1 between Well Station Drive and Anthony Rolfe Avenue, work on the duplication of Horse Park Drive from the Federal Highway to Katherine Avenue west is expected to be finished by the first quarter of 2019. The expanded road capacity and traffic flow measures along Horse Park Drive will provide for greater connectivity for those in the eastern and northern suburbs of Gungahlin with the town centre. With links to the Federal Highway and the Majura Parkway, it also speeds up traffic flows coming in and out of the region.

Of course, we all await the commencement of light rail services in the ACT. An ABC news article on 3 April 2017 by Elise Scott listed a comprehensive tram network as one of the coolest things in Griffin's original plan for Canberra in 1912 that were never implemented. It took us over 100 years but we are finally delivering on this part of Walter and Marion's vision for our city.

With the introduction of the light rail, Gungahlin will see significant change to the way we travel in and out of the city. Light rail services every six minutes during peak times and 10 to 15 minutes in off-peak times, the capacity to carry more than 200 people and the number of cars and buses taken off the road along that corridor during peak hour will cut travel time for everyone between Gungahlin and the surrounding areas and the city.

Upon completion, the connectivity between Gungahlin and Belconnen will benefit all road users, whether they travel by car, bus or bicycle. The increased capacity of major thoroughfares within Yerrabi will better support Canberra's new public transport system, as well make active travel safer and more appealing. The improvements to roads coming in and out of Yerrabi will help residents connect with our city more easily. And the light rail from Gungahlin to the city marks the city realising its potential and investing in the capacity needed to do just that—a comprehensive plan for a growing city with growing needs.

When you play host to the second fastest growing region in the country, you need a plan. You need to be responsible and resist populist politics that create budget black holes and you need to ensure revenue is available to deliver expanded services to increase the capacity of our roads, to provide an integrated transport network for all Canberrans and to connect and engage a community as diverse and creative as that in Yerrabi.

Only ACT Labor has the vision, the commitment and the passion to deliver this to the people of Canberra. Only ACT Labor is capable of planning, implementing and delivering an integrated transport system for all Canberrans.

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (5.04): The budget we are talking about today is lacking in actual substance. In the TCCS area there are small amounts of money to many areas. I see this as generally replacing money that has been eroded from the TCCS budget over many years.

Some of the things we will see that are new include citizen forums. This is so that the minister can blame decisions on someone else and does not need to take responsibility for actions and new things that take place. We also see here long, drawn-out investigations. We saw from the minister during the estimates process a refusal to answer questions about a dog issue; yet a couple of hours later she provided additional information to the media, even though she was willing to avoid scrutiny by the Assembly's estimates committee.

It appears to me that here we have a minister in charge of city services who has no passion for this area. There is no commitment for this area, no vision for this area and, indeed, it seems she has no time for this area because she has too many other bright, shiny things to look after that give her a better photo opportunity than looking after basic local services.

Let me start by talking about dogs, something that this Assembly has faced over and over in the past few years. We are seeing increasingly the concern in the community in relation to dog attacks. The RSPCA has said that—and I can agree—there are no bad dogs; there are only irresponsible dog owners. It is something that as a community we have to face. But the government also has a role to play in managing dangerous dogs and in better managing dangerous dogs.

This community is not feeling safe—not feeling safe to walk their own streets with or without their own dog on a leash. They are not feeling safe for their dogs in their own backyard or their cats in their own garage because of problems with roaming dogs, many of whom we hear have been previously reported to the correct authorities and yet have been released back into the community.

It seems as though this minister would prefer to see more dog attacks than admit that she was wrong about the need for stronger legislation in this area. Just yesterday we had a justice of the Supreme Court hand down a judgement that was scathing of the government's lack of action. I do not think I have ever seen such strong statements regarding the need for legislative reform in this area.

Also yesterday, the same day as we saw these scathing comments about dog legislation, we saw another beloved family pet dog mauled to death in Tuggeranong—I have seen the photos—a fluffy white dog killed by three roaming dogs. When will enough be enough? It is a serious matter and it is about public safety. We deserve to be safe on our own streets. We have heard in the past few months about Biscuit, who was mauled while being walked by his owners. We have heard about Jack. Yesterday it was Spuz who was killed.

We have also heard from the government's figures that in last year's data 11 per cent of urgent calls about dog attacks were abandoned—urgent calls about dog and cat

attacks abandoned—and that, in general calls to DAS about dogs, 62 per cent were abandoned. It is quite shameful that we do not have the resources to address people calling about dog attacks.

We have had a lot of questions about funding for extra dog rangers, and it has been quite a difficult process to try and work out what has happened. We had an article in the *Canberra Times* in January saying that there was a ranger overseeing a team of eight rangers. It went on to say that “next month”, in a government funding hit, eight new staff would come on board.

The budget only had funding for two extra dog rangers but it appears that 13 positions in DAS were advertised and nine external staff were appointed. Of the eight new positions, from what I can work out, two are ASO3 operational support positions and one is an animal behaviourist ranger. These positions are not field focused. Were these positions vacant before? Given that we had funding in the budget for two additional rangers, how have we recruited all these additional staff?

I must say that they are badly needed and welcome additional staff, but does it mean that the area was so under-resourced in the past? It is a difficult area to work in. The ranger in the article back in January talked about being a first response officer and how difficult it is. But when you add lack of resources and support to that area, it makes that job almost untenable. It is such a difficult job, not just dealing with dangerous dogs but dealing with the human aspect of it, whether it is injuries or taking someone’s dog away. These are not easy matters.

Also during estimates we talked a bit about Izzy, the Maltese terrier who was euthanased by DAS less than 24 hours after going missing from her home in Kambah. Her owner had posted on the DAS website that she was lost. The minister refused to answer questions about this during the estimates committee process. I am still unsure when the independent report on the death of Izzy will be released. How long did it take? How much longer will it take, if it is not yet completed? How much did it cost? And why was the minister not willing to answer questions at the time?

Dogs are an issue that many Canberrans care very much about. Many of us have dogs. We love our dogs but we expect to be safe, and when something goes wrong we expect responsible, prompt action from the government. And this is a government that has been lacking in that area.

I would like to move on to parking. It appears that the indexing of fees has seen an increase in parking fees of six per cent and the extra revenue in car parking fees over the next three years is due just about completely and entirely to the indexing of fees. None of it is due to the increase in car parks because the government are not providing any more. In fact, they are taking car parks away. You are reducing the amount of this very valuable resource that people want to use and penalising them more and more whilst making it more and more difficult to use public transport instead.

It is a vicious circle. You get pinged if you use a car and you get pinged if you use a bus because it is your time that suffers when you are going to use a bus—time

walking further, according to the new network, to a bus stop and walking further home again—and longer to get to your destination. It will no longer be a rapid network; it will be a frequent network, perhaps, but certainly not rapid. I have had many, many contacts from constituents saying that they will have to take a car because they just do not have the time to spend on these buses. And they have concerns about their children using public buses instead of school buses.

Another thing I would like to speak briefly about is the smell in some areas of Tuggeranong from time to time. This is certainly an area that has improved over time but it has not been eradicated. It still occurs. (*Second speaking period taken.*) On one occasion recently, a constituent of mine rang Access Canberra, as instructed by the government. The minister likes these complaints to go through Access Canberra. I pass that on to my constituents. In this particular case someone reported the odour in the morning to Access Canberra. Two weeks later they heard back from Access Canberra. Two weeks later they got an email back from Access Canberra, “We have just got your complaint and there is nothing we can do now because it was two weeks ago,” which makes perfect sense to them. They are not going to go out two weeks later and see if the odour is still there.

Again, how does this help constituents dealing with an issue, whether it is a dog attack, whether it is the smell from the tip, whether it is any other of the myriad of local complaints people have, when they feel they are doing the right thing, they are ringing and reporting the issue and somehow it is lost in the never-never? Is it a system issue? Is it a resourcing issue? Perhaps it is just a lack of interest. I am really not sure.

On playgrounds, playgrounds are another thing that I increasingly hear about from constituents. Partly this is because in my electorate in particular it is an area that has been around for quite some time and people are looking for renewal of the playgrounds in their area. There are some new families moving into those suburbs but also there are grandparents who have caring responsibility for their grandchildren and like to go out to local playgrounds.

The government has committed to citizen forums to make decisions on priorities for urban services, including a lot of money allocated towards playgrounds. I am not sure how a necessarily small citizens group is going to be able to better balance competing needs across our suburbs and over time than people whose full-time job it is to look at these issues. How much real flexibility will the citizen forums really have? Or are the government just walking away from their responsibilities? Last year, it appears, only five playgrounds were upgraded. At that rate it will be decades, on current budgets, before all playgrounds are upgraded and in the meantime a generation of children may miss out altogether in some suburbs.

There is an adopt-a-park initiative, which will obviously require some coordinator funding and it could lead to issues with standards, safety and different community expectations. Some areas will have more people available and willing to assist in the adopt-a-park initiative. In principle I think it is a good initiative, but I would not want some areas to miss out because those working families do not have the time and the energy to devote to the adopt-a-park initiative. I hope there will not be a patchy approach across suburbs.

Of course, we already have other citizen-initiated mechanisms to bring forward ideas and suggestions like this; for example, petitions. Recently we have seen petitions and approaches from residents, hundreds if not thousands of residents, about playgrounds in, for example, Greenway, seeking a shade sail, and in Torrens and Waramanga. Yet these initiatives, these requests, are being ignored in favour of going through another process altogether. What does that say to those citizens who have made an effort to get together and put forward a petition in their area?

Canberra does deserve local services that are five-star. We deserve to walk down streets that we are proud of and that we feel safe on, and many of the areas under TCCS, including street lighting, contribute to that pride and that safety that we feel or do not feel. Everyone in Canberra, including children, especially including those who live south of the lake, should have the opportunity to play on equipment of a high standard that is safe and engaging. Some of those parks and playgrounds should have protection from the sun. Some of those parks and playgrounds should have fences. Many of those have already been identified, and the government has been approached.

I think the community deserves more. They deserve laws that better protect them from dangerous dog attacks. They deserve shared paths that are accessible and of good quality. They deserve to leave their homes without odours from the tip impacting on them, their amenity and their enjoyment. They deserve a government that will take them seriously when they complain and respond in a timely manner to those concerns when they complain. They deserve a minister with vision and passion for better local services.

When Mr Barr delivered his budget speech he talked about the fact that what we can do in Canberra is limited only by our imagination and goodwill. Many of my constituents tell me that in Tuggeranong especially there is a lack of imagination and there is absolutely a lack of goodwill to improve the services that we have in Tuggeranong, let alone across the rest of Canberra. It is a pity that this government does not spend more of its attention on getting those basic local services right.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (5.21): The 2018 budget grows the key services our growing city needs. The budget reflects our priorities, including renewing our neighbourhoods and growing our core city services so that our growing city continues to be a great place to live.

Our budget will invest an additional \$19.8 million in city services to provide more mowing, more cleaning, more sweeping, more weeding, more tree trimming and more graffiti removal; plant an additional 1,330 trees across Canberra to renew and enhance our urban forest; install irrigation to ensure sportsgrounds in the ACT continue to be maintained to a high standard; and boost local library services.

As a former and current early childhood advocate, I am really pleased this budget delivers funding for playgrounds. I know how important child-friendly cities are for children's physical health and wellbeing, and our city of Canberra is well-known as a great place to raise children. But as local infrastructure starts to age and more families move into our existing suburbs—no doubt supported by our abolition of stamp duty

for existing homes in the budget—we need to continue to ensure we invest in child-friendly initiatives around our city, and this budget does exactly that.

The investment of \$1.9 million for new playgrounds and playground upgrades will allow communities across Canberra, and particularly in my electorate, to put forward their proposals for playgrounds to a new citizens forum. We have heard from the community, through the better suburbs discussion, that playgrounds around local shopping centres should be a particular focus for upgrades. Upgrades to playgrounds at local centres are a focus for communities in Farrer, Waramanga and Torrens, as well as other suburbs which will be putting forward their proposals.

The opposition's choice was to choose one playground. Ask any child and they would say that is unfair. I am proud our government is providing a fair process to fund multiple playgrounds across the ACT. We are also implementing a participatory budgeting process, in line with the Assembly's wishes. I have to say that I am really looking forward to the first citizens forum this Sunday, 19 August and to hearing the pitches from local community advocates who will be presenting their ideas for consideration, an outcome of this budget which should be supported.

Our budget also makes further important public realm upgrades across our city, investing \$21 million in active travel upgrades, with a major investment in footpaths in our town centres to better connect pedestrians and encourage healthy lifestyles. I am really pleased the government will be investing in a new shared path on Heysen Street in Weston and Devonport Street in Lyons. It will bridge the missing link between the two suburbs, for which I have been advocating on behalf of local residents.

At present the road is informally used as an east-west link between the Woden Valley and Weston Creek, but historically it has lacked a pedestrian and cycling link, despite the proximity of the two suburbs. The budget provides \$1.2 million over two years, to 2019-20, for the planning and construction of a shared path, which will also include improved lighting and improved safety for pedestrians and motorists.

In Woden town centre the ACT government is investing \$4.75 million over four years to make pedestrian and cycling accessibility improvements which have been identified in the master plan. This includes the design and construction of a new separated cycleway and verge improvements on Corinna Street and new and upgraded cycling and walking infrastructure on other key links, as well as wayfinding signage.

Melrose Drive will be upgraded, with the existing path on the western verge to be widened from Brewer Street through to the main east-west community path link into Chifley, and will include additional measures for safety, especially under the underpass at Melrose Drive. On Callum Street's western verge a new three-metre-wide shared path will be designed and constructed from the Matilda Street intersection through to Bowes Street. A new pedestrianised heart will be connected by the construction of a new shared path ramp from Atlantic Street to the central pedestrian spine around the major public service employment areas.

The existing path on Ball Street will also be widened up to Hindmarsh Drive. The works will extend beyond the intersection verge on the southern side, with a new path connection to Atree Court. Furzer Street will be provided with cycling infrastructure, and all the new and existing networks and connections will be actively used through the inclusion of new wayfinding signage to direct users in, around and through Woden town centre.

This is a significant investment because we understand that footpaths and public spaces are vitally important for a successful city. One of their primary uses is to connect people not just with points of geography but with each other. Our investment in public realm improvements at Woden will create more attractive public spaces and footpaths that bring Canberrans together. This is an important ingredient in Woden's future, where we expect there will be a greater diversity of uses—not just the foot traffic of workers but of actual residents living in Woden town centre's core and going about their daily lives. The growth of diversity in our town centres is the key to the regeneration that we are already starting to see.

As we have seen along Northbourne Avenue and now in Woden, a catalyst for urban regeneration and diversity is also our government's investment in light rail, and our budget continues to deliver the investments to stage 2 of light rail to Woden, which is so important for Woden's future. After making a decision on the final route to Woden, following consultation with the community, the government has progressed the light rail project in this budget through an investment of \$12.5 million for the planning, design and enabling works.

Light rail stage 2 will not only provide more high capacity public transport options for Woden but also significantly change the appearance of Woden town centre, starting with a new integrated public transport interchange at Callum Street. It is particularly exciting to see the investment in the budget of \$2.5 million for the preparation of works for the much-needed redevelopment of the Woden bus interchange.

The ACT government's vision for the Transport Canberra interchange at Woden is that it will integrate light rail with our modern bus network and active travel with a barrier-free shared zone that ensures easy access for pedestrians and cyclists across the track, generous active travel paths alongside the light rail alignment, and new street tree plantings to reflect the nature and pedestrian scale of the surrounding streets.

The interchange upgrades will be augmented by the Phillip bus depot project funded in last year's budget, which is currently under construction and which will support our extended fleet of buses, including our electric bus fleet. In addition, the government will develop a park-and-ride strategy to incorporate the expansion of the rapid bus network and introduction of light rail. We know the new and existing park-and-ride sites are incredibly popular in the community and that additional sites will need to be considered as our city grows. I welcome that funding.

Finally, funding is also provided for the preparation of plans for a redevelopment of the intersection of Yarra Glen with Melrose and Yamba drives to improve safety, to ease congestion and to accommodate light rail as well. These combined measures in

the transport and city services portfolio are a significant package of investment in Woden and the south side that will continue to grow the confidence and drive urban regeneration we are already seeing in the town centres for years to come.

The government is also investing in major upgrades to roads as our city grows. Many of the road improvements are centred around Belconnen and Gungahlin, as their population expands. But the budget also funds the planning work necessary for future road upgrades in the growing suburbs of the Molonglo Valley. There is an investment of \$1.25 million for the planning and design of the largest road bridge ever constructed in the ACT, which will cross the Molonglo River, a distance of some 220 metres, then extend to John Gorton Drive to future suburbs like Whitlam. This will link John Gorton Drive with the works which have already begun from William Hovell Drive down to the Molonglo River, which is being completed in stages. Together with funding in last year's budget for early planning on other road connections in Molonglo, the government is advancing the road planning and construction necessary for the future population of Molonglo.

In conclusion, I am really proud to support a budget that grows the key services that our growing city needs and that invests in the renewal of our transport infrastructure and our neighbourhoods. The Transport Canberra and City Services budget measures I have focused on today particularly demonstrate our government's commitment to the regeneration of Woden town centre and the south side, and I commend the budget to the Assembly.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (5.31): Canberra is growing. Our city is expanding up and out. Our inner-city corridors and town centres are become denser, our suburbs are expanding, and new suburbs are coming online quickly. By 2020 our population is expected to reach 428,000: 12,000 more Canberrans in just three short years. As we make room for our new neighbours, the demand for services continues to grow. In this budget the ACT government is investing to meet this growing demand. That means more and improved municipal services, more facilities for travel and transport, and the renewal of our town centres.

We often take municipal services for granted. They are frequently taken care of behind the scenes and go unnoticed, but they have an enormous impact on our lives and how we feel about our city and region. The ACT government does understand the importance of these essential services to Canberrans' lives. We also understand that our new residents must be allowed to enjoy the same level of high-quality services that we value.

This budget commits no less than \$10 million over four years to improve our existing maintenance services and \$10.9 million to deliver municipal services to both infill developments and new suburban estates. With this funding we will be able to better keep our little capital clean and tidy and be readier to respond to maintenance requests from the community. That means more mowing, more weeding and more tree trimming. It is about having better graffiti removal, cleaner lakes and ponds and better bus shelter maintenance.

I know that this investment will have an enormous impact on residents across Canberra. I have spoken to many of my constituents who are eager to see additional funds being directed towards maintaining footpaths, cleaning Lake Ginninderra and managing graffiti around Belconnen.

A growing city needs to keep moving. Unlike a lot of major cities that have become heavily congested and polluted, Canberra is prepared. The ACT government is working to reduce congestion and help Canberrans move around safely and conveniently, with minimal environmental impact.

I am especially excited about the investment of \$8.4 million over the next four years to upgrade intersections in my electorate of Ginninderra. I have had many conversations with Belconnen residents about how terrifying it can be to navigate the intersections of Ginninderra Drive and Tillyard Drive in particular, Tillyard Drive and Lhotsky Street, and Kuringa Drive and Owen Dixon Drive. When the sun is setting or during peak hour, driving through these intersections can be particularly dangerous. Together with all of my Ginninderra colleagues—it was bipartisan—we worked very hard on ensuring that these dangers were addressed.

The government has listened to the concerns of Belconnen residents and has delivered. The upgrades, which include traffic lights as well as additional lanes at the Kuringa Drive intersection, will make the intersections much safer to move through. To ease congestion in the future, the government will also be duplicating William Slim Drive from Ginninderra Drive to the Barton Highway. The 3.2 kilometres of new carriageway, 6.4 kilometres of new cycle lanes and a new bridge over Ginninderra Creek will make travel between Belconnen and Gungahlin much more convenient. I am excited that planning is underway with this budget announcement.

As you know, Madam Speaker, Canberrans are an active bunch. We like to walk and cycle more than any other community in Australia. I am glad that this government is doing more to invest in active travel infrastructure, and I am delighted that we will be allocating \$10.5 million to build the Belco bikeway and upgrade the pedestrian connections and road intersections in the Belconnen town centre.

The Belco bikeway will connect the town centre to the University of Canberra and, importantly, it will make use of the old Joynton Smith busway, which is currently an eyesore and attracts unsavoury behaviour. Opening it up will completely change the look and feel of that part of the town centre, and bring residents living in Totterdell Street, Ranken Place and Morell Close back into the town centre. While this busway has been fenced off and boarded up, it has meant that we have two different parts of the town centre, and it has not been very nice for everybody. It has looked awful, and it has kept people from being able to move around the town centre more freely.

I have spoken to many members of the local community, especially residents living close to the old busway, and everyone is very supportive of this project, without exception. It is the result of extensive community consultation, which I helped to lead through the Belconnen town centre master plan process, and Belconnen residents' views are going to continue to inform its development. Indeed many people have

already been involved in the design and in suggesting amenities through the online survey and face-to-face consultation, the latter of which I was pleased to attend and see so many interested people at in early June.

We Belconnen residents will also finally have a completed pathway around Lake Ginninderra. The budget allocates funds to construct the boardwalk around the lakeside of the Belconnen Arts Centre. Currently, we do have a path, but it takes you right onto the road, whereas the jewel in Belconnen town centre and Belconnen overall is obviously the lake, and being closer to the lake is very important. It will make a huge difference for those of us who use the lake every day, whether we are travelling around it or using it recreationally, and it will improve community engagement with the Belconnen Arts Centre, an important institution in Belconnen. It is a small thing, but lake users have been asking for it and about it for at least as long as I have lived in the town centre. Once again this government has listened.

These initiatives are a few examples of how we will create livelier public spaces in our town centres, opening them up to more activity and making them even more attractive to locals and visitors alike.

It is not just about our town centres; our suburbs will also see improvements. Our neighbourhood ovals and playgrounds will be upgraded to create better spaces for sports, exercise and play. We will be spending \$2.8 million over four years to improve playing fields and ovals across Canberra. A further \$2.2 million has been allocated to Higgins neighbourhood oval in my electorate. The oval will soon have new turf, a new irrigation system, lighting and a pavilion with toilet facilities. These upgrades will go a long way towards keeping up with the demand that is growing in west Belconnen, as well as encouraging more locals to participate in sports.

As we have heard from many members today, playgrounds are a serious concern for our youngest Canberrans and their families. They are a place to get some fresh air and make new friends. They also play an important role in mental and physical development. Here in Canberra we are lucky to enjoy over 500—I think it is 512 or 514—excellent playgrounds that are safe and fun to use. But to ensure that they stay that way, these playgrounds require maintenance, sometimes due to vandalism but sometimes due to age. This budget earmarks \$300,000 for fixing up high priority playgrounds. These funds will make sure that we can respond to complaints more quickly and keep our playgrounds safe for our young Canberrans.

At least a further \$1 million will be allocated to playgrounds through the better suburbs citizens forum. Sixty-five members of the community are deciding how and where the money should be spent, either to upgrade existing playgrounds or build new ones. The citizens forum will also empower members of our community to decide exactly where our effort and expenditure on city services should go. This is a significant step forward in civic engagement. The ACT government is not just listening to Canberrans about what city services they want; we are letting them directly decide how the funds are going to be spent.

*Mr Parton interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Don't respond to interjections, Ms Cheyne.

**MS CHEYNE:** I will take your advice, Madam Speaker; it is always excellent. I spent a good six hours as an observer at one of the consultations a few weeks ago, as well as welcoming the forum to Belconnen on their first day when they visited the library and then went on to visit John Knight Memorial Park. I have to say how impressed I was with all of the participants in the forum. They are incredibly engaged and thoughtful. It was great to see some of the usual suspects whose names come up a lot in consultations, as well as many people whom I had not met before, and a number of people who have engaged with me since I was elected as a member of this place. I also want to put on the record my thanks to the many TCCS officers who have been giving up their weekends to facilitate this forum and give the participants all the information they need to make their decisions.

This budget provides for tangible, everyday improvements that make direct and positive impacts on Canberrans. They will help to keep our city beautiful and welcoming, and make sure that our cool little capital remains one of the most livable cities on earth.

The ACT government is listening, and we are delivering what our growing community needs: more municipal services and green spaces to keep Canberra clean and green; more bikeways and walkways, improved playgrounds and upgraded ovals to support Canberrans' active lifestyles; and better connected town centres and activated public spaces to strengthen our sense of community. We are listening to what Canberrans want and we are delivering growing services for our growing city.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate—Part 1.5

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

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## **Reclink Community Cup**

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (5.41): I rise to update the Assembly on preparations for the second Canberra Reclink Community Cup, which is scheduled for 16 September at Jamison Oval in Macquarie. Reclink community cups are AFL matches that have been played regularly around Australia raising money for Reclink Australia. Reclink provides on-the-ground services for the disadvantaged and homeless, and they really do a good job here in Canberra. They do wonderful work, in conjunction with JACS, on Ainslie Avenue at Reid.

We are blessed to have Mark Ransome running the Reclink ship here in Canberra. He is awesome. He goes above and beyond every day trying to make the lives of so many much better. It is my pleasure through this fundraising event to be assisting his work. I have seen firsthand the benefits that he brings to so many members of the community.

The Reclink Community Cup pits two teams of non-footballers against each other in a game of very friendly AFL. This is, very loosely speaking, the media versus musos, following the concept that was originally established in Melbourne a decade or so ago. The musos are known as the Limestones and the media are known as the Noise.

It was an honour for me to play in the inaugural Reclink Community Cup last year. I was given honorary playing rights with the Noise after my 33 years in the media. We did get rolled by the Limestones, but only just, and we are back to beat them this year. I must also mention my Greens colleague Mr Rattenbury who umpired on the day in a relatively unbiased fashion.

Training has been going now for three weeks in the lead-up to this game. I am pleased to say that the playing ranks of the Noise have been bolstered by my colleague the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Coe, who kicks the ball like Billy Brownless and runs like Peter Riccardi. Yes, he is a Geelong man.

On the media side we do have a lot of *Canberra Times* journalists, which probably excludes Mr Barr from participating. There are a number of political media advisers and some radio people from Capital Radio at Mitchell, but at this point there have been no participants from Hit104.7, which disappoints me greatly. I feel there is a need to call out the breakfast duo from Hit104.7, Ned and Josh. Madam Speaker, you may not think that Ned and Josh really care about what goes on in this chamber, but I am telling you they are actually serious political nerds. I am pretty confident that they would be tuned into this broadcast.

Ned and Josh, I know you are watching. I say to you, “AFL Reclink Community Cup, 16 September.” My message to Ned and Josh would be, “Are you men or are you boys? You talk the talk locked up safely in your little studio there with cushions on the walls and the ceiling, but are you man enough to come out and have a kick of the footy for a good cause?” I am counting on you.

### **Appropriation Bill 2018-2019—mental health**

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (5.45): I will speak briefly. During some comments, I think on the education line, Mr Rattenbury asked for some clarification of a figure that both Mrs Kikkert and I used in our remarks on mental health. I refer Mr Rattenbury to the *Independent external review of mental health inpatient services within ACT Health*, dated 22-23 May this year. On pages 16 and 17, the reviewers talk about the service context. I will read a little from this review because it is important to put this in context:

The reviewers noted a chronic skills shortage across all craft groups but most notably in nursing and medicine. These shortages are 4.2% for medical,

14.1% for nursing and 14.1% for hotel and allied health staff and consequently the service has a reliance on VMOs, locum medical staff and agency nurses. At particular times, such as over Christmas and New Year, these staff shortages are inevitably more pronounced as agency nurse supply dries up. The skills shortage needs to be seen in a broader context that could be considered to be a ‘perfect storm’ that, if not attended to, could contribute to organizational risk and a decrease in patient safety. The broader context includes:

(a) Budget constraint—with a savings and efficiency target of 9% over 2 years.

I think I need to put on the record that I think I used the term “cut in budget” in my comments this morning. I am not sure what Mrs Kikkert said, but the issue raised by the reviewers was a savings and efficiency target of 9.2 per cent over two years. The review continues:

(b) Steadily increasing demand for mental health services via the ED ... there was an increase in the order of 8.5%.

(c) A steadily reducing average length of stay (ALOS)—which is directly related to the increased demand for beds ... and an occupancy rate higher than 100 per cent in the Acute Mental Health Unit.

For the information of Mr Rattenbury and other members, the budget constraints that Mrs Kikkert and I were speaking about were those highlighted in the *Independent external review of mental health inpatient services within ACT Health*, which are a savings and efficiency target of nine per cent over two years. If there is not a savings and efficiency target, I think Mr Rattenbury needs to come down here and say that there is not, and why it is that the reviewers who conducted this review in May this year thought that there was.

### **Australian Federation of Korean Communities**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (5.48): In November last year, the Korean communities in each state and territory came together to form a national network, and the Australian Federation of Korean Communities, the AFKC, was born. It was a great pleasure for me to be invited to address the new executive, and an even greater pleasure that the inaugural meeting of that new executive, last November, was held in my hometown of Canberra. It was fitting that the AFKC’s first national forum be held right here in the heart of Australia’s capital also.

Over a number of months, I have worked with and have seen the enormous efforts of Canberra-based executive vice-president, Philip Ahn, and Canberra-based committee member Hun-Jae Jung in organising the future leaders forum which was held on Saturday evening at an iconic Canberra location, the great hall at University House at the Australian National University.

The forum brought together about 50 young Korean-Australians, mostly from Canberra but from all around Australia, who contribute to our world as doctors, lawyers, engineers, plumbers, labourers, accountants, musicians, dentists, university lecturers, small business owners and public servants. The forum also brought together

about 70 first-generation Korean-Australians who really did it tough. They migrated to Australia in the 1970s and 1980s as adults and started a new life where they did not know the language, the culture or the people. These were the first-generation Korean-Australians who are our parents and our grandparents.

The forum was an opportunity for our young Korean-Australian future leaders to pay tribute to our first-generation Korean-Australians and to, I hope, be inspired and motivated by our political leaders and members of the Korean-Australian community who forged a path to enable them to dream big and reach their full potential in their adopted country of Australia.

The Korean community here in Canberra is a small but dynamic one. Korean-Canberrans are our public servants, our labourers and plumbers, our academics, our dentists, our lawyers, our accountants, our small business owners, our religious leaders and—from October 2016—a member of a state and territory level parliament.

Australia is, undoubtedly, one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Canberra is home to people from hundreds of countries who speak hundreds of different languages, and also to numerous diplomatic missions. The diversity of our city is one of the things that make Canberra a great place to live. We can learn so much from each other in terms of food, language and culture, and the richness of our city being home to a melting pot of different cultures and people makes for a much better world.

I hope that the young Korean-Australians who attended the forum on Saturday were able to see just how much their contributions are valued by Australian society, just how much they have to give, and just how much they have to learn. It was a great privilege to be asked to speak about my experiences in becoming the first Korean-Australian member of parliament and to give an address at the formal dinner event.

I acknowledge the Hon Alan Tudge, the federal Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, who made the trip from Melbourne to join us; our own ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Rachel Stephen-Smith, for her time and her encouragement for the community to apply for the ACT grants to showcase the Korean culture to the broader Canberra community; the Leader of the Opposition, Alistair Coe, for his warm words and his networking with our future leaders; and my colleague the shadow minister for multicultural affairs, Elizabeth Kikkert, for her presence.

Pulling off a first is hard no matter what it is. I congratulate the AFKC in hosting its first national event and I thank them for hosting it in Canberra. Of course, I thank the countless sponsors who allowed it to happen, including His Excellency, Baek-Soon Lee, the Korean ambassador to Australia. To President Don Moon and his executive, thank you; I think you got a taste of the hope for the future of young Korean-Australians in being able to make a positive contribution to Australian society.

Finally, I make special mention of two hardworking Canberrans, Philip Ahn and Hun-Jae Jung. Without their blood, sweat and tears, I am sure the forum would not have been the success that it was. Congratulations. I look forward to seeing the AFKC grow and contribute to the future of Canberra and Australia.

### **Australian Federation of Korean Communities Lyneham Commons**

**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) (5.52): I thank Ms Lee for her mention; the Australian Federation of Korean Communities forum was a very enjoyable event. I congratulate the organisers on a fabulous effort in such a short space of time.

I recently had the pleasure of attending the third birthday celebration of the Lyneham Commons. The community braved pretty typical Canberra weather for 15 July to come together and be part of the birthday celebrations with live music, food stalls, children's activities, and a range of other stalls and activities celebrating nature and community in our beautiful city.

Whether with packed picnics, purchased treats or foraged goods, neighbours came together and celebrated the commons and the community it has created. Even though I arrived towards the end of the event, and missed out on the birthday cake, there were plenty of people enjoying the atmosphere and learning more about the commons. Simple but fun activities for the kids included a maze to wind one's way through, and a massive pile of leaves to jump into, a great example of nature play.

As members would be aware, the Lyneham Commons food forest is an initiative that has been led and managed by the local community. Three years ago a small group of passionate and motivated local residents, working with the government, managed to turn an underutilised parcel of land next to the bikepath between Lyneham High School and Lyneham Primary School into a garden and food forest, a place for the local community to grow its own food and share its gardening knowledge. When this initiative was established in 2015, it was described by gardening guru Costa Georgiadis as a project of national significance.

Lyneham Commons has grown to become one of Canberra's most successful examples of urban food production. By employing sustainable, organic gardening methods and permaculture principles, the self-titled commoners aim to reduce agricultural impact, improve food security, and provide education and healthy food for the community. Through its monthly working bees, the commons helps to build connections within the community and provide meaningful engagement for any local residents who come along to participate.

The various patches and plots are filled with seasonal vegies and fruits—flowering artichokes, zucchinis, rocket, raspberries, tomatoes, herbs and nuts—and orchard trees, including cherries, apples, figs, plums and mulberry trees. By planting and

maintaining an organic garden full of flowering trees and plants, the commons is also helping to support our local bee population. I know that members are well aware of the importance of bees.

The Lyneham Commons also adds to Canberra's famously successful urban forest. The trees on our streets, in our parks and in our private and public gardens all contribute to our city's atmosphere and beauty. Trees mitigate the heat island effect and provide shady spaces for the community to gather during our scorching Canberra summer.

Much of our existing urban forest already produces food; collecting plums from street trees is an annual tradition in some Canberra suburbs. At the commons, the natives planted between the fruit and nut trees offer windbreaks and help to balance soil nutrients. The Lyneham Commons is taking these staples of Canberra life and using them as a tool to promote a positive message of sustainability and to help build connections in the community.

This connectedness and inclusion of our community is of enormous importance, especially among groups that are known to experience social isolation, such as older Canberrans and people with disabilities. Many Canberrans owe their health, their mental health and their quality of life to the support and connection offered by the inclusive and active community around them. When communities come together with a common goal, be it through a community garden, a walking group or even a monthly coffee catch-up, it naturally provides an additional avenue of social support.

It is wonderful to see this little corner of Lyneham being used so productively. It is a spot I walked past pretty much every day as a teenager when walking between Lyneham high and the shops or walking the dog along the bikepath. I hope that the example set by the Lyneham Commons and by the many other community initiatives across our city inspires more Canberrans to find ways to build spaces and activities that are inclusive, sustainable and community minded.

### **Hackett—tuckerbox**

**MISS C BURCH** (Kurrajong) (5.56): I rise this evening to talk about the wonderful work being done by one of Kurrajong's local community groups—the tuckerbox at Holy Cross Anglican Church in Hackett. The tuckerbox is a food service designed to help Canberrans who are struggling to make ends meet. It gives them access to high quality, nutritious groceries, including an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables.

The tuckerbox was started by Holy Cross Anglican Church to address an urgent community need for access to low cost fresh food. Pensioners, people living with disabilities and families who are doing it tough are among the members of tuckerbox. Each week the friendly team of volunteers make sure that members have access to a wide range and variety of goods to meet their needs.

Every Thursday Kirsty and her incredibly dedicated and hard-working team of volunteers receive up to three tonnes of groceries from Foodbank New South Wales and ACT. The team gets everything unpacked and stored away ready for the weekend.

The church generously provides a space to store these deliveries while the team prepares for a busy Saturday of service. On Saturdays this hard-working team shows up again to transform the annex at the back of the church into a makeshift grocery store, offering a wide variety of products at a significantly discounted price. With a large delivery of bread, milk, fruit and vegetables from OzHarvest, the volunteers lay out the range of goods that cover many families' weekly needs.

I spent the Saturday before last volunteering with Kirsty and her team, so I could meet the team and see the operations of the tuckbox in action. I was incredibly impressed by the speed at which her team transforms the church and surrounds into the tuckbox. It really is an amazing operation. So many volunteers give their time week after week bringing the warmth of their generosity to our local community. The tuckbox is also a great place for people to have a chat and keep in touch each week to prevent the isolation experienced by so many.

After Saturday's operations come to a close, the team again pack everything up and clean up so that the church is ready for Sunday services. Each Thursday the whole process begins again. The tuckbox is an invaluable part of the inner north community, and I thank everybody involved with it for their service. I thank Kirsty Baker and her team of volunteers for their tireless work. Together with the Holy Cross Anglican Church, they provide such a valuable service for the less fortunate members of our community.

### **Mr Shaun Fahey—tribute**

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (5.59): I rise to pay my respects to a member of the Australian New Zealand deaf community who died recently. Shaun Fahey from New South Wales passed away after a short battle with cancer. He was a well-respected member of the New Zealand deaf community. He was a proud grandfather, father and husband to Rachel Turner-Fahey and his family.

He was involved in theatre, sports and storytelling, and he was a talented illustrator. I will have a long-lasting memory of Shaun because I have two pictures in my office that he drew for me illustrating my sign name and also the sign for "politician".

In Australia Shaun was involved with the illustration of the popular Auslan resource, *The Survival Guide to Auslan*, working alongside Dr Trevor Johnston and Dr Adam Schembri. I would like to thank Deaf Aotearoa and Deaf Australia for the information about Shaun. I pass on my condolences to his family and to the wider Australia and New Zealand deaf community. Rest in peace, Shaun Fahey.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 6.01 pm.**