



Debates

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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.

Suspension of standing orders

Statement by Speaker

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, before I call the first item of private members' business, I want to reflect and make some comments on yesterday. Yesterday Mr Wall moved:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent order of the day No 6, Private Members' business, relating to development application assessments, being called on forthwith.

The motion was agreed to and then, when the order of the day was read out, the Assembly adjourned the matter until the next day of sitting. Members will recall that order of the day No 6 had been the subject of a resolution of the Assembly on 3 April which specified that the order of the day could not be brought on until after the day of tabling of the report on the development application processes by the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal.

Standing order 137 requires that a resolution agreed to by the Assembly may be rescinded, provided that three days notice is given, unless that rescinding process relates to correcting mistakes or things that are irregular in the resolution. The Assembly has done two things. It has adjourned a matter and set conditions on when that matter may be dealt with, and then yesterday it suspended standing orders to call that matter on but without rescinding the earlier resolution that was agreed on 3 April this year.

In deciding how to interpret what the Assembly has done, the Clerk has informed me that, notwithstanding that there was no rescinding of the resolution, he has moved the order of the day in question back to the list of private members' orders of the day so that the matter can be ordered to come on through the routine admin and procedure processes. Can I remind members that the Clerk and his officers are available to provide procedural advice when a member is proposing to do something that is not standard practice, and I would encourage MLAs to utilise that advice.

Mr Wall: Madam Speaker, just on that statement, if the motion has been moved previously, as it was in April, would that now run afoul of the same question rule if it is listed as a motion that is newly submitted?

MADAM SPEAKER: It is my understanding that we should have rescinded the resolution earlier, and to do that there should have been three days notice. But there was the intent from yesterday's proceedings that the standing orders be suspended to

adjourn the debate, which would have allowed it to be put back in private members' orders of the day—as we have done, even though it is not good, standard practice—so that it could be listed through admin and procedure. It was not ideal. The Clerk has provided a remedy that has put it back on the notice paper so that it can come on through admin and procedure listing it for a private members' day at another time.

Waste—recycling innovation

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.05): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the Centre for International Economics Report *Headline economic value for waste and materials efficiency in Australia* recognises the benefits of a circular economy in creating new industries, markets and products, and leading to new revenue streams and creation of jobs;
- (b) principle 3 of the 2018 National Waste Policy is “increase use of recycled material and build demand and markets for recycled products”;
- (c) the ACT Government has an ambitious goal of achieving 90 percent of waste being diverted from landfill by 2025;
- (d) recommendation 1.5 of the Waste Feasibility Study was for the ACT Government to “identify and facilitate market development for materials that are currently sent to landfill”;
- (e) the ACT Government’s continuing work on developing a procurement model for mandated recycled content in the resurfacing of all roads in the ACT and any new road pavement;
- (f) the “China Sword” policy and similar suspensions of the import of plastic materials around the world has had a significant effect on the viability of the plastics recycling market in Australia;
- (g) there are challenging conditions in the market for the recycling of glass, highlighted by the ABC’s Four Corners program;
- (h) around 45 000 tonnes of timber is landfilled annually in the ACT;
- (i) around two-thirds of all textiles in Australia end up in landfill; and
- (j) re-using and recycling creates around 9.2 jobs per 10 000 tonnes of waste compared with 2.8 jobs per 10 000 tonnes of waste sent to landfill; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) direct the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment to undertake a public investigation into innovative ways to grow the recycling and waste reduction industry in Canberra and report by July 2020;
- (b) include within the terms of reference of the investigation:
 - (i) opportunities for the creation of sustainable, secure jobs within the recycling and waste reduction industry in the ACT;
 - (ii) opportunities for artisans, craftspeople and not-for-profits to work with and support the recycling and waste reduction industry in the ACT;

- (iii) opportunities for business to work with and support recycling and waste reduction industry in the ACT;
 - (iv) public education and awareness raising that may be beneficial to supporting the recycling and waste reduction industry and its intents; and
 - (v) specific analysis on opportunities for textiles, building and plastic waste as well as any other waste stream of note identified as part of the inquiry;
- (c) work with the CBR innovation network and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate to develop a strategy and recommendations on measures that may be taken by the ACT Government to support the growth of the industry; and
- (d) coordinate with the Waste Infrastructure Study commissioned by Transport Canberra and City Services to inform the final report.

A lot of what we consume as a society ends up as waste to landfill. The food we eat, the appliances we buy and the clothing we wear all have a huge impact on our environment and our economy. In moving this motion today, I am calling on the ACT government, this Assembly and our community to start focusing on how we can find new and innovative ways to reduce waste that will benefit our environment and economy.

In calling for this, I acknowledge the ACT government's goal of achieving 90 per cent of waste being diverted from landfill by 2025. This ambitious goal sets us in the right direction to mitigate the impacts of waste and pollution on the environment. But to achieve this goal I believe we need to shift our attention and also look at new and innovative ways to reduce and re-use waste. We should be asking about and searching for what we can do to address the environmental and economic impacts of waste in areas that we have not necessarily turned an eye to in the past.

Canberrans understand the importance of reducing, re-using and recycling daily. This ACT government understands that we need to implement innovative ways of reducing waste and creating new jobs. We have established several initiatives that divert waste from landfill and repurpose the materials for good use.

One such initiative is the use of recycled content in the resurfacing of roads in the ACT. Old car tyres, printer toner powder, recycled road surface, recycled road base, recycled concrete and fly ash from power generation are all used in the construction and maintenance of Canberra's roads. Soft plastics, printer toner cartridges and crushed glass have also been trialled in new road surfaces, with the first trial of these materials completed at the Gundaroo Drive roundabout in my own electorate of Yerrabi. This new road resurfacing program has upskilled workers in this sector and has provided a pathway for the ACT government to continue work on developing a procurement model for mandated recycling content.

In addition to innovative road resurfacing, we have also implemented the hugely successful container deposit scheme and the rollout of green waste bins. I am also looking forward to the re-usable coffee cup zone trial getting underway in Gungahlin,

as a result of my recent private member's motion. The re-usable coffee cup zone will support businesses and consumers to reduce the number of disposable coffee cups that end up in our landfill; and, from the feedback I have received so far, people are very excited for the trial to begin.

All of these initiatives show that it is possible for us to transition to a circular economy here in Canberra. As defined by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a circular economy is a framework for an economy that is restorative and regenerative by design. The three key principles of a circular economy are to design out waste pollution, keep products and materials in use, and regenerate natural systems. These principles may seem like obvious ways to reduce waste. However, we know that our current business as usual model will not allow us to achieve these objectives. That is why it is imperative that governments and our communities look for new opportunities to build a circular economy.

The European Commission has already begun work on transitioning to a circular economy. As the 2018 national waste report highlights, the European Commission's circular economy action plan sets out targets for the reduction of different waste streams. The action plan includes goals to separate the collection of hazardous household waste by 2022, biowaste by 2023 and textiles by 2025, among several other ambitious and important goals. Through the establishment of the broader circular economy package, the European Commission has estimated that the transition to a circular economy would provide waste management savings of €30 billion over 20 years.

While talking about the economic saving that can come from circular economy initiatives, it is also important to note the benefit to working people. ACT Labor is the party for working people in this city, and it is therefore up to us as a Labor government to make sure Canberrans have access to secure local jobs, now and into the future. Re-using and recycling creates approximately 9.2 jobs per 10,000 tonnes of waste, compared with 2.8 jobs per 10,000 tonnes of waste sent to landfill. These are jobs that should be invested in and, realistically, will become the jobs of the very near future, as part of a cleaner and more sustainable economy.

We should also be looking to invest in the research and development that will advance sustainable technology and industries. We should be finding ways to encourage people to explore their innovative ideas and support their start-ups and small businesses. There are already several sustainable businesses in Canberra that are transforming the way we think about what our environment will look like in the future, and I would like to highlight two of these in a moment.

With such significant savings and job opportunities to be made, we should be looking at how we can follow the example of bodies like the European Commission in transitioning to a circular economy. One area of opportunity that I want to bring into the spotlight today is clothing and textiles.

When talking about waste streams and opportunities for new initiatives, textile waste is something that cannot be ignored. In 2009-10 the Australian Bureau of Statistics calculated that Australians sent approximately 85 per cent of purchased textiles to

landfill. That is 501,000 tonnes of clothing and textiles. Similarly, the 2018 national waste report identified that two-thirds of all textiles in Australia end up in landfill. There is no denying that this is a disastrous amount of waste going to landfill that has a huge potential to be reduced and re-used, instead of making it into our bins and our land.

The harmful impact of textile waste is not just a concern to our environment; it also impacts our society. Australia's charities are being placed under significant financial and operational pressure as a result of people donating poor quality and unwearable clothing and textiles. By dumping or donating unusable clothing, Australians are placing the burden on charities to dispose of the items. The National Association of Charitable Recycling Organisations has estimated that it costs charities up to \$13 million a year just to dispose of these items. The serious harm caused by our consumption and disposal habits has now reached further than our environment, to organisations in our community that are seeking to support those in need. From this perspective we cannot ignore the need for textiles to be considered in an investigation into ways we can grow the recycling and waste reduction industry in Canberra.

Despite these concerning facts, there are Canberrans who are leading the way in producing more sustainable textiles and clothing, and reducing the impact of textile waste on our economy. Kelli Donovan is the CEO, creative director and founder of Pure Pod, a sustainable fashion label that provides people with high quality, sustainably sourced and produced clothing. Pure Pod is a great example of a small business that is providing consumers with an alternative to fast fashion. The business is passionate about supporting the Australian fashion industry and looking after the people who make, print and cut the clothing. It comes as no surprise that Kelli is an ethical clothing activist. She has a lot of industry knowledge and would be able to provide the government and our community with great insight into how we can create a more sustainable and waste-minimal textiles industry.

Nina Gbor is another great leader in this space, and I have previously spoken about her work in the Assembly. Nina is the founder and CEO of Eco Styles, a fashion line that uses recycled textiles to reduce textile waste going to landfill. She is known as a style icon and does a lot of great work with people like Kelli to encourage Canberrans to think twice before throwing out unused clothes or purchasing garments from fast fashion chains.

Where people and businesses are doing the commendable thing, they should be supported and encouraged. With people like Kelli and Nina contributing to the sustainable future of textiles, I am confident that Canberra could become a hub for textile waste reduction and recycling.

It is my intention for this motion to start a serious conversation about what we can do as a government and a community to tackle our issues with waste and consumption. I have highlighted the significant opportunity presented by the textiles industry. However, there are a few other areas that should also be considered.

Building materials and the waste that is associated with construction should be further examined for opportunities to reduce and re-use discarded products. For example,

sustainably sourced and recycled timber can play a role in minimising our impact on the natural environment. The repurposing of the old Tharwa bridge is a fantastic example of how our community and environment have benefited from a sustainably sourced product. In fact, the timber logs at the Giralang community park originated from the old Tharwa bridge and are one of the most loved parts of the new park. I know there are also other nature play areas across Canberra that have received the repurposed timber. This has provided a cost saving to both our landfill management and the delivery of services to the community.

Another obvious area for consideration is single-use plastic. There are a lot of initiatives across Australia and the globe that are starting to make up a lot of ground in reducing our dependence on single-use plastics. The ACT government's single-use plastic discussion paper has identified areas where we can reduce the ACT's reliance on single-use plastic, and these opportunities must be looked at in any review of waste reduction. I have been working in my local community to encourage people to ditch single-use plastics where possible, and once again I encourage all members in this place to do the same in their communities.

As part of this conversation and the review which my motion calls for, we need to look at how our economy is structured, and the impact that environmental degradation and climate change are having on it. By identifying the opportunities that could fit within a cleaner economy, we will be able to achieve great outcomes for both the economy and the environment.

We also need to think about whether environmental policies should continue to be analysed through an economic lens or whether it is time to flip the thinking and for economic policies to be examined based on their impacts on our environment. The dangers presented by climate change are known and believed by those on this side of the chamber. It is important that we do everything we can to identify ways to mitigate those dangers and implement the policies that are needed for a cleaner economy.

As I said earlier, business as usual will not provide us with a sustainable future for our environment or our economy. We must look for innovative ways to grow the recycling and waste reduction industry in Canberra. I look forward to the government's report back to the Assembly in 12 months time. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Transport and City Services) (10.16): I thank Ms Orr for bringing to the Assembly this important motion regarding recycling, waste reduction and job creation as we continue our work to responsibly manage waste resources and the environment. Australia is in the midst of a national waste crisis. We have seen the landfilling of recycling material in other jurisdictions as China's national sword policy and actions by other countries mean our waste can no longer simply be sent overseas. We have to take responsibility for it here in a variety of different ways, and that provides both a challenge and an opportunity.

This crisis has put the issue front and centre, and governments need to act to build recycling processing industries at home. Not only does this have the clear

environmental benefits of reducing waste going to landfill but investing in recycling industries has a clear benefit in creating job opportunities for Canberrans and throughout the region more broadly.

This motion highlights the challenges involved in taking the early steps in the ACT's journey toward a circular economy. The ACT government has set ambitious resource recovery goals and it is important to discuss how we can facilitate better recycling behaviours and develop markets for recycled products whilst growing employment and the economy.

I support the objectives of this motion and its direction to consider innovative ways to grow the recycling and waste reduction industry in Canberra, including seeking advice from the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment on this important issue. I also support working with the CBR Innovation Network and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate in developing recommendations on measures that may be taken by the ACT government to support the growth of the recycling industry.

The ACT is one of the best performing jurisdictions in Australia in terms of resource recovery and Canberrans are some of the best recyclers in the country. The government is continually striving to support recycling in Australia. The ACT waste management strategy seeks full resource recovery and a carbon neutral waste sector.

We have a strong, contemporary legislative and regulatory framework under our Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act 2016 that underpins our ability to reduce and sustainably manage waste, supports innovation and investment and promotes responsibility for waste reduction and best practice.

In 2018 we evaluated the waste management strategy through the ACT waste feasibility study and we found that, despite Canberrans' good recycling rates, we need to find ways to move beyond the 70 to 75 per cent resource recovery plateau which we have experienced since the mid-2000s. The evaluation recommended that in order to move towards full resource recovery the government needs to, among other things, continue to find ways to divert material from landfill, particularly organics; and develop and support the enterprises seeking to enter, or transitioning to, a circular economy.

The motion is timely in that the government would like to support Canberrans to transition towards a circular economy. The circular economy promotes avoidance and re-use above recycling. The concepts "design out waste" and "keep products in use" are at the core of the circular economy principles.

In the ACT we are educating the community on how to avoid waste and better re-use, recover and recycle the waste they do produce—for example, our award-winning recycling discovery hub at the materials recovery facility in the ACT that promotes innovative recycling and re-use ideas; our recently refreshed and updated online Recyclopaedia, which is a fantastic resource supporting our community to recycle and reuse products; and a collaboration with local governments that I recently announced,

with the recycle right region-wide campaign to simplify our messaging on recycling and ensure that only clean and correct materials are placed in yellow bins.

We are also collaborating with organisations such as the Canberra Environment Centre to empower our community to create a more sustainable future through lifelong behaviour change, and we are exploring the application of circular economy principles to treat today's waste as tomorrow's resource.

Ms Orr mentioned the work that we are doing using recycled products in our roads and road resurfacing in the Gungahlin area, and we are currently looking at how we can procure a certain amount of recycled content across all roads in the ACT.

We recognise that the circular economy principles present a significant opportunity for the waste and resource recovery sector, helping to stem our reliance on virgin materials and maximise the economic value of waste as a resource. Transport Canberra and City Services has begun engaging with the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment on the potential for an ACT circular economy strategy.

Of course, this pivot towards a circular economy is not unique to the ACT. We have a national waste policy that has been agreed to by all governments—state, territory and commonwealth—that provides opportunities for national collaboration that are being investigated through a circular economy cross-jurisdictional working group as we speak.

The government is administering the ACT container deposit scheme, which is also focused on litter reduction but which encourages recycling industry development and the use of recycled materials in government and private projects as well. During 2018-19 the CDS operator, Return-It, established 21 network collection points, which has resulted in the recovery at this point in time of 27.3 million containers. Glass sand processed through the material recovery facility has been included in successful trials of a new asphalt product in Canberra roads, along with plastic bags and soft plastics collected through the ACT container deposit scheme, printer cartridges, as well as recycled asphalt.

We are also supporting ongoing investment in better recycling and resource recovery through a levy on the disposal of waste to landfill. In July this year we introduced an interim levy on waste disposal for commercial landfill operators at ACT government facilities, and we continue to work on developing an enhanced permanent ACT waste levy. In doing so we are contributing to the harmonisation of waste levies on mainland Australia and joining our jurisdictional partners in sending a strong price signal that makes recycling and resource recovery more attractive than landfill.

The government's approach is part of a broader strategy to improve recycling and support jobs growth. There are 53 licensed waste facilities in the ACT, both public and privately owned, which are improving our ability to recover resources for use locally and for sale to end markets. These facilities provide employment opportunities, provide jobs for Canberrans and further our economic growth.

In the 2019-20 financial year, as the budget shows, our economy is growing strongly, and this is an opportunity to further grow our economic potential. We are creating more jobs for Canberrans through attracting and supporting investment, helping local businesses become export market ready and further developing key industry sectors, including our waste management and resource recovery sector.

Modelling by Access Economics on waste recycling employment suggests that a total of 593 people were directly employed in the recycling industry in the ACT, compared to 63 people on landfill activities. A further 498 people were indirectly employed in recycling, compared to 53 people indirectly employed on landfill activities. The modelling shows that for every 10,000 tonnes of waste that is recycled 9.2 jobs are created, compared to just 2.8 jobs if the same amount of waste was sent to landfill. Recycling clearly has better outcomes in terms of jobs creation.

The government is seeking to support and grow employment in the circular economy through a number of initiatives. For example, the materials recovery facility at Hume is the primary destination for the ACT's recycled goods and provides employment for 38 people. The Green Shed is another employer in the re-usables space, effectively keeping saleable items out of landfill. Since its inception the enterprise has created 70 jobs, sold close to 64 million items and saved almost 60,000 tonnes from going into landfill.

The ACT is also supporting the Soft Landing mattress recycling centre at the Hume materials recovery precinct, providing a shed space in proximity to the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre. It is a social enterprise offering real job opportunities for people who experience barriers to employment in the open labour market and currently employs 17 people breaking down mattresses into their component parts so that they can then be recycled.

There are also over 50 truck drivers providing the territory's essential domestic waste and recycling collection services across the ACT. Best practice waste management has also supported employment growth internationally. We have seen recycling rates in the European Union increase significantly since the mid-1990s, and that has translated into employment growth in the recycling sector there. The overall employment related to the recycling of materials in European countries increased by 45 per cent from 2000 to 2007.

This works in terms of providing jobs, and, more importantly, the research shows that recycling can create jobs at higher income levels than landfilling or incinerating waste. Specifically, recycling a tonne of waste will pay \$US101 more in salaries and wages than disposing of it in landfill. This is being demonstrated in other jurisdictions and locally and is something we need to build on. I commend Ms Orr's motion to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.26): I thank Ms Orr for bringing this motion to the Assembly. Waste and recycling is an issue that I am particularly interested in, both as shadow minister for urban services, which includes waste collection and recycling, and also as acting shadow minister for the environment while my colleague Ms Lee is

away. In addition, as a Canberran, I am interested in this matter, as are most Canberrans.

Most Canberrans care a lot about waste and recycling. We spend a lot of our time remembering our keep cups and re-usable bags. We try to read the little triangles on the bottom of our food containers to work out whether they are recyclable or not and put them in the right place. We choose cardboard straws

It is both an emotional issue and an environmental issue for Canberrans when we hear of stockpiling of recyclable waste and even dumping of recycled material due to the lack of a market to use it. Recycling in Australia has become more difficult since the Chinese policy of accepting waste was tightened and this is having an impact on our waste industry in the ACT. But it has had an invigorating impact upon consumers and the market in pushing for improved recycling outcomes.

I feel Ms Orr has taken a number of steps to make this motion agreeable and acceptable to all parties in the Assembly. Her passion for this area is apparent in a number of motions that she has brought before the Assembly.

I feel this motion is reasonable in requesting that the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment conduct an investigation and report to the Assembly regarding the growth of the recycling and waste reduction industries in Canberra. Of course, we know that the commissioner is knee-deep, if not deeper, into the four-yearly *State of the environment report*, which is due to be published later this year. We need to ensure that the commissioner has adequate time to develop the report that was called for in this motion.

The terms in Ms Orr's motion are very broad, but I appreciate that she has focused on the need for the creation of secure jobs within the recycling and waste industry in the ACT and the opportunities for businesses to be involved in the solution. We will be supporting this motion today.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.29): I am very happy that Ms Orr has brought this motion forward today. It is a topic for which I have great passion, and one that is well worth discussing here in the Assembly. I thank her for bringing it forward. In her speech and in the motion she has made some very interesting points.

From an ACT Greens perspective, we agree that recycling of waste is an important issue. Over many years we have worked to advance waste policy in the ACT, including through our successive parliamentary agreements. There is currently a lot of policy work happening in the ACT, which is very good. Ostensibly, this is largely through the waste feasibility study, which was a parliamentary agreement item.

Our view on waste and recycling is pretty clear, and we have talked about it for decades. Firstly, we need to be consuming less of the resources of the planet. That is the first and most important step. That is why we have been supportive of initiatives such as the plastic ban bag and have pushed for the phase-out of single-use plastics. The first step is always to reduce.

We also need to recycle the resources we do use for their highest possible use. This means we use fewer resources, which are usually finite. The extraction of most resources has some sort of environmental impact and causes environmental damage when they are extracted. If you think of things like oil for plastics, timber and even the metals that go into many of the electronic goods that we consume these days, these resources both are finite and have environmental consequences by their harvesting.

Organic waste is one important area of recycling in which we have a particular interest. Currently, organic waste largely goes to landfill, where it breaks down anaerobically and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. We need to collect and process it through processes like composting or anaerobic digestion. Not only does this reduce the greenhouse gas impact of releasing all of that methane but it actually creates a valuable resource. Composting, for example, creates soil enrichers, and these improve the soil. That is another valuable climate change mitigation measure, as soil can sequester carbon. I recently saw a news report of a new scientific study that found that we have underestimated the impact of soils in terms of their capture and also the potential release of greenhouse gases under various scenarios. The impact on soil is very important.

The main point I would emphasise in today's debate is that we are mostly at the point where the government needs to be getting on with it. We need to be implementing waste and recycling solutions. There has been a lot of policy work done on waste over many years. We have had some very good studies, analysis, policy ideas and cogitation. There was a federal Senate report from a committee which my colleague Peter Whish-Wilson was on and has been very vocal about. I think we have all the ideas; we need to get on with creating the industries. There are always points around job creation. It is particularly relevant in this context, and that is why implementation is the key to this.

As an example, my colleague Ms Le Couteur moved a motion in the Assembly recently regarding the collection and recycling of organic household waste. In coming years there will be some moves on that, which is a good outcome, but it is an issue that has been around for some time. This demonstrates the fact that the policy work is often well advanced but the implementation tends to be rather slower than we might care for.

As I said, the issue of the recycling industry specifically is a good one. The China sword policy has particularly highlighted the problem that Australia and many other countries are relying on recycling industries in other countries. We should be setting up our own. There are many advantages to setting up our own. They include local jobs and industries but also closer oversight to ensure that the recycling is occurring properly; fewer carbon miles; and even the removal of the "out of sight, out of mind" effect, which plays on human behaviour when it comes to things like waste.

Rather than sending the products we use to another country, they will need to be processed here. That really is the way it should work. I am not saying that everything needs to be processed in the Canberra region, but there are real opportunities for us to

do that here, which addresses some of the other issues I have just touched on. Also it brings the other benefits that Ms Orr spoke about in her remarks in terms of job creation, investment opportunities and the like.

I would emphasise that, for me, the key outcome from today's motion is to get on with it. I seek leave to move amendments that are consistent with that.

Leave granted.

MR RATTENBURY: I move:

(1) Omit paragraph (2)(a), substitute:

“(a) consider innovative ways to grow the recycling and waste reduction industry in Canberra, including by asking the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment for advice on the issue;”.

(2) Omit paragraph (2)(b), substitute:

“(b) consider the following issues:

(i) opportunities for the creation of sustainable, secure jobs within the recycling and waste reduction industry in the ACT;

(ii) opportunities for artisans, craftspeople and not-for-profits to work with and support the recycling and waste reduction industry in the ACT;

(iii) opportunities for business to work with and support recycling and waste reduction industry in the ACT;

(iv) public education and awareness raising that may be beneficial to supporting the recycling and waste reduction industry and its intents; and

(v) specific analysis on opportunities for textiles, building and plastic waste, as well as any other waste stream of note identified as part of the inquiry;”.

(3) Omit paragraph (2)(d), substitute:

“(d) coordinate the above work with the Waste Infrastructure Study commissioned by Transport Canberra and City Services; and”.

(4) Add new paragraph (2)(e):

“(e) provide a report to the Assembly on the above work by July 2020.”.

This amendment is a subtle change. Ms Orr's motion calls for the commissioner to undertake a full investigation. I am the minister responsible for the commissioner, and I have had a chat with the commissioner about this. Ms Lawder touched on the fact that the commissioner is very busy. Investigations tend to be quite long and large pieces of work. I think the commissioner really should play a role in this work. My amendment calls on the commissioner to be involved through the provision of advice. I know the commissioner and her team have quite a bit of expertise in this area and can bring a lot of value to the discussion. If we want to meet the proposed reporting time line that Ms Orr has in her motion, rather than undertaking a full investigation, I think it is better that we have the commissioner involved in that way.

It is a bit technical, but, because of the definition of an investigation under the legislation, I have proposed to Ms Orr that this is the way to proceed. I believe she is supportive of that. That is the key thing my amendment seeks to do today.

Overall, I think this is a good piece of work. TCCS has been building up considerable knowledge in this area in the last couple of years and I think there is plenty of scope to get on with. We have ambitious waste reduction targets in the ACT. That is right. It is right from a resource usage point of view and it is right from a recovery point of view. It is consistent with our greenhouse gas objectives to be carbon neutral by 2045, because of the impact of waste on our greenhouse targets.

One of the things that we are not doing at the moment in our greenhouse work is accounting for scope 3 emissions. That is a piece of work I would like to advance. It is quite complex and it is one that no jurisdiction is grappling with well at the moment, but it is one that we can do important work on. Once we get into those scope 3 emission issues of consumption, recycling and waste very much come to the fore. This work fits in well in that regard.

I am very pleased to support this motion today. As I touched on, the minor amendment I have circulated clarifies the role that the commissioner will take. I look forward to seeing the report back from the Assembly in July 2020 with the combined contributions of the CBR Innovation Network; the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate; TCCS; and the commissioner for the environment. That will bring together the various strands of government that have a role to play here in terms of technical expertise, waste policy, and how to create jobs and economic opportunity, and provide this Assembly with some clear guidance on how we should proceed. I commend my amendment to the Assembly and indicate the Greens' support for Ms Orr's work on this.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.37): I am very encouraged and a little excited by the positivity that this motion has been received with. I will be supporting Mr Rattenbury's very sensible amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Health—diabetes education and testing

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.38): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the 2019 Diabetes Week has just finished, from 14-20 July 2019;
- (b) diabetes is the No 1 chronic disease in Australia;
- (c) in the ACT, 1926 people have Type 1 diabetes;

- (d) in the ACT, 14 777 people have diagnosed Type 2 diabetes;
 - (e) in the ACT, 1053 people have diagnosed gestational diabetes;
 - (f) in the ACT, a further 106 people have been diagnosed with other, rarer forms of diabetes; and
 - (g) a further 5500 people in the ACT are likely to have undiagnosed diabetes;
- (2) further notes that:
- (a) diabetes can be due to hereditary factors and also lifestyle factors; and
 - (b) diabetes can lead to a range of complications, including blindness and amputation; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) recognise and applaud the work of diabetes educators, dietitians, podiatrists, nurses, exercise physiologists and other health workers who strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for people with diabetes in the ACT; and
 - (b) work closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT to ensure testing of ACT public servants in the workplace for diabetes.

I am sure we are all aware that diabetes is a huge health challenge we must confront and address. Diabetes is Australia's number one chronic disease and can lead to a range of health complications, including heart disease, stroke, kidney issues, blindness and amputation. It can also cause death.

Many people live up to seven years with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes before, for some reason, they get tested and are diagnosed with diabetes. Thousands of Canberrans have been diagnosed and are living with different types of diabetes. Nearly 18,000 people in the ACT have diagnosed diabetes. Of those around 1,926 have type 1 diabetes; 14,770 have type 2 diabetes; 1,053 have gestational diabetes; and 106 people have other more rare types of diabetes. But it is also estimated that about 5,500 people in the ACT are silently living with diabetes without knowing it. In effect, that may bring us up to something more like 25,000 people in the ACT with this chronic health condition.

When you are diagnosed you are better able to manage this chronic condition and mitigate complications. Diabetes often comes with other associated health conditions—for example, high blood pressure. Having the condition diagnosed means you are able to stay healthier for longer. For example, recently Diabetes NSW & ACT held a clinic in one ACT pharmacy and in one week at one pharmacy they diagnosed 20 Canberrans with high blood sugar levels. There is now an opportunity for those 20 Canberrans to receive the medical treatment they need to stay healthier for longer and prevent or at the very least delay the onset of some of the very serious complications of diabetes. If testing had taken place at 100 pharmacies during that week, imagine how many more Canberrans would now be receiving the treatment they need. This is a classic preventative health scenario.

There are a number of messages I would like to make sure we take away from today. Firstly, I encourage all Canberrans over the age of 40 to know their blood sugar levels

by checking with their doctor or attending one of the free clinics. Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the great work of Diabetes NSW & ACT. They perform a number of clinics and provide support, advice, connections and referrals for people. That information about how to better manage your condition is vital, especially in the early stages, when you are first diagnosed.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the professionals who work in this area. A number of different disciplines within the health sector specialise in diabetes or have a focus on it within their other practice. They include professionals such as diabetes educators, dietitians, podiatrists, nurses, exercise physiologists and other health professionals. They work very hard to assist people living with diabetes.

The thrust of the motion is about confronting diabetes in the workplace. As a first step I have suggested that the ACT government could facilitate the testing of ACT public servants for this chronic health condition. We could be doing more. It is a preventative health measure—by identifying early we can stop the serious later complications. It is not intended to be mandatory testing, but having it available in the workplace makes it easy and simple for people to pop down to one of the testing sites.

We need to confront diabetes in the workplace. By ensuring that ACT public servants can be tested early and easily in their workplace they will be healthier for longer and will be able to stay in the workplace for longer, probably through to retirement, as opposed to having medical issues that mean they have to leave the workplace early. Awareness and early diagnosis is the first step towards achieving the best possible outcome for people living with diabetes.

Through this motion I call on the ACT government to work closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT to ensure that ACT public servants can be tested for diabetes. Whilst presenting some facts and figures about diabetes, the thrust of the motion today is calling on the ACT government and all of us here to recognise and applaud the work of diabetes educators, dietitians, podiatrists, nurses, exercise physiologists and other health workers who strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of the ACT who have diagnosed diabetes and to work closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT to ensure that testing of ACT public servants in the workplace for diabetes is available. I hope members will support my motion.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Health, Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.45): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this matter before us today. It highlights the growing impact that diabetes has on our community and the important work done by health workers working with people with diabetes in the ACT. I note that Ms Lawder's motion additionally calls for the ACT government to work closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT to ensure diabetes testing of ACT public servants in the workplace.

I wish to amend an element of the motion, and I therefore move the amendment standing in my name:

Omit paragraph (3)(b), substitute:

“(b) work closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT and other relevant organisations to promote testing for diabetes to ACT public servants.”.

While the government remains committed to diabetes prevention, it would not be appropriate to mandate the testing of its public servants for diabetes. Therefore, the amendment that I have moved to Ms Lawder’s motion outlines the government’s commitment to work with Diabetes NSW & ACT and other relevant organisations to promote diabetes testing to ACT public servants. Essentially, it replaces the word “ensure” with the word “promote” to be clear that we are not mandating testing for ACT public servants.

As the motion notes, National Diabetes Week was held from 14 to 20 July this year with the message, “It’s about time we all took the time.” This message highlighted that we should all take the time to better detect all types of diabetes. For type 1 diabetes, this means taking the time to learn the four Ts: toilet, thirsty, tired, thinner—the early warning signs of type 1 diabetes.

For type 2 diabetes, this means taking the time to get checked. As Ms Lawder has already outlined, diabetes is a condition affecting a growing number of people in the ACT community, with an increasingly adverse impact on the wellbeing of Canberrans as individuals but also the broader community through higher health service utilisation and costs.

Diabetes comes in a range of types. However, the three most common include type 1 diabetes, which is an autoimmune condition where the body destroys cells which produce insulin. Type 1 diabetes requires daily treatment with insulin for survival.

Type 2 diabetes is the most commonly occurring diabetes and occurs when the body gradually loses the ability to produce enough insulin or becomes resistant to its normal effects. While traditionally diagnosed in people over 50, it is increasingly being diagnosed much earlier.

Finally, gestational diabetes occurs during pregnancy. However, some women will continue to have high levels of blood glucose after the birth of their child. Gestational diabetes is the fastest growing form of diabetes in the ACT and in Australia. Diabetes during pregnancy has adverse effects on both women and their babies in the short and long term.

In the short term, there are increased risks during pregnancy, labour and delivery, such as high blood pressure during pregnancy, preterm delivery, high birth weight and longer hospital stays associated with admittance to specialist care or the neonatal nursery. Once women are affected by gestational diabetes during a pregnancy, their chances of having diabetes during future pregnancies is markedly increased.

Furthermore, in the longer term, women with gestational diabetes are at much greater risk of developing diabetes later in life and their babies are more likely to be obese and develop diabetes themselves. This has an added impact on the prevalence of

diabetes, increasing the prevalence for generations to come. However, it also presents the opportunity to target two generations at once to improve long-term outcomes for individual Canberrans and for the community as a whole.

There is no single answer to address diabetes in our community. No one action will work effectively on its own. Reducing the impact of diabetes requires a balance between prevention efforts, early identification of those at risk and treatment services to help people better manage their condition. Prevention actions are needed to slow and reverse the growth of risk factors such as obesity, and hence diabetes into the future, while effective treatment services are required for individuals and families in need now.

Prevention approaches aim to maintain the health of Canberrans through population and targeted actions preventing the development and progression of lifestyle risk factors. These approaches will reach the largest number of people and have the greatest overall population benefit.

The ACT is a leader in preventive health and continues to provide a range of programs that address the lifestyle factors that contribute to diabetes. The ACT Health Directorate continues to run a range of programs such as fresh tastes, “It’s your move” in schools or healthier choices Canberra, which is working with local businesses to make it easier for the community to find healthier food and drinks.

In addition, in June 2019 the government announced almost \$1 million in grants focusing on the prevention of diabetes in the community. This included over \$700,000 for Diabetes NSW & ACT for the healthy women, healthy mums, healthy families program.

The prevention of chronic conditions, including diabetes, will continue to be a key focus of the ACT Health Directorate and is core to the work currently being undertaken in developing the ACT’s preventive health plan. This plan will use an evidence-based approach in focusing on the key protective factors which influence the future health of Canberrans: healthy weight, healthy diet, active living, tobacco-free living. The plan is still being developed, but I look forward to providing further information to the Assembly in due course and ensuring that the ACT continues to lead in preventive health programs.

In addition to prevention, the early identification of Canberrans at high risk is also an important plank in the government’s approach to diabetes. Early identification allows for either the reversal of lifestyle risk factors or prevents and delays the development of diabetes. This includes appropriate screening for diabetes. Diabetes is much more prevalent in communities with a low socio-economic profile and certain ethnic groups, in particular the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

As I stated earlier, the ACT government, while committed to diabetes prevention, does not support mandating the testing of its public servants for diabetes. However, the ACT government, working through the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services, will commit to working closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT and other relevant organisations to promote diabetes prevention and testing information

and education to ACT public servants. This may include the delivery of staff information sessions, with possible commencement in early 2020.

Finally, for those people who have been diagnosed with diabetes, it is important that care and support are provided across multiple providers. In this, I must acknowledge the important work that GPs play. Not only does most screening occur through GPs; an ongoing relationship with a GP is important to ensure that a person with diabetes continues to be supported in managing their condition.

Nationally, diabetes is the sixth most frequently diagnosed problem in general practice. In addition, given the chronic nature of diabetes, it is important that there is a strong and ongoing relationship between the GP and the individual with diabetes. Of course, GPs must be supported with specialist advice and care to assist in the management of more complex situations or patients.

To support GPs, Canberra Health Services has available the ACT Health diabetes service. This service is a multidisciplinary team comprising medical, nursing and allied health professionals. The service provides a coordinated and integrated service between the Canberra Hospital and various community-based locations within the ACT. Diabetes education, care and treatment are provided across the continuum, from children, adolescents and adults, women during pregnancy and adults with all types of diabetes.

Specific services include a paediatric service for children with predominantly type 1 diabetes, a young adult diabetes service for those aged 16 to 21 years to assist mostly those with type 1 diabetes, but a slowly increasing number of type 2 diabetes, in their transition from the paediatric service to full responsibility for their care within the adult service.

The multidisciplinary diabetes in pregnancy service provides care to women with gestational diabetes, as well as type 1 and type 2 diabetes, during pregnancy. The service also provides pre-pregnancy planning services to women with type 1 and type 2 diabetes who are planning pregnancy.

A high-risk foot service for clients with diabetes and major foot conditions is also provided. In addition to regular podiatry clinics, a multidisciplinary high-risk foot collaborative group meets weekly to provide expert care to those with the most complex foot problems. The ACT Health diabetes service assists Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services in diabetes programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

I would like to acknowledge the work of those across our entire health system, from those who work in general practice to the highly specialised diabetes nurses and educators who work diligently to support people with diabetes and other chronic conditions. On behalf of the ACT government and the people of the ACT, thank you for the work and the support you provide.

I note that Ms Lawder emphasises that the point of her motion, in addition to drawing attention to the importance of addressing diabetes across our community, is to ensure

that the ACT government provides support to ACT public servants in being screened and tested for diabetes. I can assure her that we are absolutely committed to promoting testing for diabetes. As I think I said earlier, possibly commencing in early 2020, we will be working with Diabetes NSW & ACT to ensure that this occurs.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.55): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the issue of diabetes in the ACT. I value the fact that Ms Lawder has brought this to the Assembly's attention today. Ms Lawder, in her motion, has provided some statistics on diabetes in the ACT. Of particular importance is the issue of undiagnosed diabetes in the ACT, and the story she provided in her remarks underlines that issue.

The 2019 National Diabetes Week emphasised "it's about time we all took the time" to learn more about the warning signs of type 1 and type 2 diabetes. The campaign focused on raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of diabetes to increase earlier detection and promote action. It contained clear, punchy and easy to understand messaging to help people identify whether they may be at risk of diabetes.

This awareness raising and education are extremely important, as Australia-wide almost 300 people are diagnosed with diabetes each day, with many Australians living with type 2 diabetes for up to seven years before diagnosis. This is quite troubling, because if diagnosis is made too late people can experience very serious health risks like vision loss, kidney failure, amputation, heart attack and stroke. This can then lead to subsequent serious comorbidity and health problems and also has the potential to be life threatening to the individual who has not been diagnosed or who did not seek help earlier. The earlier that people are diagnosed, the earlier that health care can be targeted to help them live well and reduce any future complications.

Data also demonstrates early detection of diabetes can prevent hospitalisations, with an estimate that in New South Wales and the ACT almost 13,000 hospitalisations could have been prevented if people were identifying symptoms and seeking help, diagnosis and better management and care sooner. This demonstrates that delayed action on diabetes-related symptoms significantly impacts our hospitals, and there is a real opportunity to reduce the admissions burden we know they face.

It is also important to note that often when people present to hospital for undiagnosed or unmanaged diabetes they are then hospitalised for a lengthy amount of time. Recent data indicates that in New South Wales and the ACT diabetes complications accounted for more than 76,800 hospital bed days.

Lifestyle factors are also an extremely important consideration when looking to reduce the rate at which diabetes impacts people. This is a well-known issue and one that has received considerable press coverage. Unfortunately, obesity is inextricably linked to type 2 diabetes, so it is important that we look at ways to inspire people to improve their health and wellbeing. This is where it is also extremely important to promote healthy behaviours and physical education in our schools so that our children and future generations are better educated and informed on how to make healthy lifestyle choices. The government's healthy weight initiative has specific targets towards meeting this goal. This has an important role in reducing the impacts of diabetes, along with other chronic diseases and illnesses.

Our agreement with ACT Labor commits to reducing the incidence of diabetes and other preventable conditions by expanding and refocusing the healthy weight initiative, which includes a comprehensive preventive health strategy. The initiative will help address the rising rates of overweight and obesity in our community and increase healthy lifestyle choices across schools, communities, workplaces, homes and places where food is provided, sold and consumed. It is working with schools to increase physical activity opportunities and working to renew urban and built physical environments to help promote physical activity opportunities.

The initiative promotes active travel behaviours to support people to exercise as they commute and encourages active lifestyle and behaviour changes. This is one area where there is a lot of opportunity to have an impact. If we can combine those two things we need to do each day, which is to get our physical activity and to go places, into a single thing, through a range of active travel options, that makes it really easy for people. Part of what we need to do is help people find easy ways to do this, and make it part of their lifestyle.

I have been really encouraged by the impact light rail has had on the number of people who have taken the opportunity to cycle down to light rail and jump on from there. They either cycle at the other end, or, if they leave their bike behind, walk at the other end. These are the sorts of outcomes we can achieve through rethinking how we design our city so that people can get around in a range of ways and not always be dependent on cars as their sole form of transport.

Each of these elements that I have talked about today in the preventive health space can play a really important role in reducing obesity, the incidence of diabetes and fostering positive health and wellbeing for our community.

It is not an easy fix but it is one where a series of small actions can have a really positive impact. Promoting diabetes prevention, as National Diabetes Week seeks to do, and as Ms Lawder's motion does today, can help people understand why this is important and some of the opportunities that are available to them to both seek help and take steps in the preventive space.

In regard to the specifics of Ms Lawder's motion, in paragraph (3)(a) she calls on the ACT government to recognise the work of professionals. Certainly, I support such recognition and applaud the work of diabetes educators, dietitians, podiatrists, nurses, exercise physiologists and other health workers, who all do an extremely commendable and important job for the ACT community and provide vital services to the people who live with or are at risk of diabetes.

I would also like particularly to recognise Diabetes NSW & ACT and congratulate them on the work they do each year in National Diabetes Week, and the education and events they regularly provide to the ACT community to help reduce the risks from and impacts of diabetes.

In terms of Ms Lawder's paragraph (3)(b), which calls on the government to work closely with Diabetes NSW & ACT to ensure the testing of ACT public servants in

the workplace for diabetes, I note the subtle change that Minister Stephen-Smith has brought forward in her amendment and the reason for that. I do not think it is contentious. I certainly think it is a terrific opportunity to use ACT government agencies to engage people in this conversation in the workplace. Ms Lawder's story in today's *Canberra Times* underlines how opportunistic it can be on some occasions by giving people an easy chance, instead of having a serious, heavy conversation with them; that is a good way to encourage more testing.

I would also be interested to think about ways we can promote diabetes testing and awareness raising beyond the public service and include private businesses, community organisations and industries, through partnerships with sporting organisations and the like. These places where people congregate for other reasons provide a platform to talk to them about other matters. I think they provide terrific opportunities.

We are very pleased to support the motion today and the short amendment from Minister Stephen-Smith. I encourage people to think carefully about this and take it seriously, as it is an important community health issue.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (11.03): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this important motion to the Assembly today, close to the conclusion of Diabetes Week. I want especially to thank her for telling her own personal story in relation to diabetes. Ms Lawder's story serves to underscore the importance of diabetes week in raising awareness of what can be a debilitating condition—a condition that is not only a serious health condition but has an annual cost impact on Australia estimated at \$14½ billion.

It is the case that diabetes can fly under the radar, in some cases until it is too late. Diabetes Australia has described it as “the epidemic of the 21st century and the biggest challenge confronting Australia's health system”. With 1.7 million people in Australia having diabetes, almost a third, or almost half a million, of those Australians do not know that they have this condition.

As various speakers have already outlined them, I will not go into the different types of diabetes that people can experience. But it is important to reflect on some of the myths—Mr Assistant Speaker, welcome to the chair; you too can reflect on some of the myths—about diabetes. It is a myth that diabetes is not serious; it is serious. It is a myth that all types of diabetes are the same. It is a myth that you have to be overweight or obese to develop diabetes. It is a myth that you only get type 1 diabetes when you are young and type 2 diabetes when you are old. And it is a myth to say, “There's no-one in my family who has diabetes so I don't have anything to worry about.” It is also a myth to think that it is only people who have type 1 diabetes who need to use insulin.

There are many other myths about it. To some extent there is a fear in the community about finding out some things about their health, and we should be doing all that we can to discourage that fear and encourage learning. One of the important things to know about diabetes is that it can be managed effectively. There are many, and improved, ways with new technologies to help with the management of diabetes.

In the case of type 2 diabetes, there are no specific ways of preventing the condition, but there are strategies that people can adopt to reduce the risk of contracting the condition and, if they do contract the condition, of reducing the impact. These strategies are obvious, and they have been touched on by the Minister for Health—maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in regular physical activity, making healthy food choices, managing blood pressure, managing cholesterol levels and not smoking. There is no prevention for type 1 diabetes, but, as I said, there are now increased ways with new technologies to allow us to more effectively manage type 1 diabetes.

By far the most effective means of staying on top of diabetes, its risks, its management and possible prevention is to take the test. This is what Ms Lawder's motion is about. The test that took place in her workplace, right here in the Assembly last year, was an important step for Ms Lawder.

Like Ms Lawder, I applaud the work of the people and organisations, and especially Diabetes NSW & ACT, who raise community awareness of diabetes and its treatment and management strategies. I applaud the work of the health professionals who help diabetes sufferers to manage their conditions, and I applaud the work of those who provide treatment services in such a caring and professional manner.

Like Ms Lawder, I call on the ACT government to work with Diabetes NSW & ACT to facilitate access by public servants to diabetes testing. I do note what Mr Rattenbury called the subtle amendment by Ms Stephen-Smith, the Minister for Health. The whole notion that Ms Lawder would come in here and attempt to mandate that ACT public servants should have diabetes tests is, quite frankly, risible. Although the amendment proposed by Ms Stephen-Smith is benign, and it will be supported, it is a bit risible to think that, given Ms Lawder's stance on a range of issues, and the stance of the Liberal Party on compulsion, we would be attempting to compel public servants.

We are trying to raise awareness of the importance of testing, and question why, suddenly today, we have enthusiasm on the part of the ACT government to allow the testing of public servants or to facilitate testing of public servants. It is interesting to think that it has taken a long time for the government to get to this place. The government come in here on a regular basis and say how much they value their workers. Simple screening tests like this should be, as a matter of course, made available to public servants on a regular basis.

The fact is that this government has not done that. Part of the reason for this motion today is that this government has not done it. We do not want to compel people; we want to encourage people to take easy steps so that their life will be better, so that they will be more productive workers and so that they will not be in a position where they have to take long leave or retire early because of a debilitating disease.

The minister can come in here and say, "We don't want to compel people." No-one wants to compel people; we want to provide a mechanism so that people know about and can understand their own health for the betterment of themselves and for the whole of society. I commend Ms Lawder for her courage in this matter, and I commend Ms Lawder for bringing forward this motion today.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (11.11): It is true that I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes through a workplace test, right here in the Assembly, late last year. It was an accident—a fortuitous accident. I had not planned to be tested, but on the day the testing was taking place one of my staff who had booked a slot was away sick, so I thought I would pop down, take that slot and use it as a photo opportunity on social media to promote awareness of diabetes in the ACT.

Imagine my shock when I was diagnosed with diabetes. That was not what was I was expecting. Despite the fact that with my second child I had gestational diabetes, it seemed so long ago that I had forgotten this would put me at greater risk of diabetes later in my life. Despite the fact that both of my parents have type 2 late onset diabetes, I never dreamed it would happen to me or at least at my age. It did not occur to me. I thought I had 10 or 20 years before I might be diagnosed with diabetes. So I was surprised, and not in a pleasant way.

This has encouraged me to make changes to my lifestyle, and I want other people—the estimated 5,500 people in the ACT—to have that same opportunity. It would not have occurred to me to go to my GP and ask to be tested for diabetes. I go to my GP, not frequently but every so often, and usually it is a focus on a particular health issue at that point in time, rather than broader health issues and speculative, preventative health checks. That is why the concept of workplace testing—making it easy, making it accessible—is so important. I would like ACT public servants to have that opportunity.

I thank Ms Stephen-Smith for her amendment. It is subtle, but it is a retraction of what I called for. As Mrs Dunne has already outlined, I do not believe in the government telling you what to do in all aspects of your life; I would never dream of mandating testing. But making it available in their workplace makes it much more likely that people will avail themselves of the test. That gives them the opportunity to be diagnosed early and prevent that significant impact on our health and hospital system that Mr Rattenbury, for example, referred to.

The wording of Ms Stephen-Smith's amendment is not a commitment to provide workplace testing; it is about promoting testing. I appreciate the point about information sessions, but that does not mean the government will make workplace tests available if ACT public servants would like to take that test. It is a retraction, and I am a bit disappointed about that. Staff information sessions are a start, but as I have just said, knowing about diabetes, knowing you might have risk factors and knowing you may be likely to have diabetes later in your life does not mean you get tested or that you think you have diabetes at the time.

Testing being available in the workplace is one way we can prevent long-term health impacts for thousands of Canberrans, not to mention the impact on our health and hospital systems. My attempt was never to mandate testing; it was to make it available. We will support the minister's amendment today with some degree of disappointment. It is a good starting point and we can always work forward from there.

I reiterate my appreciation for and recognition of the work of the staff and board of Diabetes NSW & ACT and the many professionals who work in this field, assisting people like me every day with programs, information, support, medication and all sorts of different ways to live with and manage diabetes. They run an amazing number of programs all over New South Wales and the ACT about living with insulin and being carb smart and foot smart.

There are many things you may not think about when you have diabetes. For example, you are four times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke if you have diabetes. You are more likely to have high blood pressure. Whenever there is some kind of injury or wound to your foot, for example, it is more likely to develop into complications. Speaking for myself, and I presume most other Canberrans, the prospect of having your foot or leg amputated is not attractive.

Awareness and information are the first steps that you must take before you can change behaviour. Having testing available in the workplace is the way to create awareness and give people information. I thank everyone for their support in various ways of this important preventative health motion. I hope we will be speaking further with the health minister about ways to bring in this testing in the ACT public service so that we can avoid the very, very significant health complications for people in the future and the impact on our health and hospital systems.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Youth—substance abuse

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (11.18): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) according to the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018–2021*, “illicit drug use ... has a particularly adverse impact on young people”;
- (b) the Action Plan commits the ACT Government to “providing people with ... a range of treatment options”; and
- (c) this commitment embraces “drawing on specialist sector knowledge [to] identify options to expand alcohol and other drug services to meet ... the needs of priority populations”, including young people;

(2) notes that:

- (a) the *Commission Initiated Review of Allegations Regarding Bimberi Youth Justice Centre* contains an estimate that “up to 90% of young people at Bimberi have had involvement with drugs in the community”; and
- (b) this review reports that “there are gaps in rehabilitation and other drug and alcohol services for young people in the community”;

(3) notes that:

- (a) some families in the ACT include young people with complex substance use disorders that are beyond the family's capacity to deal with;
- (b) families in the ACT cannot compel drug treatment for such young people nor can they seek for such treatment to be ordered; and
- (c) this situation leaves some families feeling afraid and hopeless, in some cases requesting that their children be removed into out-of-home care;

(4) further notes that:

- (a) Magistrate Jennifer Bowles of the Victorian Children's Court has, based on extensive local and international research, developed a model that would allow for the compulsory therapeutic treatment of young people with complex substance use disorders when voluntary treatment fails, comprising:
 - (i) Youth Therapeutic Orders made by the Children's Court;
 - (ii) secure therapeutic residential treatment facilities for young people; and
 - (iii) effective after-care and transition arrangements for these young people; and
- (b) Magistrate Bowles's recommendations are currently under consideration in Victoria; and

(5) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) consult with experts about whether compulsory therapeutic drug treatment models for young people with complex substance use disorders, including the model based on Magistrate Bowles's research and recommendations, should be implemented in the ACT;
- (b) report back to the Assembly no later than the last sitting day of 2019; and
- (c) add these findings into the *ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan*.

I am grateful for the opportunity to bring this very important motion before the Assembly today. In doing so, I am seeking to fulfil my role as an elected representative by bringing the voices of regular Canberrans into this chamber. This motion has its origins in conversations that I have had with a number of families who reside in this territory. These concerned mums and dads have told me very difficult stories of what happens in and to a family when a member of that family develops a complex substance use disorder.

I have heard distressing accounts of families who have spent years watching a child first play at the margins of and then be swept away by the whirlpool of serious addiction. The impacts of such a tragedy on a family can be devastating. I have had parents tell me that they have grown fearful of the violence and anger of their own offspring. In many cases they have come to fear for their own lives and/or for the wellbeing and safety of younger children in the home.

I have heard stories of extreme worry as mothers have gone days at a time, sometimes weeks, not knowing where their child is. Families have come home at the end of the work day to discover that their home has been broken into and their possessions have

been taken by an affected family member. Fathers have had to ring the police to report the behaviour of their own children. One set of parents told me through tears that they were informed that their 13-year-old daughter was obtaining drugs by exchanging sex with adult men.

In some extreme cases, concern for the safety of other children in the home has led parents to contact the territory's care and protection system to ask that a child with a substance use disorder be removed from the home. Imagine that: being so afraid of what your daughter or son has become capable of doing that you would need to request government assistance and intervention to remove that child from your own home.

In response to such difficult and heartbreaking circumstances, these families have tried everything they could to halt this spiral of self-destruction in the lives of their children. They have sought out and contacted services both in Canberra and also interstate. They have saved and paid for private counselling and treatment. We should all be grateful for the availability of such services but in some cases children refuse to engage with them or they start and then stop when the allure of addiction or the pull of peers becomes too great.

In our current system, drug and alcohol treatment programs for youth rely on the young person voluntarily participating, and the one message I have heard again and again from families with lived experience is that sometimes this is asking too much, regardless of how good the services are. These mothers and fathers are crying out for another option, including mandatory drug rehabilitation for these youths, to help save their children before it is too late.

Desperate Canberra families are not wrong to raise these issues. The impacts of addiction on a young person and that person's family can indeed be devastating. This government's own ACT drug strategy action plan 2018-2021 acknowledges:

Illicit drug use ... has a particularly adverse impact on young people.

The ACT Human Rights Commission's recently released review of allegations at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre includes the estimate that "up to 90 per cent of young people at Bimberi have had involvement with drugs in the community". There are real concerns, too, that currently available services may be inadequate. The same Human Rights Commission report noted:

There are gaps in rehabilitation and other drug and alcohol services for young people in the community.

Likewise, experts acknowledge that, for some young people, drugs, alcohol and/or mental health issues adversely impact on their ability to make rational choices and decisions to voluntarily engage in treatment.

In light of these facts, the request of these parents that there be an option for compulsory therapeutic drug treatment for young people with complex substance use disorders, often accompanied by severe mental health disorders, appears to make

perfect sense. Not everyone agrees, however. Twelve years ago a report prepared for the Australian National Council on Drugs noted repeatedly:

The research base on compulsory treatment is young and incomplete.

But its authors still confidently stated, without further evidence:

Compulsory treatment of young people does not work.

This statement seems to have been the standard position for a number of years. Much more currently, researchers at the University of New South Wales drug policy modelling program earlier this year noted:

Mandatory treatment is not without controversy ... with such programs raising a number of ethical and motivational concerns including how much the state should impose on civil liberties and whether individuals need to both recognise their problem and want treatment for the treatment to be successful.

These researchers, however, also felt that the research is often limited or is characterised by significant gaps. Interestingly, their own investigation into compulsory treatment involved looking exclusively at centres “in a number of east and South-East Asian countries that resemble prisons, located in remote areas”. Unsurprisingly, the authors of this report did not recommend copying this approach.

It should be pointed out, however, that rehabilitation centres in the jungles of Cambodia and Laos are not the only compulsory treatment models available for inspection by serious research—or the end of it. In 2014 Magistrate Jennifer Bowles of the Victorian Children’s Court applied for a Churchill Fellowship to gain an understanding of the overseas residential treatment options for children and young people. Her specific objective was to ascertain whether mandated treatment in a secure, therapeutic residential facility could assist young people and, if so, what were the essential ingredients.

Upon obtaining the fellowship she travelled to 21 different treatment facilities in Sweden, Scotland, England and New Zealand to see what is happening in those places and to spend time with experts and young people alike. Her conclusion was:

For some young people, compulsory orders to attend therapeutic residential facilities are necessary in order to ensure these young people are safe and secure, to deal with the addiction, to commence the process of improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing and to reconnect them with education and training.

Upon returning to Australia, Magistrate Bowles published her findings and, taking the best of what she had witnessed, proposed that the state of Victoria adopt a nine-point model that involves empowering the Children’s Court to make a youth therapeutic order that places a young person in a secure therapeutic community facility to engage in treatment with appropriately qualified and committed staff. This model includes judicial oversight of the process and a well-resourced transition plan for the young person to return to the community.

Significantly, Magistrates Bowles's report includes evidence that compulsory treatment, if carried out correctly, can be effective. She quotes one Swedish expert:

For a long time, we considered treatment had to be voluntary ... but here, they studied groups, one mandatory and the other voluntary[,] and they couldn't see any difference.

The report also addresses human rights concerns.

After 17 years of working with young people in the Children's Court of Victoria, Magistrate Bowles had reached the conclusion that what we are doing in Australia, in too many cases, is not working. She has spent the past five years researching and proposing an alternative model. It is worth examining her findings. That is the purpose of my motion, to call upon this government to consider this and any other serious options.

The informed conversation in Australia has moved on considerably from the 2007 statement that compulsory treatment of young people does not work. But here we are. It is a new day, with new research and new results.

I note that one year after Magistrate Bowles released her report, a steering committee was established in Victoria to undertake further development of her model. This committee comprises 25 professionals who have multidisciplinary experience in the field, including the CEOs of the Youth Support Advocacy Service, Windana and Odyssey House; senior medical/addiction specialists from St Vincent's Hospital; the Director of the Children's Court clinic; alcohol and other drug clinical specialists; clinical and forensic psychiatrists; the community service agency sector; education or training; lawyers; and advocacy groups.

This issue has gained traction in Victoria such that last year Premier Daniel Andrews told both SBS and ABC that his Labor government was looking into the matter and would have more to say in the future. This is precisely what my motion is all about. It is calling on the Labor government to take this seriously and look into it.

The ACT drug strategy action plan commits this government to providing people with a range of treatment options. A number of Canberra families, sick with worry over their children, were asking that one of these options be compulsory therapeutic treatment of young people when all other options fail. Considering the evolving nature of the national conversation on this issue, this is not an inappropriate request. The drug strategy action plan also commits this government to "drawing on specialist sector knowledge to identify options to expand alcohol and other drug services to meet the needs of priority populations", including young people.

This motion calls upon the government to honour the families that have spoken to me, as well as to acknowledge the work of Magistrate Bowles and others, both in Victoria and also overseas, by making compulsory therapeutic treatment part of the expert consultations that they are already engaging in, to report their findings to the Assembly by the last sitting day of this calendar year and to include these findings in the territory's drug strategy action plan.

It is critical that a comprehensive drug strategy action plan consider how to include members of our community who are unable to access voluntary treatment. Young people who are trapped in complex substance use disorders are Canberra's children, our children.

We in this Assembly constantly talk about making policies for all Canberrans. What about these young Canberrans who are fighting through life with drug addiction? These are boys and girls, some as young as 13 years, who have made one mistake in their life and are now hooked on drugs. Their normal lives have been replaced by the need to get the next fix, including turning to law breaking to fuel the never-ending drug addiction craving. Parents have said to me that they are watching their children slowly killing themselves.

This is a crisis in our society, a crisis that is on our front doorsteps. These are Canberra's children, our children, and we have a drug strategy action plan that identifies young people as a "priority population" and then almost never mentions them again. As Magistrate Bowles has noted:

A valuable opportunity to assist them whilst they are young, and the rehabilitative prospects are potentially at their greatest [is] being lost.

Why are we letting them fight on their own? I fear that we are failing these young people and their families and we will continue to fail them if we do not act now and seriously explore the full range of options. These children and families are in need of a system that works for them and they deserve it.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Health, Minister for Urban Renewal) (11.34): I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing the motion before us today. This motion does indeed touch on some of the complex issues that young people and families in our community are forced to grapple with daily, and I appreciate Mrs Kikkert's concern for those families and the passion with which she speaks about some of the very difficult and complex circumstances that families in our community are facing.

I share the commitment that this motion articulates, to helping young people who have drug and alcohol problems, and their families. I can assure Mrs Kikkert, and all in this place, that the ACT government is committed to evidence-based interventions to reduce the harm of drugs and alcohol in our community and has led the nation in many of its approaches. To this end, the government will always engage with those who bring forward well-thought-out and evidence-based approaches to helping families and young people affected by drugs.

I thank Mrs Kikkert for highlighting the work of Magistrate Jennifer Bowles who, as part of her 2014 Churchill fellowship, produced the report *What can be done? Residential therapeutic treatment options for young people suffering substance abuse/mental illness*. The call to action in the motion today specifically calls for consultation with experts about whether compulsory therapeutic drug treatment

models, including the model promoted by Magistrate Bowles, should be implemented in the ACT. This work will be undertaken in the context of other critical projects, considering models of support, care and treatment for families, children and young people, including: the early support by design work being progressed across the ACT government's human services cluster; the ACT government's joint project with the Youth Coalition and three other youth services, working to deliver improved services for young people who are at risk of homelessness or engaging with the youth justice or child protection system; and consideration of modern and best practice models or frameworks for therapeutic protection for young people.

The government, in collaboration with the ACT Human Rights Commission, is reviewing the therapeutic protection provisions to develop options that align with best practice and contemporary knowledge. These options will consider how existing legislation and frameworks can complement work to establish best practice therapeutic care for children and young people and their families in the ACT, including the implementation of the Senior Practitioner Act 2018. The Senior Practitioner Act provides a formal framework for the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices by service providers in the ACT. It has independent oversight of the use of restrictive practice in care and protection services for children.

As I have mentioned, the government has committed \$480,000 over the next year to address youth homelessness, in partnership with the Youth Coalition and other community organisations. This funding will support service system improvements to support youth at risk, and will provide respite services and family reconnection services to prevent homelessness in children and young people aged eight to 15 years.

As part of this consultation, I will seek information from my counterpart in Victoria, noting that Mrs Kikkert's motion states that this model is being considered by the Victorian government. She has provided some further detail in speaking to her motion today. I think it is fair to say that at this point the Victorian government's position on the matter is not clear. While Mrs Kikkert has outlined some of the work and quoted more recent material from Victoria, spokespeople have previously noted that successful treatment outcomes are dependent on a person being willing, ready and motivated to make a sustained change in their lives. I will certainly be consulting with my Victorian counterparts and with experts from other jurisdictions to ensure that we are fully informed in undertaking this work.

In agreeing to undertake these further discussions, it is important to set out the government's current position and the evidence that sits behind this. The government does not currently support compulsory treatment. The government takes this position because of a lack of evidence that supports that action at this point in time.

The ACT government only recently engaged in extensive consultations on drug and alcohol treatment in the ACT, as part of the development of the drug strategy action plan. I am advised that compulsory youth treatment did not receive any significant level of support during stakeholder, expert or public consultations. It is because of this extensive process of consultation, which informed the development of the ACT drug strategy action plan for 2018-21, that I will be moving to amend Mrs Kikkert's motion to remove part 5(c).

In doing so, I would note two things about the action plan. First, it is a plan that goes to 2021, and the development of any such model, if it were determined to be appropriate for the ACT, would take some time. Secondly, the action plan already includes an action to:

Design and deliver a range of interventions using a number of models to meet the diverse needs of people involved in, or at risk of being involved in, the criminal justice system. This includes exploring ways to increase diversion and treatment and support options available as part of an integrated system in the ACT, through either policy or legislative reform.

Should it be determined that such a model is appropriate for the ACT, its implementation is already covered in that broad action of the existing action plan.

I would also note that that the ACT's drug strategy action plan is based on approaches set out in the national drug strategy for 2017-26 and, to some extent, the national ice action strategy. Neither of these national documents, which were also compiled with considerable expert and public input, supports the compulsory treatment of young people.

An expert systematic review of evidence for compulsory treatment was carried out by a team led by Canadian researchers and published in 2016. The authors concluded:

Evidence does not, on the whole, suggest improved outcomes related to compulsory treatment approaches, with some studies suggesting potential harms. Given the potential for human rights abuses within compulsory treatment settings, non-compulsory treatment modalities should be prioritized by policymakers seeking to reduce drug-related harms.

This and other expert research suggests that there is no strong evidence that compulsory treatment helps people; in fact, it may harm people.

All of this being said, I look forward to reporting back to the chamber by the end of this year on my consultations and conversations with experts in the drug and alcohol sector about the efficacy of the proposal in Mrs Kikkert's motion, and support and treatment models for young people more broadly.

I would like to briefly reflect on some of the context provided in Mrs Kikkert's motion, particularly as it relates to the evidence-based and expert-informed ACT drug strategy action plan.

The motion includes a number of extracted quotes which, unfortunately, in some cases exclude some critical information that would be of use to the Assembly. In particular, I want to highlight the full quote in part 1(a). The ACT drug strategy action plan states:

Illicit drug use, although having a lower overall burden than alcohol and tobacco, has a particularly adverse impact on young people.

I do not highlight the full sentence to diminish the impact of illicit drug use among young people but, rather, to highlight the entirety of the issue faced by families, the government and the drug and alcohol sector. We cannot simply think of this issue as being about illicit drugs. We cannot make the mistake of conflating drug use with addiction. And we must not think that the only, or correct, approach to drug and alcohol issues is a law and order response.

The truth is that there is no magic bullet for alcohol and other drug problems once they have started. Drug and alcohol addiction is a complex and ongoing medical condition and, in young people in particular, it can often be linked to significant trauma which needs to be understood and acknowledged if treatment is to be successful. As in so many other cases, the best response to the use of drugs and alcohol by young people is to prevent drug and alcohol problems before they start. That is why it is important to control the access of young people to alcohol and tobacco, whose use often precedes illicit drug use, and to regulate the promotion of alcohol and tobacco to young people as well as emphasising the harms of illicit drugs.

The ACT government, as set out in the ACT drug strategy action plan, takes a harm minimisation approach focused on three key areas: demand reduction, supply reduction, and harm reduction. As part of the government's commitment to this issue, in the 2019-20 budget we announced additional funding of \$2.9 million over four years to expand early intervention and diversion for people with alcohol and other drug dependence.

Currently, the ACT alcohol and other drugs diversion program operates under a partnership agreement with ACT Policing and the ACT Health Directorate. The alcohol and other drugs diversion program diverts alcohol and other drug offenders, including young offenders, away from the criminal justice system and to assessment and education programs.

The youth alcohol diversion program provides diversion to education for underage drinkers who are intoxicated or are in possession of or consuming alcohol in a public place. The illicit drug diversion component of the program provides diversion through education and assessment for potential treatment for people who are found in possession of illicit drugs for personal use alone. These programs are supported by evidence and provide an element of compulsion without going so far as to detain people only on the grounds of alcohol or drug dependency.

Where young people have come into contact with the youth justice system, the Children and Young People Act requires that young people in detention, as far as practicable, have access to necessary healthcare programs, including rehabilitation programs.

The ACT health system provides mental health, justice health and alcohol and drug services in a range of contexts, including in the community, Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and other inpatient settings.

The final report of the blueprint for youth justice taskforce identifies 10 areas for future focus, including to maintain and continually improve quality therapeutic services in detention. This includes a commitment to improve the provision of services in Bimberi to build young people's life skills and provide tailored alcohol and other drug treatment and counselling services and support. I acknowledge that the Human Rights Commission found a need to improve such services, and we are committed to working between the Community Services Directorate and Health Services to do this.

As I alluded to previously, drug use and offending are often symptoms of trauma or other issues in young people's lives. The root cause of offending is not necessarily drug use but the broader circumstances people find themselves in, of which drug use may be a symptom. The root cause must be addressed if we are to solve the dual issue of youth offending and drug and alcohol dependency.

It is the government's aim to build services across the spectrum of our human services agency which support children and families earlier and more effectively. The government's intention is to prevent crisis, to prevent youth offending and the need for detention, and to prevent drug and alcohol dependence. Drug and alcohol dependence is a complex medical condition whose treatment in young people requires evidence-based trauma-informed supports and services. This is what we are committed to.

Again, I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing this motion to the Assembly. We will certainly undertake this work with the experts, consulting with our colleagues in Victoria. But, as noted, I am going to move an amendment to remove the last part of Mrs Kikkert's motion, to remove the reference to adding these findings into the drug strategy action plan. It is not necessary, given the actions that are already included in the drug strategy action plan, and retrofitting this into the drug strategy action plan does not necessarily make sense.

I look forward to reporting back to the Assembly no later than the last sitting day of 2019 on this very important work. I again thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing this matter to the Assembly. I move:

Omit paragraph 5(c).

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (11.46): I commend Mrs Kikkert for bringing this motion before the Assembly. Like the minister, I commend Mrs Kikkert for the passion and commitment she brings to these issues and her fantastic advocacy for young people at risk. Our alcohol, tobacco and drug strategy should focus on the needs of the people in the community who have the biggest problems. People with complex substance abuse disorders not only have problems with drug use but often problems with mental health and the criminal justice system.

Mrs Kikkert highlighted that the commission-initiated review of allegations regarding the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre stated that 90 per cent of young people at Bimberi have had involvement with drugs in the community, which highlights the connection

between drug use and the criminal justice system. I have also seen an answer to a question on notice from Mrs Jones which states that 110 prisoners at the AMC are receiving some form of treatment for addiction issues. With the capacity of the AMC just north of 300 we are approaching a third of inmates and detainees who are receiving treatment for addiction issues.

I understand that there are many more inmates and detainees who have problems with inappropriate use of alcohol and tobacco, but that is not the subject of the motion today, although the minister did try to make it that.

It was reported on 18 April in the *Canberra Times* that one of the more recent young people admitted to Bimberi was a 17-year-old accused of murder. The article stated that this young person was so drug affected and violent that it took three police officers to restrain that person. The report also states that many young people admitted to Bimberi are affected by the drug ice and that the centre has to manage their withdrawal.

The ABC reported in December that many young people in Canberra are using ice and other dangerous drugs and are being targeted by drug dealers. Matthew James of the Police Citizens Youth Club said that drug dealers targeted school aged children living on the streets unlinked with support services and not going to school. Many of those students are too young to work. Mr James said of these kids that to feed their addiction they will sleep with these older males to get free ice. He said they end up having to steal cars and commit break and enters, aggravated robberies and pretty much anything they can for drugs.

The commission-initiated review of allegations regarding Bimberi Youth Justice Centre notes gaps in rehabilitation and other drug and alcohol services for young people. Families that have young people with complex substance use disorders are telling us they are having trouble dealing with these issues. It is a pitiable state for a family to be in the situation where they have to turn the care and protection system and say, "Please take our child from us because they represent such a danger to the rest of the family".

Unfortunately, voluntary treatment orders do not always work. We have to be absolutely sanguine about this: sometimes treatments do not work. But we should be doing everything we can to increase the type and variety of services available so we might find something that does work. Families are finding it difficult to cope with the impact of a young person with complex substance use disorders. It places a great strain on families, especially when there are other children.

We need to look to measures being considered in other jurisdictions to see whether they might work and whether we can add them to the panoply of services we provide, especially considering that it has already been pointed out to us that we have significant gaps in the services we provide.

Mrs Kikkert reflected on the work of Magistrate Bowles in Victoria through her Churchill Fellowship, and there are many relevant models both in Australia and elsewhere that we can reflect on, We can to some extent use the work already done by

Magistrate Bowles in that space. It is important that we look at these models to see what can be learnt.

Mrs Kikkert's motion calls on the government to look at whether compulsory therapeutic drug treatment could work in the ACT. Doing nothing is not working. We have had many opportunities over the years to try to treat complex substance use disorder before young people graduate out of Bimberi into the AMC. We owe it to the young people and their families that Mrs Kikkert so passionately supports and represents to do everything in our power to provide services that will meet the needs of young people.

I am a bit flabbergasted by the approach of Minister Stephen-Smith on these matters. I commend her for her attention to detail, but there is an overweening nitpickedness about her approach to motions of this sort. Rather than just embracing the motivation of Mrs Kikkert and supporting the motion we always have to have a little niggles. We always have to prove that we are more switched on or a bit more in touch than anybody else instead of just standing up and saying, "Mrs Kikkert is right".

To Ms Stephen-Smith's credit, she acknowledged the passion and the commitment of Mrs Kikkert to these issues. But to say, "Well, I want to delete something because it isn't really necessary", is the sort of mean-spirited nitpicking which is not becoming in a minister. The minister then critiqued Mrs Kikkert on not quoting enough, and that highlights that nitpicking and shows poor spirit.

This happened with the previous motion moved by Ms Lawder and I see it again now. Instead of just saying, "Thank you for bringing this to us. Yes, we will work together," no, we always have to have a little bit to show, "Well, we're the government and we're just that little bit smarter than you." That is not the case; I would back Mrs Kikkert and her commitment to young people and her work in this space over the work of government ministers and their nitpickedness any day of the week and twice on Sunday. I commend Mrs Kikkert for her work and I commend the motion. I look forward to a very positive report from the government on the last sitting day of the year.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services, Minister for Government Services and Procurement and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (11.54): This motion presents a timely opportunity to reflect on the importance of a harm minimisation approach to drug and alcohol abuse. Mrs Kikkert has called on the government to explore therapeutic drug treatment models, and I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing the motion to the Assembly. I also note the passion with which she has spoken. I also commend Minister Stephen-Smith for ensuring that the motion that is considered through the amendment reflects full accuracy. It is always important for the Assembly to pay attention to the detail of the motions that we are considering and to take on not just the spirit of the motion but also the precision of the wording. That is incumbent upon us in this place.

This government is very pleased to prioritise treatment and harm minimisation. In the context of the matters that have already been raised by Minister Stephen-Smith I will

speaking briefly on the broader therapeutic work. When it comes to people who face the courts primarily as a result of addiction this government is focused on the evidence of what we have about their behaviour.

The evidence is overwhelmingly clear that treating addiction as an issue of right and wrong is not only ineffective but it does not stack up with the biology and psychology we know about drug use. The criminalisation and moralisation about drug use that occurs from time to time are proven ways to fail as policymakers. That is true when it comes to drug use not just among our young people but also across the broader community. With the attention being paid today to a therapeutic approach I look forward to everyone in this Assembly joining in a tripartisan rejection of what we know is a failed law-and-order-style approach to drug use.

The ACT government is working hard to ensure that our policies reflect the strongest and latest evidence. That commitment to turning evidence into action is part of my approach to the work of the courts. The evidence is very strong that if we provide the right support services to people with drug and alcohol problems at the right point of contact with the judicial system we can address those dependencies and, in turn, we can build more resilient people, more resilient families and a stronger community as a whole. That is why this government has made the establishment of the drug and alcohol court one of its top priorities. It is the example of therapeutic justice and prioritises treating the causes of the crime and preventing recidivism.

The former Minister for Health and Wellbeing and I had the privilege of joining His Honour Judge Roger Dive in the Parramatta drug court last year to see firsthand what the harm minimisation focus can achieve. We saw that through building relationships and surrounding vulnerable people with support new beginnings are possible and the root cause of offending can be addressed very effectively.

Here in the ACT the development of a drug and alcohol court has been focused on relationships. Corrective Services, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid ACT and ACT Policing will all have an important role to play, along with health and broader social services.

I make particular mention of Her Honour Chief Justice Helen Murrell and His Honour Justice Burns for their strong support in this process. I also place on record in this chamber my appreciation to the ministers, judicial officers and officials from several jurisdictions, including Victoria, who were very cooperative with us in the formation of the drug and alcohol court model that we are recommending for adoption in the ACT.

Just this week I announced a major milestone in the development of our new therapeutic jurisdiction. Chief Magistrate Lorraine Walker has been appointed as an acting judge to preside over the drug and alcohol court in the ACT. Her honour's commitment to therapeutic jurisprudence has been clearly demonstrated.

Following engagement with her in her role as Chief Magistrate, the government has also committed to the establishment of a therapeutic care court for care and protection matters heard within the Children's Court. This will provide court-led interventions

for parents whose children have been removed from their care or who are at risk of being removed and seek to achieve reunification and address issues of parental substance abuse, parenting capacity, family violence and mental health issues.

The drug and alcohol court and the therapeutic care court are demonstrations of this government's firm commitment to examining the evidence, just as Mrs Kikkert's motion calls on us to do. They are also demonstrations of our core values. We believe in making our legal system restorative and rehabilitative. That means that our court system should support people to repair the harm they have caused through offending and restore the relationships with the community.

When it comes to addressing the impacts of drug and alcohol abuse, harm minimisation is our number one priority. Treating addiction in order to prevent people from falling into a cycle of crime is an important way of minimising the harm of substance abuse to individuals, their families and the broader community.

Those restorative approaches help to make our community whole again after conflict, crime and loss. They also help to make sure that behaviour ceases and does not flow on into the future. Holding people responsible for crime can happen, and simultaneously we are able to address the underlying causes of the behaviour. In fact, as Minister Stephen-Smith has mentioned, we need to deal with the underlying cause of behaviour and not just the symptoms and the behaviour itself.

Across our laws and our services this government has demonstrated its commitment to preventing and minimising harm. Our approach to drugs, alcohol and other sources of harm will always focus on evidence rather than ideology, and evidence about how we can make life better for individuals of all ages, for families, for friends and our whole community will definitely continue to guide our actions.

We have approached this determined to ensure that people, especially the most vulnerable people in our community, get the support they need. We are delivering, and we will keep delivering on our commitment to make Canberra safe, stronger and more connected. Again, I thank Mrs Kikkert for the motion today. I thank Minister Stephen-Smith for her speech and her amendment to the motion, and I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

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 12.03 to 2.00 pm.

Questions without notice

Health—maternity services

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, why is it that mothers are leaving our hospitals more quickly than anywhere else in Australia?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Sorry; can I ask Mr Coe to repeat the question.

MR COE: Minister, why is it that mothers leave hospitals after a birth more quickly here than anywhere else in Australia?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Coe for the question. I will take the detail of the question on notice, but I would note that as a general proposition staying in hospital longer than necessary is not a good idea.

MR COE: Minister, is it not a case of capacity pressures at the hospital rather than clinical fitness of the patients that is driving early post-natal discharges?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take the question on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what is your plan to give new mums the time they need in hospital to recover from what could be the gruelling experience of childbirth, rather than to succumb to the Labor government's history of under-resourcing the hospital?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Dunne for the supplementary question. Of course, I completely reject the premise of the question. Our plan is to continue to provide excellent maternity services across the ACT health system. The feedback that we get is that generally people have a really excellent experience across our health system. Canberrans are telling us that the primary experience that they have across the health system, including in maternity, is one of good health care. That is what we intend to continue to deliver.

Transport Canberra—weekend bus services

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for transport and relates to the unacceptable number of cancellations of weekend bus services. Are these cancellations a result of the enterprise agreement which, I understand, does not require weekend work or pay an additional penalty rate for such work?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question. I certainly acknowledge the issues around bus reliability on weekends. Our new transport system does have more buses running more often on the weekends—same route, same number—which has seen a significant number of people taking more journeys, around 30 per cent. However, there have been some issues with reliability on weekends, with drivers not necessarily taking up the shifts that we thought they would with the new network.

That is something that we continue to work closely with the Transport Workers Union on, and we are looking at a range of other options. Recruiting more drivers will be a significant focus of that work. To ensure that weekend reliability is there, we need to make sure that there are more bus drivers to meet the need for increased services. Over the coming three months, a further 34 trainees are scheduled to undertake training to become bus drivers, thus increasing the number of bus drivers.

Ms Le Couteur: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat, please.

Ms Le Couteur: I specifically asked whether the issue related to weekend work and paying penalty rates. The minister has not even uttered those words yet.

MADAM SPEAKER: He made mention of the inability or unreliability of taking up shifts. But you do have some time left, minister, if you want to talk more to that point.

Mr Steel: No, I think I have answered the question.

Mrs Dunne: On the point of order—

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order?

Mrs Dunne: Madam Speaker, the convention is that when a member rises to make a point of order, the person speaking cedes his way and sits down. I draw that to the minister's attention.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. A supplementary, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, is it ACT Labor's position not to pay weekend penalty rates?

MR STEEL: Bus drivers are paid a composite rate under the enterprise agreement. They are compensated for a range of things they do in the course of their work both on weekdays and on the weekends and they often have to work after hours. It is up to bus drivers as to whether they want to take up shifts on the weekend and a clause in the enterprise agreement provides a level of incentive for them to do so.

We are currently working very closely with the Transport Workers Union on these issues but, ultimately, our focus is making sure that we have more bus drivers recruited so that we can make sure that we deliver more services more often on the weekend, when we have seen a very significant increase in the number of people using bus services, which is great.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, will the many drivers being hired exclusively work weekend shifts or will drivers still need to volunteer for weekends?

MR STEEL: The ACT government is continuing to look at all options to improve reliability on the weekends, working closely with the Transport Workers Union. We will continue that work, and I look forward to making further announcements. Part of that focus will be making sure that we are just recruiting more bus drivers overall to deliver the network that we have, with more services delivered more often.

Transport Canberra—weekend bus services

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, on 3 July, the *Canberra Times* published an article titled “Bus cancellations soar as too few drivers volunteer for weekend and holiday shifts”. It mentions that several weekend travellers waited at stops “for almost three hours as consecutive

services were scrapped”. Minister, what steps have you personally taken since becoming the responsible minister to ensure that Canberrans do not experience extended wait times for buses on weekends?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I have outlined some of those steps in the Assembly during question time today. I have acknowledged that there are some problems with the reliability of bus services on the weekend. On average, 90 per cent of services have been running on the weekend. School and public holiday weekends have also seen an additional decrease in services due to drivers taking leave. That was evident over the past few weeks. I know that Canberrans expect more of our public transport system on the weekends. I have been working hard, on taking on the portfolio, with Transport Canberra to ensure that Canberrans can have faith in their public transport system on the weekends. That includes working closely with the Transport Workers Union, making sure that Transport Canberra has a focus on recruiting more drivers and looking at a range of other options to improve reliability on the weekends.

As I said, we have seen an increase in the number of people taking journeys on the weekend, which has been fantastic: 30 per cent more, because we are delivering more services more often; same route, same number.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, how have you progressed negotiations with the TWU since becoming transport minister, and when will you fulfil the promises made to Canberrans to deliver more frequent weekend services?

MR STEEL: We have already delivered more frequent weekend services, which has seen a very significant increase in the number of people using weekend services. Since I came into this role we have met with the Transport Workers Union on two occasions to talk through a range of different issues, including weekend reliability. I will continue to do so as we look at a range of options to make sure that we have great services continuing to run on the weekends.

MRS JONES: Minister, how many bus drivers have been hired since the beginning of the recent recruitment drive?

MR STEEL: I have already mentioned to the Assembly today, Mrs Jones, that over the coming three months a further 34 trainees are scheduled to undertake training to become bus drivers, increasing the number of bus drivers that are available on the weekend.

Taxation—abolition of stamp duty

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Since the ACT government abolished stamp duty for eligible first homebuyers on 1 July this year what has the response been like?

MR BARR: The feedback from real estate agents and sellers has been that first homebuyers have been very active in the market. This makes sense as on a \$650,000 home the saving for those buyers is approaching \$18,000. That \$18,000 is a

significant amount of money that first homebuyers do not have to save as part of their deposit or, indeed, add to their mortgage and pay fortnightly or monthly repayments over 20, 25 or 30 years on that amount.

This is a very significant benefit for first homebuyers in our city. Combined with lower interest rates it means that more first homebuyers can get into the market sooner. That is what we want to see: more Canberrans being able to experience the security and stability that come with owning their own home.

MR PETTERSSON: How will abolishing stamp duty help first home buyers find the right place to call home?

MR BARR: Clearly getting a deposit together is a very significant component of first home ownership, and that is tens of thousands of dollars. This significant first hurdle of securing sufficient funds for a deposit should not be compounded by state and territory governments then reaching into the pockets of first home buyers to the tune of several tens of thousands of dollars more.

That is why from 1 July we are very pleased to have abolished stamp duty for eligible first home buyers. There is a means test associated with this, but a very generous one. What this does is ensure that those who are entering the housing market for the first time are not hit with a tax that is, on an average home, around \$15,000 up front. That is a very significant benefit to those entering the housing market.

This is an important policy that we have been pursuing for some time and we are very pleased to deliver on it. Those opposite, of course, have a policy of supporting more stamp duty because they do not support tax reform.

MS CODY: Chief Minister, how does abolishing stamp duty for all eligible first homebuyers help in giving buyers more choice about where they live across our city?

MR BARR: The policy change means that all properties that are purchased by eligible first homebuyers are exempt from stamp duty, no matter where you buy in Canberra and whether you are buying a new or established home. This does give first homebuyers significantly more choice.

Mr Wall interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall!

MR BARR: What it does is ensure that every property across the territory comes under this new policy framework. We have become, I believe, one of the first jurisdictions in this nation to fully abolish stamp duty for this class of buyers across all property types, subject to a reasonable means test.

Mr Wall: Not for all categories.

MR BARR: If Mr Wall wishes to argue for a more generous means test that means that people who are on very substantial incomes should be receiving this government

benefit, he is, of course, free to do so. But that does not detract from the fact that from 1 July stamp duty has been abolished for eligible first homebuyers against all opposition from this party opposite me for the past two elections and undoubtedly heading into a third in a row.

Crime—Yerrabi

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. In my electorate of Yerrabi there have been several small businesses targeted, including a ram raid at the IGA at Ngunnawal, and a robbery at the local fish and chip shop and a retail shop in Mitchell. Minister, what is the government doing to help protect local businesses from such destructive and costly crime?

MR GENTLEMAN: We are investing in ACT Policing and providing them with the resources they need to combat these sorts of crimes. I was very pleased to see on Tuesday that a 38-year-old Lyons man and a 37-year-old Rivett man will face the ACT Magistrates Court following an aggravated robbery of a Fyshwick business. On Monday a business in Barrier Street, Fyshwick was rammed by a vehicle, the premises sustained significant damage and an amount of property was stolen. Following the investigation by the criminal investigations team, officers arrested a Rivett man at Coombs, and further investigations led ACT Policing to execute search warrants on premises in Rivett, Lyons and Phillip. At each location police found property stolen in the Fyshwick aggravated burglary and another aggravated burglary. An ACT government depot in Kambah—

Mr Wall: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, minister, please.

Mr Wall: It is on relevance. Mr Milligan's question was specifically around offences that had occurred in Yerrabi, at the IGA in Ngunnawal and also in Mitchell. The minister is talking about a series of other offences. Could he please be specific to the question that was asked, or, if they are related, state so.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, you have 40 seconds left, and there is a particular location. I understand your response is about the response of police in general.

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, that is right, Madam Speaker. We are investing in ACT Policing and resourcing ACT Policing. Of course, the question comes: will the opposition approve the budget to support ACT Policing in the coming budget discussion?

Opposition members interjecting—

MR GENTLEMAN: They did not last year. They called for more support for ACT Policing; then they voted against the money bill to supply that support.

Mrs Jones: The most useless minister in the government—

MR GENTLEMAN: And here they are laughing about important matters of crime in the ACT community.

Ms Berry: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, please, minister.

Ms Berry: I think it is unparliamentary for the opposition to describe ministers, or any members of the parliament, as useless.

Mrs Jones: I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs Jones. I had not picked it up but I appreciate your withdrawal.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, what do you say to business owners who are concerned about the low police numbers in the Gungahlin police station?

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, I missed the start of the conversation with the noise on the other side.

MADAM SPEAKER: Repeat the question, please, Mr Milligan.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, what do you say to some local business owners who are concerned about the low number of police officers in Gungahlin?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said in my previous answer, what we are doing is supporting police operations in the ACT, with more police and more resources. We will continue to do that. We have announced in this budget a large investment in ACT Policing to do exactly what these businesses are after, and that is support them and support the Canberra community in efforts against crime across the ACT.

MRS JONES: Minister, do you have any idea what the cost to local businesses of each of this recent spate of robberies and ram raids has been? Have you visited any of the small business owners affected?

MR GENTLEMAN: I can only go to the costs in relation to those media reports that we have seen in the press. In relation to visiting different establishments across the ACT, I do regularly.

Light rail—stage 1 safety compliance

MR WALL: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services and relates to an ABC article titled “Canberra light rail construction was ‘reckless’, non-compliant and in danger of flooding, explosion”. Among the many problems with the light rail construction that the article describes, it claims that the original electrical certifier refused to sign off on the project because the electrical workmanship did not meet guidelines. Why did the government sack the original

certifier and enlist a new one who would sign off despite serious concerns over light rail's stage 1 compliance, particularly electrical compliance?

MR STEEL: The government did not sack the certifier.

MR WALL: Minister, who was responsible for the sacking of the certifier, and why were workers put at risk by having unlicensed workers and supervisors working on stage 1's electrical components?

MR STEEL: Canberra Metro is responsible for employing the certifier. The light rail system is safe. Neither the regulators nor the Transport Canberra project team, nor Canberra Metro management, would have permitted the system to open if it were not safe. There was a change of certifier mid project. I understand that that was in relation to the capacity to deliver certification on the project.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, your colleague is on her feet wishing to ask a supplementary, I am assuming.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, will you commission a full safety audit to assure Canberrans that the network is safe?

MR STEEL: The light rail is safe in the ACT. As I mentioned before, it would not have been certified if it were not safe.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: That is enough, Mr Coe, thank you.

Housing—home ownership

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. How is the government increasing access to home ownership in the ACT?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the question. Each year the ACT government publishes its indicative land release program which outlines the planned release of land over the next four years. Over the next four years the government will release over 15,000 residential dwelling sites through the land release program. Over the next two years we will release more than 3,400 homes primarily in Gungahlin, the Molonglo Valley and Belconnen.

Greenfield releases continue in Gungahlin, expanding the planned and existing suburbs of Taylor, Throsby, Jacka and Kenny. The greenfield release focus will now move from Gungahlin to the Molonglo Valley with the new suburb of Whitlam and more suburbs planned to the east of John Gorton Drive.

Whitlam is an exciting addition to the Molonglo Valley precinct. It will deliver around 2,100 dwellings over the next four years and will eventually be home to over

5,000 people. It will provide a range of block types suitable for detached, terrace and townhouse dwellings. Stage 1 construction of the estate has begun and the first sales are expected to commence in late 2019 with 600 sites to be released in the 2019-20 financial year.

MS CODY: Minister, what sorts of benefits will Whitlam provide to the Canberra community, and specifically to those families who choose to live there?

MS BERRY: Whitlam is well situated with easy access to the city and Belconnen town centre. The plan for Whitlam includes vital community services: a school site, as well as local shops and playgrounds. The school and shopping sites are on the land release program for 2021-22. Active travel principles will be incorporated into the project as part of Whitlam's design, with an extensive network of safe pedestrian and cycle paths, as well as connecting to existing and proposed networks outside the estate.

Whitlam will also benefit from the new special purpose reserve on the Molonglo River that is currently being designed by the ACT parks and conservation service. In addition the Kama Nature Reserve is located directly west of Whitlam.

Whitlam is designed to accommodate families. The playground equipment will be designed to be challenging and appropriate for a range of age groups. Whitlam will be connected as well with the community development program, which helps neighbours to find each other, building a strong and thriving community.

MS ORR: Minister, how are suburban developments like Whitlam providing greater opportunities for affordable housing in the ACT?

MS BERRY: The ACT government is committed to improving Canberrans' cost of living. The latest development planned in Whitlam is no exception, providing greater opportunities for affordable housing in all areas of Canberra, including new suburbs which traditionally attracted only affluent buyers. The government is committed to improving accessibility to these areas for all Canberrans.

The ACT government has a target of 15 per cent of its annual land release to go for public, community and affordable homes. New greenfield suburbs such as Whitlam will be key contributors to meeting this target. With Whitlam stages 1 and 2, approximately 104 dwelling sites have been identified for affordable housing, 52 for public housing and 10 dwellings for community housing.

As future stages of Whitlam are developed, additional affordable community and public housing sites will be nominated. In addition to meeting affordable housing targets, the government will be assisting Whitlam residents to lower their ongoing household energy costs. There will be an incentive rebate to help cover the up-front cost of installing a range of sustainability measures, including solar panels and energy on-demand management systems as well as residential electric vehicle charging points.

Sport—McKellar Park

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Minister, the issues surrounding the lights at McKellar Park continue to impact on the

soccer community. Following a complaint from a resident in December last year this community asset has remained in the dark, despite light emissions being well below the allowable limits. Minister, why is the government using heavy-handed tactics and threatening fines of up to \$20,000 on a Canberra sports club?

MR RAMSAY: I will take that question in my capacity as minister for regulatory services, noting of course that the work of the Environment Protection Authority has been strong with the McKellar oval and with the Belconnen Soccer Club. There was, I know, an article published about it referring to two particular complaints. The EPA has been active in working with the Belconnen Soccer Club.

It is important to note that there are no regulatory impediments that prevent the use of the lights. The use of the lights is a business decision for the Belconnen Soccer Club and it is not a decision of the regulatory authority, nor have there been any threats, as has just been alleged by the opposition. The EPA does not engage in threats, and I invite the opposition to withdraw that allegation. That is an outrageous allegation against the very capable and committed members of our EPA.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, will there be similar restrictions, warnings or anything similar on the new \$20 million “home of football” to be constructed in Throsby?

MR RAMSAY: There is a hypothetical basis for the question. The EPA works on matters that are drawn to its attention, as was the case with the Belconnen Soccer Club. As I say, there are no regulatory impediments at all in place in relation to the use of the McKellar oval. I do not see that there is any advantage in speculating about future work for the very important work that is happening at the home of football.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, can you give an assurance that the Belconnen Soccer Club will be able to use the ground at night and turn on their lights for matches held at Belconnen?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Milligan for the second supplementary and for the opportunity to repeat something I have just answered in both the primary question and the first supplementary question, that is: there are no regulatory impediments to the use of the lights at the Belconnen Soccer Club. The use of the lights is a business decision for the soccer club.

Transport Canberra—south side bus services

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, I refer to a *Canberra Times* article dated 17 July 2019 titled “We’re the forgotten people of the south: bus changes opposition heats up.” Minister, why have so many south side residents lost their local bus services?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Parton for his question. What we have seen since the end of free travel with the new network is that more people are using our public transport network across Canberra. Today’s paper, in fact, features Julie Peat from Conder, who said, “It used to take an hour and 20 minutes before the bus timetable changed.” The

bus that she catches now does not stop at Woden and it is more direct. The article states:

The Conder resident travels 50 minutes getting between her home and her work in Forrest.

In relation to the Wanniasa bus services, which I think you are referring to, we are delivering more rapid services, more buses, more often, throughout Canberra. The R5, which Julie was in fact taking, has been widely welcomed in the Wanniasa community.

In response to that article, there were a number of comments made by Wanniasa residents. Morama Camira responded to the article by saying, “Really? We are in Wanniasa, and for the first time we have a decent bus service. We’re on the R5. It’s brilliant.” So there is a range of different views, and any significant change to a bus system will affect some people more adversely than others. But it is great to see that, overall, Canberrans are taking up public transport. In fact journeys on public transport are up by 8.5 per cent over the first eight weeks of the new network, since the end of free travel, than over the same period in 2018.

MR PARTON: Minister, aside from Morama and Julie, how many people have stopped using the bus network in Tuggeranong? How much has patronage fallen in the south?

MR STEEL: Any change of this magnitude to a bus network usually would see a decline in the number of people using the transport network. In fact, what we are seeing overall is an increase in the number of journeys being taken. I am happy to provide, on notice—I already have, by the way, in relation to questions that were asked of me through the estimates process—details about the region by region breakdown.

MR WALL: Minister, when will you restore a reliable bus service to Tuggeranong residents and fix the problems that your predecessor created?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. As I have explained, we have actually introduced new bus services like the R5 rapid that are providing much better and more frequent connections throughout the south, right through Woden, Barton and the city. This is providing new opportunities for people who work in the parliamentary triangle in particular, in the employment centre there, to get to work from places like Condor, where Julie is from. It provides better connections through other parts of the city as well. We are continuing to monitor how the bus system is being embedded, and feedback on the new bus system, as we look forward to the future of the public transport network.

Planning—Dickson

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Why did you exercise your call-in power to approve the Coles development in Dickson?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Orr for her interest in planning across the ACT. On 11 July this year I used my call-in powers to approve a DA for a mixed-use development in the Dickson group centre. Residents and businesses in the inner north have been calling for a second supermarket in the area for years. As our population in the inner north continues to grow we need to ensure that there are appropriate facilities such as supermarkets and other retailers.

Residents and businesses also wanted certainty about whether this development would go ahead. The need for certainty as well as the needs of inner north residents were key considerations when I made my decision. A previous development application for a larger proposal had been appealed to the Supreme Court and the ongoing court action had caused uncertainty for the inner north.

The new development application clearly addressed community concerns raised in the previous development application. I am satisfied that the affected community and businesses were appropriately consulted and that the DA underwent a rigorous assessment.

MS ORR: Minister, how will the development benefit the Dickson community?

MR GENTLEMAN: A revitalised Dickson group centre would comprise a new supermarket, supplemented by small retail tenancies and five levels of residential development consisting of 140 apartments.

Submissions from the community about the DA were particularly supportive of the inclusion of adaptable housing in the development. A distinctive aspect of the new development application is a renewed focus on community spaces. The development is smaller than the original application and has been reconfigured to be open and integrated with Dickson Square and the Dickson library. The 237 publicly accessible parking spaces in the current open car park will be replaced in the basement by a total of 655 parking spaces provided as publicly accessible parking.

MR GUPTA: Minister, how will this contribute to jobs in Canberra?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Gupta for his question and his interest in jobs for the ACT. The government is committed to creating more jobs in our local community. This development is another example of how this government is creating a more diverse Canberra economy with a range of different jobs. When I was considering this development, I took into account that it would provide additional certainty to the local community and businesses and provide a way forward for the ongoing renewal of the Dickson area.

The proposal will provide a substantial public benefit to the Canberra community, an economic boost for the area and more local jobs. Hundreds of local jobs will be created during the construction phase as well as around 160 ongoing jobs in the retail elements of the development. Increased activity in Dickson will also provide a boost for existing businesses.

Light rail—stage 1 construction safety

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, I refer to the ABC article titled “Canberra light rail construction was ‘reckless’, non-compliant and in danger of flooding, explosion”. Why did the ACT government enforce strict time pressures on construction workers knowing that it could result in a risk to the safety of workers?

MR STEEL: I am pleased to have the opportunity to reiterate that our light rail system is safe, and documents released under freedom of information show that the Transport Canberra project team, regulators and Canberra Metro itself were all focused on identifying potential issues prior to operations commencing. They demonstrate that the contract and regulations worked as intended.

Documents and photos released under FOI were mid-build and do not represent the end state of the project; it is like taking a photo in the middle of a surgery. Things that needed to be fixed were fixed. Where further verification and analysis were required they were undertaken. Canberra Metro undertook a level of verification activities which far exceeded what is typical for similar projects elsewhere in the country, including extensive CCTVing of conduits and the location of built assets.

MRS JONES: Minister, will you admit that the unrealistic time pressures and time constraints enforced by the government led to the reckless and dangerous construction of light rail stage 1?

MR STEEL: No.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, can you guarantee that the construction of light rail stage 1 was compliant with all safety regulations?

MR STEEL: It would not have been certified if it were not safe.

Courts—funding

MR HANSON: My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, it was revealed during estimates that reforms to the safer families levy will actually result in defunding positions in the Legal Aid Commission, court clerk positions and court translation positions. Attorney-General, why have you made these cuts to essential front-line domestic violence services?

MADAM SPEAKER: You are taking it, Ms Berry?

MS BERRY: Yes, Madam Speaker. The family safety levy is my responsibility so I will respond to Mr Hanson’s question. I refer him to the responses that I gave and that the Attorney-General gave during estimates hearings. In particular, I would like to say that the family safety levy was always intended to provide opportunities for innovation to respond to domestic and family violence in the ACT. This is a complex and complicated issue and it requires ongoing, challenging innovation to address it as

we learn more about the controlling behaviour behind domestic and family violence and how we can better support perpetrators to change their behaviour and particularly support women and children who are experiencing domestic and family violence in their homes.

With regard to the changes that will be made to the funding that the family safety levy particularly provided to Legal Aid, my expectation is that in future years funding for Legal Aid to provide different functions will continue. With regard to funding for translation services—

Mr Coe: Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, Ms Berry. Point of order.

Mr Coe: On relevance, the minister is not directly answering the question regarding the actual cuts. We would appreciate her being directly relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER: I do not think there is a point of order. She started the response by saying that it was around an innovative program and ongoing change within that response. Minister, you have 15 seconds.

MS BERRY: I did refer members to my responses at estimates as well. But also, with regard to the translation services, the translation services were less than was originally predicted.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you intervene to reverse these budget cuts to essential services and cuts to jobs?

MS BERRY: The Attorney-General and I will work closely together on the implementation of the family safety levy. In particular, we will work with Legal Aid with respect to their future needs.

MR PARTON: Minister, will you guarantee not to allow further cuts to be made to front-line domestic violence services?

MS BERRY: First of all, I think I have made very clear what the family safety levy is designed for. I have made it clear a number of times in this place and during the estimates hearings. It is a contribution that has been made by the community to deal with this very complex and very terrible issue that our community is not alone in trying to address.

We are certainly coming up with the innovation and the different kinds of ways through the family safety levy and the family safety hub, led by the coordinator-general, to address this issue, and I will continue to work with those services to ensure that their needs are met so that they can meet the needs of our community.

Housing—rental reform

MR GUPTA: My question is to the Attorney-General. How will the government's changes to the Residential Tenancies Act make renting fairer and more secure?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Gupta for the question. This government recognises that housing is a human right and that access to housing is fundamental to our rights and our dignity. Public tenants, private tenants and home owners all have a right to fair and secure living conditions. In October last year the Deputy Chief Minister launched the ACT housing strategy, the purpose of which is to promote an equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for Canberra.

The changes to the Residential Tenancies Act this government brought to the Assembly support fair housing for renters. The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2019, which will commence later this calendar year, makes renting fairer by recognising the importance and value of pets, recognising basic rights to settle into a home through modifications, and ensuring a fair balance of rights between tenants and landlords for ending leases and changes to rental rates.

The government's legislation reflects the changing nature of renting in our city and our commitment to ensuring that tenants are well protected. The private rental sector is no longer a stopgap just for young people who go on to buy their first homes; there are more private renters at midlife and more private renters are families with children. There are also more long-term renters in the sector who rent properties for more than 10 years and do so deliberately as a choice of way of life. The legislative changes that this government has developed reflect our commitment to make Canberra a liveable, secure city for this whole community.

MR GUPTA: Minister, what steps did the government take to ensure that the community was properly consulted in developing these reforms?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Gupta for the supplementary question. The government's policy on residential tenancies is the product of very thorough consultation. Members will have heard me say this before: good policy comes from good listening. This government's program of reviewing and reforming laws for renters is focused on vulnerable people first. That is why, after speaking with Canberra Community Law and the Tenants' Union, we introduced legislation to improve the way that unpaid rent disputes operate.

Those changes gave tenants a fair opportunity to argue their circumstances before the tribunal and at the same time reduced complexity for landlords who are seeking to recover unpaid rent. By listening to the people who were most experienced in representing both tenants and landlords in these disputes, we were able to deliver tangible improvements.

In delivering our most recent legislative reforms, we listened to the views of tenants who participated in the development of the ACT housing strategy. We also spoke to renters' rights advocates, including the Tenants' Union, and we spoke to the Real Estate Institute ACT. The review of the Residential Tenancies Act that was produced in 2016 also contained a wealth of information that came from roundtable discussions and direct engagement with the community.

We held a series of roundtables over the past 12 months to deliver even more reforms. Those roundtables have heard from residents of caravan parks, students and people who rely on crisis accommodation. In response, we will be delivering even stronger legislation to protect tenants who live under occupancy agreements.

MR PARTON: Minister, what message do you have for the many real estate agents who have told me and you that they are losing a large percentage of their rent roll as a consequence of the changes that you have spoken about today?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Parton for the question. Yes, we did share some time at the Real Estate Institute forum. It was a good chance for us to be able to be together and for me to be able to explain some matters to those people who gathered there for that function. It was unfortunate that some of the matters raised by some of the speakers on behalf of the Real Estate Institute ACT and some of the written documentation that was produced at the forum contained some inaccurate information about the amendments that had been made. What I will say is what I have said to the Real Estate Institute ACT, which I have met with since that forum: we will work closely to make sure that accurate information about those changes is provided to everyone, so that people realise that the changes are indeed fair and that we have worked very closely on them.

Transport Canberra—south side bus services

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the minister for transport. How many of the southbound R4 buses terminate at Woden interchange?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I am happy to take that on notice.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, why do many of these R4 buses now have a handmade sign taped to the door saying “This service terminates at Woden interchange?”

MR STEEL: I will take that question on notice.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, when will R4 buses resume their advertised service?

MR STEEL: I will take that question on notice, but I do note that R4 is our most popular rapid service in the city and continues to see passenger growth with the new network.

Transport Canberra—south side bus services

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, have you done any risk assessment of the effect that routing bus services back on to Anketell Street in Tuggeranong may have on pedestrian safety? If so, what was the outcome of that assessment?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Lawder for her question. The government is still considering the running of buses on Anketell Street. During the upgrades to the Anketell Street

precinct buses have been running on Cowlshaw Street, which is not ideal for running buses and would require reasonably significant capital investment to be made to accommodate buses. We are considering what the scope of those works might be and whether we want to make the decision. We will of course need to continue to consult with the Transport Workers Union as well.

It is very difficult to turn right currently at the end of Cowlshaw Street at the corner of Reed Street as it requires buses to cross over two lanes, which is not ideal and potentially could be rectified through capital works. That is the work that we are currently doing as we consider both the petitions from the Tuggeranong Community Council and the needs of businesses in the area.

MS LAWDER: Minister, have you done any impact assessment on the effect that rerouting buses back onto Anketell Street may have on business viability, and have you had discussions with businesses on Anketell Street about that?

MR STEEL: I look forward to having discussions with businesses on Anketell Street about both the upgrades that have been undertaken and running buses through this identified public transport corridor through the Tuggeranong town centre. Anketell Street provides efficient access to the Tuggeranong bus interchange. Anketell Street is the main street of Tuggeranong; it is a busy thoroughfare for all vehicles, including buses. As I said, Cowlshaw Street is not necessarily an ideal route for buses at this time. We need to consider all those issues and consult further not only with businesses but also with the bus drivers.

MR PARTON: Minister, when will buses be returning to Anketell Street in Tuggeranong? When will a firm decision be made as to the longer term viability of either Cowlshaw or Anketell?

MR STEEL: The government is currently considering the longer term solution there, taking into account the community's views, and that of businesses and bus drivers. We will do that in consultation, but until that point Anketell will remain the main transport thoroughfare before we make a decision on whether rerouting is required.

Municipal services—playgrounds

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, what is the ACT government doing to support children's play in our suburbs?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Cheyne for her question. Our government is funding new and upgraded playgrounds and parks in our suburbs to provide a diverse range of high quality play experiences for children and families in the ACT. Play is vital for children's development. Outdoor play, particularly in nature, helps to develop children's creativity and problem solving, and helps them to build social skills as well as their motor skills.

In this year's budget, 20 playgrounds across the ACT were funded to receive refreshes and amenity upgrades. Refreshes deliver essential work to improve and protect the

condition of a play space, including repainting, replacing equipment and undertaking necessary repairs. In 2018, 16 playgrounds across Canberra received a refresh and new playgrounds are being constructed, with three new nature play spaces funded last year and an additional two funded from the budget this year to allow children an opportunity to connect with nature through play.

Following the play space review that was undertaken last year, five suburbs were identified for whole-of-suburb play space reviews to identify where a new playground could be facilitated. Following this year's budget, funding has now been provided for the construction of new or upgraded play spaces in five suburbs: Torrens, Narrabundah, Richardson, Higgins and Waramanga.

Designs for the five new playgrounds are currently being finalised and we expect construction to begin soon. Undertaking these works will ensure that across the 500 playgrounds that we have in the ACT there is a diverse range of improved play experiences to give children of all ages fun, creative and engaging play opportunities.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, will all Canberra regions benefit from new and upgraded playgrounds?

MR STEEL: Yes; every part of Canberra will benefit from our upgrades to existing playgrounds, and every region in Canberra will also receive a new playground.

A new nature play space will be installed at Yerrabi Pond in Gungahlin and a new playground is being built in Gungahlin Place. I want to knowledge Suzanne Orr's advocacy in relation to improvements there. Higgins in Belconnen will have a new playground constructed once design and public consultation have concluded, and a further six playgrounds in Belconnen will receive upgrades, including refreshes, through the budget and the play space forum allocation last year.

Central Canberra will see a new play space in Glebe Park, mentioned yesterday by Minister Stephen-Smith, a very popular destination for families already. Also, a new playground will be constructed in Narrabundah, with nine existing playgrounds in the central region to be refreshed.

Woden and Weston Creek stand to benefit from two new nature play spaces, with the Eddison Park nature play space under construction already, with a focus on supporting children with a disability from the local Malkara School in particular. There is also a new nature play space in Farrer. New playgrounds in Torrens and Waramanga are being provided, and there are upgrades to eight existing playgrounds in that region as well.

Children in Tuggeranong will be excited to learn that, along with a new playground in Richardson and a new nature play space at Kambah District Park, 12 playgrounds will be upgraded and funded. It is an exciting time to be a young Canberran.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, when can we expect these upgrades to begin?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary. I am very pleased to advise that the first round of many of the upgrades and refreshes to playgrounds has been completed, with 16 refreshes funded last year. Residents across the 20 suburbs to receive refresh works on existing playgrounds thereafter are likely to see works commencing in the coming months.

I had the pleasure of turning the first sod on the site of the new Eddison Park nature play space. We expect work on the nature play spaces to progress very quickly and I expect that the community will be able to enjoy these new play spaces before the end of the year.

For the five suburbs identified as part of the whole-of-suburb play space reviews, consultation with the communities has gone very well. I know that both parents and children have had their say over where new or upgraded playgrounds should be, what the priorities should be and what features should be included in those upgrades.

It is important to get these designs right and to take into account the context of the suburb and the age group of children who are likely to use the playgrounds. At present designs are being finalised and I look forward to these designs being released to the public and for construction to begin shortly after. Of course, I am sure that these new playgrounds will be easy to install. After all, it is child's play.

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

Youth—substance abuse

Debate resumed.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (2.54): The Greens are pleased to see this motion brought before the Assembly today as it provides us all with an opportunity to consider the substance of a very complex and, I think, multifaceted issue. The issue of mandatory or compulsory medical treatment and enforced psychological intervention should not be taken lightly. Many of us, either through our personal or professional roles, have certainly heard stories of extremely vulnerable children and young people falling through the gaps in our generally comprehensive support systems and perhaps also the heart-wrenching stories of pain and anguish of a parent or family carer who feels utterly helpless in those situations.

It is therefore completely understandable to hear of the genuine and sincere desire of the Victorian magistrate named in Mrs Kikkert's motion today to do more to help, and also of her personal and professional frustration at times not to be able to intervene in a young person's life at a time when they may be at serious risk to themselves or others. I am advised that Magistrate Bowles's 2014 Churchill Fellowship canvassed many options and included visits to New Zealand, Scotland, England and Sweden. However, importantly for this debate, I also understand that her initial report at least had a much broader remit than just drug and alcohol use.

Ultimately, though, she is recommending a youth drug court and crossover list for the many young people who are subject to both criminal and child protection proceedings. I acknowledge that this approach is broadly in line with the policy thinking behind the establishment of our new drug and alcohol court for adults in this jurisdiction. The new drug and alcohol court will use a restorative approach, and that is what we need for our young people.

I will talk more shortly on the issues of responding to child and youth trauma, the deep and integrated issue of trauma and child protection and the far too common overlap with youth mental health. But on the matter of youth drug use, I would just like to acknowledge again the distress and frustration that a family experiences when their loved one is clearly in the midst of risky substance use and addiction.

In these cases, where perhaps there may be no diagnosed mental illness or identified care and protection issues, the ACT does offer a range of services. But unless court ordered—usually as a result of a criminal offence—these services are not mandatory. That means that for people who have not become involved in the criminal system, there is, I think in many people's eyes, a gap there where they are not voluntarily willing to be involved. I think that is the point that Mrs Kikkert was touching on earlier today.

There is actually a variety of good reasons why it is not mandatory. In general, it is our understanding that addiction specialists are pretty unanimous that mandatory compulsory drug and alcohol treatment is not ideal. It is partially an issue of motivation and desire to change and partially a matter of effectively enforced medical treatment. Having said that, as I noted, courts can and do currently make orders for offenders of all ages to attend treatment services. It is hoped that the providers themselves have the skills necessary to build a rapport with the individual and to work with them to address their substance use.

However, these orders are delivered in the context of criminal offending and existing legal frameworks. That is a matter of some debate that we continue to have, and need to have further, regarding the need to re-evaluate our society's approach to drugs from being a criminal matter to instead being a health matter. That is a view I have articulated in this place on many occasions and one that I think is also very relevant in this discussion. However, in the interests of time I will not speak on that point further in this debate, particularly as the motion is constructive and focused on children and young people with more complex needs.

That leads me to emphasise that most often the underlying reasons for young people resorting to problematic drug use are trauma, abuse and neglect. Addressing the underlying causes in my view, and in the Greens' general approach to policy in this space, is key to resolution and restoration of a normal life.

Approaches to dealing with drug taking, especially for young people, in our view should not be punitive. A punitive approach we do not believe will get us anywhere. We really need to be much better at addressing trauma as the underlying cause. People, whether young or old, often resort to drugs to self-medicate. They are medicating

against the pain of their lives and experiences, and to make themselves feel better. I think that is where our focus should be in seeking to respond to the behaviour that they have got involved in and the downward spiral that that can be for their lives.

Childhood trauma is one of the nation's most important public health concerns, with adverse childhood experiences being one of the strongest predictors for difficulties in life. In the ACT, while we do have Melaleuca Place, a trauma recovery centre that is a targeted, multi-disciplined, holistic early intervention and prevention service committed to supporting children and young people to heal from trauma, repairing existing relationships and establishing new supportive and protective networks, I am advised that the ACT still does not have a residential component. That is something that we think is really needed.

I have no doubt that the service provider at Melaleuca Place is a good one. It targets exactly the sort of issues I am talking about. But it is our understanding that it does not have the residential component. We think that that could make a very positive difference. We should all be seeking to provide improved therapeutic care for our young people.

Emerging models around Australia are using small or home-like environments housing small groups of children or young people. Models like this are informed by knowledge of trauma and its impact on development and behaviour, the critical importance of worker-child relationships and the importance of organisational support and congruence.

In relation to my own portfolio of mental health, I see the distress that families and loved ones experience. I am also keenly aware of the rightly very cautious approach to utilising the existing powers of emergency apprehension and psychiatric treatments for compelled treatment. I presented a report on this only yesterday, as members will have noted. This is a complex area of human rights, medicine, law, ethics and, ultimately, compassion.

I can also state that the government is committed to developing more youth-focused mental health services. We are expanding the size and range of services across the board. I have had a number of new initiatives in the budget in recent years. These have included improved consultation liaison services for adolescents at the hospitals, but also an outreach service that seeks to target particularly young people with complex problems who will not actually come to the services we provide. Instead, the service seeks to go to them at their homes where they can also interact with the families. I think this one particularly is a very important initiative.

We are also expanding the size and range of services at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, including the planning of a dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit and day care program. Canberra Health Services has commenced preliminary work on the new unit, which has an estimated completion date in 2022.

The aim of admission to this unit is acute stabilisation of psychiatric risk, supporting the family at a time of distress, and facilitating transfer back to the family home as soon as is practicable so as to minimise the disruption to education, peer connections,

interpersonal relationships, social and recreational activities, and other adolescent developmental milestones.

The day service will provide a therapeutic program for the continued recovery of adolescents who have been discharged or who have previously presented to the emergency department and would benefit from the day service programs to avoid a possible readmission. But, again, while this is all of benefit to young people and their families, it still does not fully answer the needs of the likely very small number of young people in the ACT who may need a highly specialised and targeted response to help them overcome a range of multiple issues.

This is where we share some concerns around the ACT's lack of therapeutic orders and places of treatment support. This is what we must get better at and this is where our focus should be in our view. I support the call for consultation with experts about whether compulsory therapeutic drug treatment models for young people with complex substance use disorders, including the model based on Magistrate Bowles's research and recommendations, should be implemented in the ACT. It is important to ask the question and to make sure that we are keeping up to date with the latest research.

However, this consultation should also include the scoping of alternative options to compulsory treatment in order to address the complex needs of some young people. As I mentioned earlier, there is some debate about whether compulsory treatment is the best option. But one thing I am clear about is that we need to have a suite of options available to young people with problematic drug use and that those programs, whatever they are, need to have a trauma focus in order to be effective. We are happy to support Mrs Kikkert's motion today, with the amendment from Minister Stephen-Smith.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (3.04): I thank those who have spoken in favour of this motion and its intent. Mr Rattenbury spoke about why we have not implemented compulsory drug rehabilitation for people. I want to reiterate and remind him that Magistrate Bowles's report includes evidence that compulsory treatment, if carried out correctly, can be effective. She quotes one Swedish expert as saying:

For a long time, we considered treatment had to be voluntary ... but here—

In Sweden—

they studied groups, one mandatory and the other voluntary and they couldn't see any difference.

If it is working in Sweden, perhaps it could work here in Australia because we are all human beings. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to move this motion. I especially want to thank the heroic parents who have come to me to raise this issue. They love and worry over their children. They want them to be safe. They want to give them the best opportunity to enjoy productive lives and live up to their full potential.

They are obviously desperate to have somewhere to turn to get help. Whether compulsory therapeutic treatment of young people with complex substance use disorders is the answer needs to be discussed. This is an option that several other nations have implemented, with reported success, and it is an option that is under serious consideration in Victoria. Here in the ACT, we cannot afford to choose to be left out of this conversation.

I well understand that this is a complex issue that involves not just determining what is best practice but what best protects the rights of young people, as Mr Rattenbury had mentioned before. But as Magistrate Bowles has noted, doing nothing when a better option may be available is a violation of a young person's most basic human rights. Quoting from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, these include that children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

In addition, governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs and children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development. I am satisfied that the government has agreed to consider this matter. I and many parents look forward to hearing the reported findings. Once again, Madam Assistant Speaker, I commend this motion to the Assembly.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Waste—sustainable personal products

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (3.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the environmental impacts of disposable nappies, continence pads and sanitary products, with:
 - (a) Australians and New Zealanders using approximately 3.75 million disposable nappies each day, which take up to 150 years to decompose;
 - (b) the average menstruating person in Australia using around 10 000 to 12 000 disposable menstrual products over the course of their life, with pads taking more than 500 years to decompose;
 - (c) the average adult experiencing incontinence using at least three continence pads a day;
 - (d) these products requiring the use of a significant amount of plastic and water during production;
 - (e) these products contributing to landfill as they cannot be recycled; and
 - (f) these products impacting on plumbing and sewage if not disposed of correctly;
- (2) acknowledges the ACT Government's commitment to reducing waste, including:

- (a) the *Waste Management Strategy 2011-2025*, which sets a target to divert 90 per cent of waste from landfill by 2025;
 - (b) the release of the Waste Feasibility Study in 2018, which canvasses options to manage and minimise waste in the ACT;
 - (c) the introduction of the plastic shopping bag ban in 2011; and
 - (d) the release of a discussion paper exploring the phasing out of single-use plastics in the ACT;
- (3) notes the increasing number of sustainable and environmentally-friendly nappies and sanitary products commercially available, including:
- (a) modern cloth nappies and accessories;
 - (b) reusable pads;
 - (c) menstrual cups;
 - (d) period underwear; and
 - (e) continence underwear;
- (4) further notes the importance of promoting and discussing environmentally-friendly alternatives while acknowledging that consumers value having the choice of a variety of nappy and sanitary product types;
- (5) further notes existing initiatives aimed at increasing the uptake of cloth products across Australia, including:
- (a) rebates for the purchase of cloth nappies and sanitary pads, as offered by Casey City Council in Melbourne, Victoria;
 - (b) the provision of cloth nappy library services through partnerships between local councils and community groups or businesses, such as those supported by Prospect City Council and Campbelltown City Council in Adelaide, South Australia;
 - (c) workshops introducing and demonstrating the use of cloth nappies; and
 - (d) Canberra Environment Centre's onsite cloth nappy display, showcasing the various types of nappies, accessories and kits available;
- (6) calls on the Government to consider coordinating or supporting initiatives that encourage the use of sustainable cloth nappies, continence pads and sanitary products, including:
- (a) investigating the feasibility of introducing rebate schemes similar to those offered in other Australian jurisdictions for consumers who have purchased cloth nappies or sustainable sanitary products and have a receipt of purchase;
 - (b) supplying, or liaising with other groups or businesses to supply, cloth nappy kits that can be trialled over a set period at a set cost;
 - (c) providing, or liaising with community groups to provide, free introductory workshops showcasing cloth nappies and reusable sanitary products, including information about the various products available and how to use them; and/or

- (d) producing educational material highlighting the benefits of using sustainable and environmentally-friendly types of nappies and sanitary products; and
- (7) requests the ACT Government to report back on this work to the Assembly in July 2020.

Madam Assistant Speaker Orr, I am proud to have moved this motion today, the last day of plastic-free July, and to follow on, quite neatly, from your motion from earlier today. This is fundamentally a motion about sustainability. It is also one about choice, about ensuring that we as a government do what we can to encourage consumers to consider making sustainable choices with sanitary and nappy products, if that is something that works for the consumer. It is about removing barriers that might be stopping people giving these products, or even at least considering giving these products, a go.

Here is why it is important for us to do more: disposable nappies and incontinence and sanitary products are resource intensive to create, they are not recyclable and our use of them is enormous. Their creation and production require the use of a significant amount of water and plastic. Australians and New Zealanders use roughly 3.75 million disposable nappies every day, and it takes up to 150 years for these to decompose. The average person uses around 10,000 disposable menstrual products over the course of their life, and things like disposable pads, whether for menstruation or incontinence, take more than 500 years to decompose. Their contribution to landfill is significant and, if not disposed of correctly, they risk blocking or harming our plumbing and sewerage systems.

This is not a motion about shaming people who use these disposable products. Consumers value choice, and I absolutely recognise that, for many people, disposable products might be what works for them. There are plenty of reasons and circumstances where and why disposable products are absolutely appropriate. This motion does not dispute that, and nor do I.

But it is important to recognise that, increasingly, there are alternatives available, sustainable alternatives such as cloth nappies, re-usable sanitary and incontinence pads, menstrual cups, and period and incontinence underwear. As a government committed to reducing landfill, and a strong proponent of reduce, re-use and recycle—in that order—it is worth discussing and considering whether more can be done to promote and encourage use of these sustainable products and to remove any barriers to their use, if, of course, that is what works for the consumer.

The phrase “cloth nappies” might evoke images of white squares of cotton pegged to a clothesline, blowing in the wind. Perhaps it evokes flashbacks of carefully trying to fasten a safety pin without nipping a little, wriggly tummy. Today the options available to parents seem almost endless in comparison, from more old-fashioned varieties to brightly-coloured, shapely nappies that are as easy to manoeuvre as their disposable counterparts.

The Canberra Environment Centre has witnessed a newfound momentum building behind cloth nappies. The centre is already leading the charge with an on-site cloth

nappy display, showcasing the types of nappies and accessories available. For more than seven years the cloth nappy display has given parents and parents-to-be the opportunity to see and feel these products and to seek out more information.

The Canberra Environment Centre team has also witnessed concerns or misconceptions about the benefits of using these products. There are misconceptions such as the amount of water used to clean cloth nappies and whether that outweighs the environmental benefits of using them. There are misconceptions about the cost of purchasing cloth nappies and how that compares to disposable nappies. The list goes on.

With so much information out there, it can be difficult to know where to begin. One Canberra parent who understands this firsthand is Emma Black. Emma decided to switch to cloth nappies when her daughter was five months old and she has not looked back. Since then she has created Canberra Cloth Bums, a Facebook group providing information and support for families interested in using cloth nappies. The group has already reached 400 members since its inception in November. If that was not enough, Emma also runs introductory cloth nappy workshops at the Environment Centre.

Emma says that cloth nappies have come a long way since the days of terry towelling with a plastic pilcher. They are a lot easier to use and do not take too long to clean, and they have saved her money in the long run. Emma believes that education is crucial when it comes to sustainable alternatives and recommends that families start small and see what works for them.

The same could be said about environmentally-friendly sanitary and incontinence products. In times past there were very few options available to consumers. Thankfully, gone are the days of sanitary belts and literal rags. Today the options seem almost endless, from traditional tampons and pads to re-usable pads, menstrual cups and even period underwear.

Deciding what is best for you can be tricky and overwhelming. As with cloth nappies, there are also concerns and misconceptions about the benefits of these products and how they work. There are misconceptions about day-to-day comfort, leaking or cost. So how can we make this decision-making process easier?

Madam Assistant Speaker, exploring how we can encourage more Canberrans to consider using environmentally-friendly products is not only worthwhile but it complements this government's commitment to creating a more sustainable city. The ACT government has well and truly demonstrated its commitment to reducing waste, as you recognised earlier this morning as well. We have the waste management strategy, which sets a target to divert 90 per cent of waste from landfill by 2025. Last year the government released the waste feasibility study, which canvasses options to manage and minimise this waste.

In 2011 Canberra led the way as one of the first Australian jurisdictions to ban single-use plastic shopping bags. Earlier this year Minister Steel announced the launch of a discussion paper exploring the phasing out of other single-use plastics, items such as plastic cutlery and polystyrene food containers.

There is no doubt that the ACT is leading the way in this space. But there is always room to do a little more. This is where nappies and sanitary and incontinence products come in. As I have discussed, these disposable products are huge contributors to landfill. But there are several initiatives across Australia right now aimed at increasing the use of sustainable alternatives. For instance, Casey City Council in Melbourne has offered rebates for the purchase of cloth nappies and sanitary pads. Residents are refunded half of what they spent on cloth nappies or re-usable sanitary products if they can provide proof of purchase, with rebates capped at a set amount.

There are various ways that a rebate scheme could operate here. It could be means tested, a short trial or simply a short promotion. It may not even be appropriate for our jurisdiction. But even though you quickly recoup the cost of cloth nappies or sustainable menstrual or incontinence products through re-use, and they end up much cheaper than disposable products over time, it is that initial outlay that I think, and that I hear, is off-putting for some people.

While I do not have children, for a baby shower recently I was very happy to gift a friend cloth nappies, but even I was surprised to find that the cost was upwards of \$30 each, and obviously you do not just buy one. Cloth sanitary pads, which I own and use myself, also cost around \$30 each. Again one is, frankly, not enough. Menstrual cups can cost around \$50. These are costs that I think could be genuine barriers for consumers.

It is worth comparing that, for nappies, while just one sustainable cloth nappy costs \$30, for \$30 you can buy 90 disposable nappies. For the average consumer, that initial outlay might not seem to be worth it, even though the overall benefit is genuinely very considerable. In my view it is worth at least investigating whether the cost is a barrier to Canberrans, or at least to some Canberrans, and how we might be able to alleviate that.

There are other ways worth thinking about to encourage consumers to consider using more sustainable products. It is not just about removing a financial barrier to considering environmentally-friendly alternatives; it is about giving people a chance to learn more about how these products work and the benefits of using them.

We know that the leap from disposable to sustainable products can be a big one. Just ask anyone who has had to describe exactly how a menstrual cup works. One of those barriers could be that people are simply a bit anxious about using these products for the first time, and fair enough. Leakage, staining and disposing of waste are real questions, but ones, when answered, that can help to alleviate that anxiety and further encourage the consideration of use.

As I have raised, Canberra Environment Centre is already leading the charge with its on-site cloth nappy display. The introductory workshops are another great way to showcase both sustainable nappies and sustainable sanitary and incontinence products. There are workshops to engage in interactive forums to learn more, physically see exactly what is being discussed and ask questions in a safe environment. Let us not

forget education materials, a simple but effective way to highlight the advantages of using sustainable nappies and sanitary products.

Some councils in Adelaide have gone one step further, by partnering with businesses or community groups to provide cloth nappy library services. A cloth nappy library enables families to hire a cloth nappy kit, including a sample range of modern cloth nappies and accessories, over a set period and at a set cost, enabling consumers to test things out for themselves, to determine if it is the right product for them. There are various ways that a cloth nappy library could operate here, such as a government-run service or a partnership with another organisation. Again I simply think it is worth having a look at.

Canberra is already a leader when it comes to sustainability and waste reduction, but together I think we can do more to encourage people to consider environmentally-friendly alternatives, if they are right for them, such as cloth nappies, cloth sanitary pads, menstrual cups, and period or incontinence underwear.

There are many individuals and groups dedicating time and resources to help Canberra consumers to make informed decisions about nappies and sanitary and incontinence products. There are many ways we can support these efforts and give consideration to how we as a government can go about removing barriers which might be putting people off considering these options, such as investigating the feasibility of rebates, considering a cloth nappy library service, and exploring having more introductory workshops or education materials.

As I said it is not about shaming consumers who use disposable products; it is simply about choice. Disposable products can be the right choice for people. I absolutely understand and respect that. This motion does not in any way seek to remove those options or to restrict those choices. But if there are ways that we can help or encourage people to try out, or hopefully to commit to using, more sustainable products, ways to remove barriers to consumers using these products, ways that ultimately result in less landfill and waste, it is absolutely worth us looking into. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.20): I thank Ms Cheyne for bringing this motion to the attention of the Assembly today. The issue of reducing waste, as we have already touched on today in relation to another motion, is one that occupies the minds of many Canberrans. People are deeply committed to it.

The ACT has long prided itself on its recycling. I think most of us are familiar with the waste management strategy hierarchy, the mantra of reduce, reuse, recycle, recover. The ACT waste management strategy has been a resource document since the days of, I think, previous minister Simon Corbell. It followed on from the no waste by 2010 strategy, released in 1996, that reduced waste sent to landfill from nearly 60 per cent of total waste in 1995-96 to below 30 per cent by 2003-04.

The goal of the ACT waste management strategy for 2011-25 is to ensure that the ACT leads innovation to achieve full resource recovery and a carbon-neutral waste sector. As the strategy suggests, it is embedded in legislation to ensure “that the

ACT's waste management strategy presents a holistic waste management system approach from the initial generation of waste through to its ultimate disposal with opportunities to reduce waste at each step of the hierarchy".

As Ms Cheyne's motion outlines, the strategy has set a target to divert 90 per cent of waste from landfill by 2025. It is an ambitious target, but worth while. But much more work will need to be done and more alternatives to sending waste to landfill will need to be adopted if we are to reach that target in six years time. We know that Canberra's growing population is putting increased pressure on the Mugga Lane tip. As unpalatable as some alternatives might seem to some, there needs to be a serious discussion about what other options are possible for the ACT, and we need agreement on a way forward.

I was pleased to hear Ms Cheyne talk about choice, that people can make a choice as to which approach they might like to adopt. Her motion goes specifically to the numerous disposable products that are now common, both feminine hygiene products and nappies for babies. Unlike with plastic bags, there are fewer options to move entirely away from sanitary and nappy products, disposable, reusable or otherwise. It will take time to overcome some emotional barriers that people might have towards this change.

We have to acknowledge and accept that these sanitary products and nappy products have an enormous impact on society. A staggering 3.75 million disposable nappies are used each day in Australia and New Zealand. It takes about one cup of crude oil to make each nappy. This is a lot of landfill with conventional disposable nappies, which are estimated to take up to 150 years to break down. Whether you choose disposable or cloth nappies, in the first few years of a child's life there are likely to be around 6,000 nappy changes. I am sure that parents everywhere are thrilled to hear that number quantified.

Both disposable and cloth nappies have an impact on the environment. Millions of disposable nappies end up in landfill every day. Their manufacture uses finite resources and contributes to global warming. When disposable nappies were first introduced, they were viewed as a timesaving and, in some cases, lifesaving gift for busy mothers and fathers. I remember them becoming really popular when I had my children quite a long time ago. I remember often going out to the supermarket or other places with a couple of nappy pins still attached to my shirt from a nappy change. If you did not have a screaming baby with you, people knew that you were definitely a mother.

Disposable nappies have been around since the 1950s. They were invented by the US-based company Procter & Gamble. Disposable menstrual pads grew from a Benjamin Franklin invention created to help stop wounded soldiers bleeding, but they appear to have been first commercially available from around 1888. Given the length of time of production of both these products, it is perhaps surprising, if not disappointing, that more has not been done to make these types of products more environmentally sympathetic.

Ms Cheyne's motion points to the benefits of a return to cloth nappies. These have been around for centuries, since the 19th century at least. The first cloth nappies were cotton, held in place with a fastening, eventually the safety pin. It is believed that cloth nappies were first mass-produced in the United States in around 1887-88.

Ms Cheyne has pointed to a number of councils that provide rebates, exchange stations and workshops to teach new mothers how to fit cloth nappies and calls on the government to examine similar schemes and workshops for the ACT. People of my era and older will find it astonishing that you have to teach someone how to fit a cloth nappy. It was something that you just learnt as a child from changing the nappies of siblings and cousins and the babies of friends. When you had your own babies, you generally already knew how to do it. How much things have changed. Now, new mothers and fathers may not know how to change a cloth nappy. There were a multitude of different ways to fold a cloth nappy. There was a girl way and a boy way. People had favourites.

We would like to see more research and innovation for more acceptable and environmentally sustainable products. While cloth nappies have some advantages over disposable ones, there is still a significant environmental cost to cloth nappies.

In the ACT, many of our house blocks are small and there is an ever-increasing number of apartments. People do not always have a backyard and clothesline, which is one of the key parts of having cloth nappies. It was always said that sunlight was the best disinfectant for nappies. No matter how well you washed them, even with Napisan or whatever product you used, initially in a bucket and then in the washing machine, it was still the done thing to hang them out in sunlight to be disinfected. You have to factor in the bucket to put the nappies in. Often that comes at a baby shower; Ms Cheyne talked about a baby shower. You need stain removers on an ongoing basis, as well as sanitising solutions, detergents, and fabric softeners. There is the washing machine and clothes dryer energy. It does start to increase the carbon footprint even if you use a commercial nappy service. In my day that was quite a common baby shower gift. You would give someone a commercial service for four, six or eight weeks, whatever you could afford, as a way of relieving the pressure and stress on a new mother.

We do need to have a bit of focus on research into environmentally sustainable products, not just get rid of the ones that are currently there and go to something where we need to assess the environmental impact. We need to make sure that the carbon footprint of cloth nappies does not make them just as bad as disposable nappies. Just because they are not going to landfill does not mean they do not have an environmental impact.

For example, there are currently some biodegradable disposable nappies made from different materials like bamboo, fabric and paper pulp. They use a non-chemical absorption method, and when they are thrown away, they decompose more quickly than ordinary disposable nappies. But they can still take years. We have seen that trend in many other areas, for example with the move to bamboo cutlery, plates that are easily compostable and biodegradable bags. Mr Steel has talked about

biodegradable bags for dog poo at dog parks. These are all really important things that we can do.

Current biodegradable disposable nappies are better for the environment than ordinary disposable nappies, but they can be more expensive to buy; and to be biodegradable, they need to be composted in stringent circumstances and conditions, which may not happen at standard landfill facilities. More work needs to be done on such products to help us to reduce our landfill waste. Many Canberrans—I presume most—aspire for the ACT to be a zero waste territory or, if not zero waste, achieve an enormous reduction in waste to landfill. We still have a way to go to achieve that.

With increasingly small house blocks and apartments, the clothesline is becoming a thing of the past. We have fewer people with outside clotheslines and more people depending on clothes dryers. Whether the energy to power the washing machines and the clothes dryers comes from a wind farm, a solar farm or a coal-fired power station, it still has a cost to the hip pocket for the consumer and the environment.

I am aware that Ms Le Couteur will be circulating an amendment; she has already distributed it although she has not yet moved it.

I will make one or two very brief comments before I close. We will be supporting Ms Cheyne's motion and supporting the amendment, if that gets up. My only concern with Ms Le Couteur's amendment, which I am not going to vote against, is that it talks about "using midwives, MACH nurses, disability support and aged care workers and ACT Government directorates to assist with education and promotion of these reusable products". This may mean that those staff and professionals will have to be taken offline for training in how to provide that support and education to others. These are professionals who already are in demanding positions and who may be time poor. We will be potentially taking them away from their front-line service delivery in order to achieve this.

That is not to say that it is not an admirable goal. It is just something that we should keep in mind: it may mean that we have to deliver that. As Ms Cheyne's speech outlined, not everyone even knows how to fold a nappy these days. I am sure some of our health professionals may be also in that boat.

Once again, I would like to thank Ms Cheyne for bringing this motion to the Assembly. Reducing waste is everyone's responsibility and in all of our interests. Ensuring that there is choice for individuals is important, because some people may well be resistant to change, as is always the case. It is worth looking at, but we need to assess the environmental impact of moving back to cloth nappies and cloth female sanitary products in regard to some of the issues that I have outlined. I would like to see further work on that.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (3.34): I thank Ms Cheyne for moving this motion and for including continence pads at my request. I have reached a stage in life where I am unlikely to need to use nappies or menstruation products, but my future could include continence pads. Before continuing, I move:

Insert new paragraphs (6)(e) to (g):

- “(e) using midwives, MACH nurses, disability support and aged care workers and ACT Government directorates to assist with education and promotion of these reusable products;
- (f) consider mechanisms to support low-income households to convert to use of environmentally-friendly types of nappies and sanitary and continence products; and/or
- (g) consider mechanisms to support early childhood educators to convert to use of environmentally-friendly types of nappies; and”.

I am pleased to agree with virtually everything preceding speakers have said. It is interesting that we have taken different approaches to this based on whether it is primarily a women’s issues or an environmental issue, and of course they are both.

This is a really important issue because sanitary pads, disposables and continence pads are all basically a sandwich of inorganic and organic materials, we could say that none of us is going with the concept of recycling them, but we need to think of better ways to deal with them.

At the risk of sounding old fashioned—I am even older than Ms Lawder—when I had a baby this was not a matter of conversation and I was very lucky that each side of the family gave me three dozen nappies. That was a standard sort of thing at the time. They are great; they last for a very long time, and if you are lucky enough to have any left over when the baby is out of nappies they are incredibly useful. People kept on pinching them to do things with them.

The new cloth nappies are more convenient, and certainly the washing machines and dryers are. The new cloth nappies have velcro so you do not have to wear nappy pins anymore. Actually, I remember not so much wearing the nappy pins but always going around with a nappy on my shoulder to wipe up the messes. Today’s nappies are tailored so babies in cloth nappies can wear the same clothing as babies in disposable nappies.

I have a toddler grandson and his mum uses cloth nappies. She is fortunate enough to have a washing machine and a dryer very close to the change table and it is really no work. The dryer and washing machine are both solar powered; they managed to put in an awful lot of PVs. So for her using cloth nappies is a lot less hassle than disposables would be. With disposable she has to go to the shops and buy them and then she has to dispose of them. Of course, what she is doing is a lot cheaper once you have bought them. I also point out that nappies last very well and if you want to save some money, Gumtree—and probably eBay—has a very good market in second-hand modern cloth nappies.

Ms Lawder raised the big question of what is the most environmentally sound when you take it all into account. Whether they are single use or cloth, be they sanitary products, continence products or nappies, they all have environmental impacts. The real question is, which creates the biggest. The production of disposable nappies uses a lot of resources, I have not done extensive fact-checking on this and my numbers are

only from Google, but over 1,500 litres of crude oil is used to produce enough disposables for a baby until they are potty-trained.

There are big differences in transportation costs. While initially you have to get a set of nappies to the household, with the disposables you keep on bringing them in and then you have to take them away to dispose of them. They are a very mixed product. The plastic is bad enough but plastic by itself can be recycled reasonably well. You also have a mixture of some synthetics, some organic products—certainly the early ones used a lot of tree pulp—and obviously human body waste. So you have a whole heap of things and disposing of them is quite difficult. I have heard people say they can get their compost hot enough to compost nappies reasonably well, but I share the scepticism Ms Lawder is expressing on her face that that is possible.

Cloth nappies, of course, have to be washed. That requires water, but it is a minor amount compared to the amount used to manufacture disposable nappies. You can use biodegradable nappies, and people who are reasonably organised will segregate nappies with poo on them from the nappies with just urine on them and you use a lot less water et cetera if you do that. I have read some figures that the manufacture of disposables uses 230 per cent more water and 350 per cent more energy compared to cloth nappies. I do not know how accurate that is, but it has to be somewhere in that order of magnitude.

I understand new parents have enough going on trying to work out how to live with this new person who has been added to their lives on a 24-hour basis. So the most important thing with cloth nappies is education and understanding they will work and that in the long run they are good for the environment and your financial sustainability.

That is why I amended the motion to include midwives, MACH nurses and disability support and aged-care workers. Who are new parents going to be talking to? We do not have to worry about those who are talking to the environment centre; they are already on this path. The new parents who are overwhelmed will be talking to those sorts of people, and if they can say, “Look, it actually works. This is how you do it,” that will make the whole thing possible. They are not the only groups who can be part of this; it would be really good to do some funding for the Australian Breastfeeding Association who, again, also talk to people at this stage of their life.

The important thing is that cloth nappies work environmentally as well as economically. As Ms Cheyne said, they cost a fair amount up-front, but everything you read shows that over any period of time they save money big time. That is why I think the idea of rebates is reasonable. But given the fact that the people who use cloth nappies will save money overall, we need to target our financial enthusiasm. We do not want to end up with a case of middle-class welfare where only the people who have enough money to buy them in the first place get a refund, which I think is what would happen. I am very happy with the idea that we look at the feasibility of a rebate scheme, but we need to focus this as far as possible on people for whom the money is a barrier.

Given the long-term cost savings, for many people in Canberra money is not the barrier; the barrier for using reusable nappies, incontinence products and menstruation

products is that we do not know people who use them. We do not know they are going to work, so we are not going to spend money to buy the things in the first place. As both previous speakers have talked about, education is the most important part of this.

You have to realise that this is going to work and over the long run it is going to be easy-peasy. That is one of the reasons I included early childhood educators in my amendment. We need people to see that it works and that their peers are doing it. I have been told about a number of childcare centres where the nappy service is part of it: the baby goes to the centre with one of their own nappies, comes home with one of their own nappies and the childcare centre deals with the cloth nappies in between. This shows people how it works and that it is quite reasonable.

Another place where it would make sense to do these sorts of things is at the AMC so the women who are there for any period of time have a chance to see this is a change. It could save money for the prison authorities as well because there must be some washing facilities there. I know very little about it—

Mrs Jones: They do not do their own washing.

MS LE COUTEUR: Fair enough, but someone must wash. I do not know anything about the mechanics of how that would happen in that environment, but it seems like a place where we could do something.

As to sanitary items, an average woman has 400 menstrual cycles in a lifetime, and that represents an awful lot of tampons and sanitary pads. I remember from the past that some of those washable pads were not that wonderful, but they have improved. For anyone who is interested, on my desk is some unused and unopened continence and menstrual underwear. Due to the age at which I became aware of these products they have not become part of my life—too old for one and not old enough for the other—but I understand that they work. While they are expensive to start with, over the long run they save money.

Every year or so we see the share the dignity campaign, which is about sharing this sort of stuff with people who find it difficult to afford it. It would be great if menstrual cups and cloth sanitary pads were part of this because the women who benefit from this campaign are women for whom the up-front cost could be a barrier to their use.

I think this is a great motion. Ms Orr's motion this morning was in the category of the great waste motions and this motion is also. We have to be aware that waste is not a single thing. If it were a single thing we would undoubtedly work out how to deal with it. But there are lots and lots of different wastes and we need to deal with them individually and in the most appropriate way. One of the most important ways of doing that is to change the products and technology we use to things with less environmental impact, and we can do that in this instance.

I am very pleased about this, and I am very pleased that this will be discussed again because Ms Cheyne's motion has a report-back date. I am really looking forward to hearing about positive progress, and I hope that there will be a greater uptake of cloth nappies, menstrual pads, menstrual cups and period and incontinence underwear.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Transport and City Services) (3.48): I thank Ms Cheyne for the motion and welcome the opportunity to talk about the impacts of disposable products, including disposable nappies, incontinence products and other sanitary items. I have made many statements to the Assembly on the subject of waste—there have been many motions in the Assembly—and for good reason. Canberrans in particular and communities right around Australia and across the world are becoming increasingly aware of the unsustainable pace of our consumption and production of products that very quickly become waste.

This has become very clear to me as the consultation on the phasing out single-use plastics discussion paper has progressed. And it is increasingly an issue at the international and national levels, which is why we are working with the commonwealth and other states and territories to deliver an action plan under the national waste policy. We have high ambitions to reduce our waste in the ACT. And this is something that we are continuing to explore following the release of the waste feasibility study roadmap last year. The study looked carefully at our existing targets, including the goal of increasing resource recovery up to 90 per cent by 2025.

While recycling is important, and has never been more important, at the top of the waste hierarchy is waste avoidance. That means that it is always better to avoid making waste in the first place, especially when that waste is genuinely problematic, unnecessary and avoidable. This is easy to say and not always as easy to do but the little changes and tweaks that we all make as Canberrans, more than 420,000 of us, can really add up.

What about nappies and sanitary items? We have some data on nappies already. For example, our last waste audit found that nappies make up around 6.1 per cent of the household waste stream in the ACT. That is more than 4,000 tonnes per annum. The figure is even higher if nappies from commercial premises are counted or if other sanitary waste such as pads, tampons and adult incontinence products are counted as well.

We also know that we have a growing population who are likely to use a greater volume of these kinds of products as time goes by. For example, 6,207 babies were born in the ACT in the 2016-17 financial year, and there are now around 23,000 children below the age of three in the ACT. National Geographic has previously estimated that the average baby goes through about 3,800 nappies in the early years, and it may even be much higher than that. But on those conservative figures alone, 23½ million nappies could be making their way into the ACT's landfill every year.

We know that around half of Canberra's population may need sanitary items at some stage of their life. This is not just pads and tampons, although these items are a significant portion. In fact, research shows that an average woman could expect to use around 10,000 to 12,000 disposable menstrual products in her lifetime. But it is not just these products going to landfill. We should also have in mind the kinds of products that support people with various medical conditions such as urinary or faecal

incontinence, mobility impairment and various degenerative diseases. The point is that everyone knows someone who uses these products.

These items serve an incredibly important purpose. They are not just optional products, they are fundamentally important and support our community to be healthy, mobile and independent. The value that we are adding, as a government, is in sharing information about the innovative array of reusable alternatives available in the marketplace.

It is also, as has been mentioned in the debate, about education. A very recent study into public awareness of the environmental impact of menstrual products and product choice found that in the UK many people were not aware of the amount of plastic used in disposable sanitary products.

What are some of the alternatives? If you were thinking that it is just cloth nappies you would be wrong. This is a market that has changed very significantly over the past few years. There is now a range of modern cloth nappies, nappy washing subscription services, menstrual cups made from medical-grade silicon and washable, absorbent period underwear, just to name a few of the options available. They are not always practical and certainly do not work for everyone. But these are alternatives that can help reduce waste to landfill, and they exist and are available right now.

Of course, this issue is not black and white and the consultation on phasing out single-use plastic led by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate really has underscored the complexity and impact of all the products we consume, whether they are made of plastic, natural fibres or a composite and whether they are designed to last for a single use, for days, weeks, months, years or even a lifetime. It is important for us to be aware that every product has an environmental cost and a waste footprint, from the inputs required to make its components, to the impacts of its manufacture and distribution, its use and of course end of life. One of the important impacts of course of cotton reusable nappies is the water cost, the environmental impact of the water that is taken to produce that product. That needs to be taken into account as well.

Of course there are many very valid reasons why people use these products. While there is no perfect solution that suits everyone we can definitely support better choices that will meet individual needs. And we are not in the business of removing people's choices when it comes to nappies, sanitary items and incontinence products.

But there are some things we know with certainty right now, and I hope that this is something that the Canberra community knows by heart. The only way to dispose of single-use sanitary products, including nappies, is to put these items into the red bin or the garbage bin or an appropriate receptacle and into landfill. They do not belong in our sewerage system. Soiled nappies and other sanitary products must never be placed in the recycling bin because they cannot be recycled. Moreover, they contaminate the recycling process and present a workplace health and safety risk for the people who work at our materials recovery facility.

Earlier in the year the TCCS made revisions to the Recyclopedia website to share information about some of the different kinds of low-waste alternatives available for single-use nappies and other sanitary items. If you visit our state-of-the-art recycling discovery hub in Hume you will find examples of these products on display. And I am advised that the directorate is also looking at ways to promote waste avoidance in the wider community. For example, ACT NoWaste will be collaborating with Libraries ACT to provide family engagement activities and displays of alternative reusable products for National Recycling Week this year, from 7 to 11 November.

I commend the Canberra Environment Centre's work in building awareness of low-waste, environmentally friendly alternatives. The centre already has a display wall of modern cloth nappies so that parents and parents-to-be can look at and feel the different types of modern cloth nappies, accessories, inserts and kits before making a purchase.

The Canberra Environment Centre regularly hosts workshops to help Canberrans reduce their environmental footprint, including an introduction to cloth nappies run by Canberra Cloth Bums, a local parents group. I applaud the Canberra Environment Centre's ongoing efforts to promote awareness of initiatives to reduce waste going into landfill and I commend the leadership shown by Emma Black, as Ms Cheyne mentioned, founder of Canberra Cloth Bums, in reinforcing the importance of the issue to the Canberra community and the opportunities to make the system better.

I emphasise again that we do not want to limit people's choices when it comes to these kinds of products. But what we want to do is support an informed discussion and encourage Canberrans through education to consider low-waste alternatives where relevant.

I thank Ms Cheyne for her motion today. I think that this has been a really good discussion and I welcome more frank and open discussion on the challenges that impact all of us in facing up to our waste. And I look forward to working with my colleagues on this matter and with the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and ACT NoWaste to see where the ACT government can continue to empower and support Canberrans to make sustainable choices and to reporting back to the Assembly in a couple of months time.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (3.58): I have to agree with Minister Steel that it has been a very good discussion in this chamber. And I thank all members who have contributed to this discussion and shared their experiences, however recent or past, in a very frank and candid way. I think the more that we can bring to this place our personal stories, and those of our constituents and those who reach out to us, the better the debate that we can have here. I think that has resulted in broad agreement on some really key, fundamental issues here today.

Mr Parton: He speaks rubbish really well, does Mr Steel.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Parton! Ms Cheyne, please continue.

MS CHEYNE: Mr Parton, you just lowered the tone of the last hour, which has been particularly good.

Many people in this place have gone through or, indeed, are going through, a period of changing nappies. I can barely imagine what it must be like as a parent or a guardian or a carer, navigating the new world of caring for a baby. There are so many decisions to be made, not to mention the judgement that can sometimes follow these decisions.

The thing is that cloth nappies might not work for everyone or they might only work some of the time. But I think that it is important that Canberra families make informed decisions about what products they purchase for their child. And that includes what kinds of nappies.

The same goes for sanitary or incontinence products. Choices about these products are deeply personal ones. Providing people with greater access to information about the options that are available and how to use them, even though some people perhaps should know how to use them or did know how to use them, is crucial to making the decision-making process easier: easier for children and adolescents coming to grips with getting their period for the first time; easier for people who are familiar with the menstruation cycle but have never used environmentally friendly alternatives before and might have a bit of anxiety about it; and easier for those who are interested in using more sustainable products but might be feeling a little unsure of what to do or where to begin or simply what the cost and the benefit overall might be.

Using cloth nappies and sustainable sanitary and continence products is good for consumers and good for the environment. These products represent a good financial investment over the long run, eliminating the need to purchase pack upon pack of the disposable products. And these products represent a good environmental investment, reducing the millions of disposable nappies and sanitary products sent to landfill each year, products that can take hundreds of years to decompose. As Ms Le Coureur noted, the resources used in production of the disposable products are much more than what is needed to clean the sustainable products.

Some people find that sustainable alternatives are even more comfortable or better suited to their needs. Some people might simply find that they prefer using a mix of sustainable and disposable nappies or sanitary products or incontinence products. If a family replaces just one disposable nappy a day with a cloth alternative, that is 365 fewer disposable nappies going to landfill each year per family.

At the end of the day what works for one person may not work for another, for the range of reasons and circumstances and the whys that we have put on the table here today. Again, it is about that choice and encouraging people to do what they can, when they can. There are various measures this government can consider to encourage more Canberrans to use environmentally friendly alternatives which we have canvassed today.

I thank all members for their support today in calling for the government to give consideration to each of these measures, and I am happy to support Ms Le Couteur's amendment adding even more measures to be put forward for consideration.

Again, disposable products have their place. I think we are all in agreement on that. That choice is not going anywhere. As Minister Steel said, we are not in the business of taking away disposable products or people's choice to use them. But if there are barriers to using more sustainable sanitary, nappy and incontinence products—financial barriers, educational ones or anxiety-based ones—then it is worth exploring what we might be able to do as a government and in partnership with others to help reduce those barriers. Our environment depends on it.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: As we call the Clerk, we might need to contemplate whether we need to have a standing order about too much sharing.

Noise abatement

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.04): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes the:

- (a) importance of live music and other live entertainment forms to the character and life of the nation's capital;
- (b) contribution live entertainment makes to creating a sense of community, cultural experience and cultural identity;
- (c) Government's objective to rapidly expand village centres and population density along the Northbourne Corridor and elsewhere;
- (d) importance of these centres having access to complementary entertainment venues and leisure precincts;
- (e) beneficial contribution made by local entertainment to business growth, employment, tourism and the wider ACT economy; and
- (f) constraints imposed on the ability of venues to provide live entertainment and particularly live music due to noise restrictions applied across business districts and town centres;

(2) further notes the:

- (a) numerous reviews, studies and reports on the potential development of live music and the night time entertainment economy; and
- (b) various recommendations made to address planning solutions and more reasonable noise level emissions and abatement strategies; and

(3) calls on the Government to:

- (a) designate specific areas and precincts around the ACT as entertainment zones;
- (b) provide flexibility in allowable noise levels in these zones;
- (c) introduce order of occupancy laws in designated entertainment zones; and
- (d) increase the standards and requirements for noise insulation and abatement for new buildings in designated precincts.

I have brought this motion to the chamber for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it is because I like to think that I understand the value of live music to the economy of any city and also to the soul and vibrancy of any city. But I would like to think also that I understand its value to individuals. I worked in radio for 33 years. For the vast bulk of that time I was at music stations playing music. During my time working at 3NE in Wangaratta I managed a rock band for the best part of 12 months, which was awesome fun. They were called Xavier. They were a ragtag bunch of Italian tobacco pickers from out at Myrtleford.

They played some covers of Bon Jovi, the Angels, the Radiators, the Sweet as well as some really cool original songs. For a year we traversed the expanses of north-east Victoria setting up and playing gigs from Shepparton to Albury, Benalla and Wangaratta. As a band, we managed to make enough money to buy a van. We were pretty happy with that. We even recorded a number of songs at a professional studio in Melbourne. I have been racking my brain to remember the name of the studio. I recall it was the same studio where Wendy and the Rockets recorded their hit *Play the game* in the early 80s, but I cannot remember the name of the studio.

When I left Wangaratta to move to another radio station, things did go pear-shaped, which I only really discovered when the credit union came chasing me for the money that the band owed on the van. We sorted that one out. I suppose all I am trying to illustrate is that I have an understanding of the live music scene in Australia. Yes, I did on occasions provide guest vocals at band practice and in performances. My song of choice was *Hit me with your best shot*, but we will not be doing any renditions of that today.

I think most of us here have an understanding of the live music industry and its importance to Canberra and to individuals. This motion calls upon this government to lift itself out of the apathy with which it treats the live entertainment and live music sectors in our city. This government knows very well that it has been ignoring the live music sector for a long time. It is certainly no stranger to this issue. It has been involved in, or been presented with, numerous reviews, reports and case studies that go back as far as 2010. So we are talking nine years ago or more.

For the benefit of the chamber I will recount a little of the history of these. Back in 2010, the standing committee on planning, public works, territory and municipal services had an inquiry into live community events, closely followed by an interdepartmental committee review of contemporary music. In the same year, there was the Loxton review of arts in Canberra. Moving along, in 2011 ACTPLA released a night-time economy discussion paper. The issue went into abeyance for a few years. Then in 2015, the Property Council of Australia and Canberra CBD Ltd brought the

issue back into play, closely followed by the arts policy framework review and the ACT noise zone review.

Before I run out of breath, there was also in 2015 the *Cool little capital* report from MusicACT in the Live Music Office. We had completely forgotten about this one until we started preparing for this but in early 2015 Mr Rattenbury gave the issue a really good shove with his motion which, when we look back at *Hansard*, has a hell of a lot in common with this motion.

Of course, the Assembly agreed, but nothing has been done. We have had a panorama of case studies and reviews that have basically been gathering dust on the government's bookshelves. All the while, the government continues to worry about how it can extract more rates, more land taxes, record levels of stamp duty and an increasing bunch of levies from the people of Canberra.

In doing so, these have served to make people's lives, on occasions, somewhat miserable. We think there should be more music. We need to stand back and look at what is happening in our capital. The government is pathologically committed to the destruction of the bush capital character of our great home. We are cramming residential structures into suffocatingly compact precincts, creating a risk of lifeless ghetto-like living environments that are bereft of social amenity, character and vibrancy.

The people living in these density points will expect their approximate spaces not only to have the right sorts of community facilities but also access to entertainment and leisure environments. Live music will be an important ingredient in meeting those expectations and I think genuinely enhancing the quality of living amenity. We need to remind ourselves that live music, as a leisure experience, is nothing new in our culture. It has been around for a long time.

I should say that the Canberra Liberals are not opposed to high residential density developments in town centres so long as there is proper consultation with the public and the creation of a balance between amenity, liveability and sense of wellbeing. The only way that stale or rundown town centres can be revitalised and made enjoyable places to live is to provide them with access to a range of cultural, entertainment and live music venues. We think it is very important.

Current demographic metrics in the ACT starkly demonstrate that demand for live music could be quite significant. According to the latest ABS data for the ACT, population statistics indicate that there were more than 100,000 residents in the 20 to 34-year-old age bracket. There are a lot more if you broaden this to the 40-year-old down to 18-year-old bracket. According to the recent snapshot by ACT Tourism for the year ending December 2018, there were almost three million overnight visitors to the territory.

Yet in the decade since this Assembly has been having this conversation—in the 10 years that we have been having this conversation!—the number of live music venues has halved. Think about how extensively the population has risen in that time. Yet the number of live music venues has halved. Can you imagine what this city's

music scene could look like now if this Assembly had done all of the things that it promised to do over the last decade?

I do not think we can even begin to imagine the sort of talent that probably would have been uncovered, but those opportunities have gone missing as a consequence of a strangulation in this space. The territory's demographics alone demonstrate the need for a vibrant and flourishing live music sector. When you count in the overnight visitor numbers, the case is overwhelming.

But a vibrant music and live entertainment sector just cannot flourish at the moment, thanks to the neglect of this government in creating planning and regulatory regimes and the standards that govern opportunity for aspiring musicians, rock bands, folk groups, country and western bands, jazz bands, bush poets, theatre groups—the list is endless. Our noise level regulations, our venue licensing conditions and zoning rules, along with the apathetic attitude of this government, ensure persistent suppression of opportunity and limitations on permissible locations for live music to flourish.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that the rights of all parties must be recognised in consideration of change. People have the right to quiet enjoyment of their place of residence. We all agree on that. We all agree. They ought not to be subjected to stressful noise levels. But likewise, we should be providing venues, localities and precincts where perhaps higher, but sensible, sound outputs may be permissible. At the moment, this is impossible because zoning provisions and noise regulations are a sort of a one-size-fits-all approach. They present a widespread and compelling deterrent. There are a number of historical cases that are drawn on where live music venues have been squeezed out.

I am not suggesting that we race out this instant and double the permissible noise levels all over the place. We need to be sensible about this. What I am saying is that Canberra has a golden opportunity to build its image as a music and live entertainment hub that the territory itself, our proximate region and our millions of visitors might be attracted to. I appreciate that things like the National Folk Festival and other large outdoor events are major attractions. But I think we also need to create a lot more opportunities for smaller, far more intimate venues that serve proximate residential hubs such as town and city centres, and village centres envisaged in the Territory Plan refresh and urban renewal plans.

If we created and pursued such a strategy, many visitors may choose to remain longer and spend more. If we provide the environment in which live music and other live entertainment can flourish, the job opportunities and the wider economic and cultural impacts could be very substantial. At the moment, the Chief Minister's cool little capital is not achieving his aspiration, nor the aspirations of many in the live music industry.

Many in the music industry may well consider Canberra to be the stale little capital, with its cold and windblown city streets bereft of the sort of activity that could draw people out of their high-density living structures. In this regard, you only need to browse the Sunday papers to see what we are missing out on. I ask members to think

of the number of times that you went to Sydney, Melbourne or Queanbeyan to see some act that you just could not see here.

This motion asks for a couple of things. It asks this chamber to recognise the worth and potential of live music and live performances. But, most emphatically, it asks this chamber to look at the constraints that prevent this sector from growing and flourishing, thanks to government apathy. I guess the crazy thing is that when you consider the number of reviews and the number of times that we have examined this space, I think the way forward is actually quite clear. It is quite clear. I think we all know what has to be done.

When you look at the massive residential concentrations proposed by this government, these new communities and their expectations will far outstrip entertainment capacity if we do not do something about it. Preferably, something should have been done five years ago but now that that has gone, it should be done now. We can do something about this. The motion before us asks this chamber to actually do something.

The numerous studies and reviews I ran through at the beginning are compelling. They are well articulated. They provide much of the foundation knowledge to move forward. This motion is mostly what the music industry wants and what venues, clubs and associations see as enormous opportunities. But these will vanish into the mist if nothing is done.

In conclusion, this motion sets out four critical points for the government to act on to create a vibrant and growing live music sector that is totally compatible with planning visions for town and village centres. I should stress that these are broad focal points that are supported by the entertainment industry and associated industries. They are the critical actions and are not intended to be a detailed project plan or implementation strategy. I understand that there is some more detail contained in amendments that are coming from my Greens colleagues.

The detailed steps, by and large, would be the responsibility of a project implementation group. The government should, as a gesture to restore our shattered confidence, establish some sort of project management function to give effect to the objectives of this motion. If this government were to listen, it would find that the various arms of the entertainment and leisure community actively support these objectives. They include the building industry, property developers, the clubs industry, the hotel industry and the music industry, along with existing and potential venue managers and owners. All these would be most sympathetic to creating developments to move in this direction.

These measures include the need for a complementary order of occupancy regime, which is also addressed in this motion. In other words, those who downstream might wish to reside in such areas would have to consider accepting the zoning provisions applicable in such entertainment precincts. Such zoning, with the appropriate abatement measures, is not beyond the reach of our city planners and structural engineers.

It must be said that a number of conversations with some key stakeholders have forced us to review the “calls upon” in paragraph 3(c) of my original motion. I will shortly seek leave to move the amendment circulated in my name to soften the calls on order of occupancy to instead examine further those potential laws.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this motion seeks to create a more vibrant Canberra with a greater cultural complexion through fostering live music development. It asks the government to make this happen if it really believes in the cool little capital vision. This motion is succinct, omits the detail that properly belongs in project scoping documents, sound emission and propagation studies, project plans, public consultation strategies and detailed legislation adjustments.

If there are doubts as to whether this government has the willpower or the goodwill to act on the spirit of this motion, this side of the chamber, and I am sure those on the crossbench, would be bitterly disappointed. But if the government commits itself to acting now, in a short while we will have a richer, more amenable Canberra that could attract even more visitors to and interest in our nation’s capital and its image.

I note that this activity has inspired the minister to make an announcement in this space this morning. I wait to hear more from him shortly. I will be responding to these surprise announcements in my closing remarks to this debate. At this stage, I believe that I must seek leave to move an amendment to my own motion. I seek leave to move my amendment.

Leave granted.

MR PARTON: I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit paragraph (3)(c), substitute:

“(c) consider and consult on order of occupancy laws in designated entertainment zones; and”.

That is all I have to say. I will leave it for others to debate the amended motion.

Mr Parton’s amendment agreed to.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question now is that Mr Parton’s motion, as amended, be agreed to.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (4.20): I move:

Add new paragraphs (3)(e) to (j):

“(e) provide home buyer information for people considering moving into an entertainment zone;

(f) deliver a calibrated approach that responds to the different needs of different types of precincts (e.g. Town Centres, major events areas);

- (g) take other actions needed to protect and facilitate live entertainment venues;
- (h) release an action plan for live entertainment by 31 October 2019 that commits to points (a) to (g) above;
- (i) deliver the first stage of this action plan, including consultation on possible areas and precincts, by 31 July 2020; and
- (j) update the Assembly and community on progress by 31 July 2020.”.

Clearly, the Greens strongly support Mr Parton’s motion, and we will be voting for it. We do not really need to say that, considering that we have some early drafts of a similar motion of our own to be moved later in August. I do not have a huge number of PMB slots, so I am very pleased that Mr Parton has managed to move this motion, because it is a good motion.

I agree with pretty much everything that he said in his speech, too. There has been a decade of inaction; it needs to stop. One of the nicest moments in my political career was a couple of weeks ago, with the *Activism* exhibition at CMAG. The truck that was outside today, the Soul Defender truck—I had no idea this would be happening—turned up, and it was projecting on the side of the Assembly the days, minutes and hours since the motion that I moved back in 2009 establishing an inquiry into this issue.

The disappointing thing is that this was around 10 years ago—a bit more than 10 years ago, as it was earlier in the year. As Mr Parton said, and as MusicACT’s website is counting down, no action has happened yet, and I very much hope that this might finally be the piece of work which leads to real action.

The problem is that current noise rules limit venues to very low noise levels as soon as someone makes a complaint. As long as venues and residents are well separated, that is fine, because there will be no complaints. The residents will be asleep in their beds and everyone will be happy. But Canberra is growing and changing, and that is no longer the case. People are moving into our commercial areas.

I would like to make it clear that this is not just an issue for the inner north area. Looking at my electorate, in Woden, there are places—admittedly, some of them have died off for other reasons—which could not be restarted now because of the residential development around them. This is not just about complaints being made by a few people in Braddon. I will list a few places; admittedly, most of them are on this side of town: the Asylum, the Terrace Bar, Gypsy Bar, Toast, Transit Bar, and New Acton’s summer events.

When I was talking about Woden, I was particularly talking about the Contented Soul. I must admit that I spent some time in the past being quite contented there, but it could not happen anymore, with the redevelopment of the Alexander—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members do understand what I mean about oversharing, don’t they?

MS LE COUTEUR: Maybe I will stop at this point, Madam Deputy Speaker! Other places have demonstrated that residents and live entertainment can live together with the right rules. I refer to Fortitude Valley in Brisbane. One of the other highlights of my Assembly career was that, as part of the committee inquiry, I, along with former MLA Mary Porter, who was the committee chair, and Alistair Coe spent a very enjoyable evening touring the nightclubs of Fortitude Valley. In the interests of not oversharing, I will leave it at that point.

We need to have some designated entertainment precincts, to protect venues and to protect residents. New apartments and hotels need to include decent noise insulation, and residents need to know before they move in what is likely to happen in their area. Of course, it is not just noise from music; if you are in these sorts of areas, it might be that, at 4 am, the garbage is being picked up, because that is the time at which hotels and big apartment blocks may do that. Venues must have realistic noise limits that they have to meet.

The Greens have been trying to get action on this, as I said, for almost a decade. The motion that has been counted down by MusicACT was actually my first motion, in February 2009. As I mentioned, it was referred for inquiry by the planning committee, which involved me, Mary Porter and Alistair Coe. We did in fact create a very useful report. If the recommendations of that report had been worked on, we would be having quite a different discussion now. We might be doing a bit of fine-tuning; we would probably be choosing some different areas for entertainment precincts. I do not think at that stage that anyone would have thought that there was any issue with EPIC because there was plenty of space around EPIC; things have changed. EPIC is now in one of the areas that we have to look at.

In 2015, Mr Rattenbury moved a motion during executive members' business on the subject. We put in a submission in 2018 on Geocon's Garema Place hotel. I put in a submission this year, but it was rejected due to the timing; I missed out by about six hours. We have asked questions during estimates, and there were recommendations on that.

As Mr Parton outlined, we are not the only people who have been agitating about this. MusicACT has done a lot of work on this, in particular, the cool little capital action plan in 2015. Again the history would have been different if that action plan had actually been acted on. As Mr Parton said, we have had lots of talk about it; I have talked about the talk. We have had very little action.

If we look at Mr Rattenbury's motion, only one of the four areas has been delivered on. There has been very little action on designating entertainment areas, acoustic insulation requirements or consideration of the need for order of occupancy laws. One area where I think we have gone in a positive direction is liquor licensing. It has been both positive and negative, but in general it has been positive. We have not had any summary of feedback publicly released on the government's 2016 urban sounds discussion paper.

What am I trying to do with my amendment, given that I am in furious agreement with Mr Parton, including with his amendment? As someone who has done a few of these things before, I am trying to make the motion stronger and make it clearer as to what the government has to do. Importantly, we need to have some firm dates for when the government has to do what it has to do.

It requires the government to release an action plan. One of the reasons for the dates in my amendment is that the biggest problem with Mr Rattenbury's 2015 motion was a lack of clear dates by which the government had to actually do anything by. It also adds some more important points around what the government might consider doing.

One of the things we are looking at potentially is that some precincts will have to be dealt with differently. For example, what you do in a town centre will probably be different from what you do for EPIC. As I mentioned, a few years ago EPIC was not even an issue because there were not enough people close by.

We probably need to identify a key site or two that can be used for music festivals and other events which are going to be really loud. EPIC is used for festivals, for the much louder festivals and for a much louder event, that being Summernats.

We also need to have clear areas that can be regarded as entertainment precincts, where noise levels can be louder for longer hours. That is probably places like Garema Place and the town centres. I am pleased that Mr Gentleman's media release seemed to help, although possibly not quite enough. Extending noise limits on Friday and Saturday nights from 10 pm to midnight is a step forward, but I would suggest, particularly in the summer months, that people in Canberra stay out well after midnight, and they still keep making noise during that time.

There are areas that should be considered to be shared spaces, and both residents and live music need to respectfully share spaces, with a clear understanding on both sides of allowable noise regulations and building requirements. Also, homebuyers need to understand what type of area they are moving in to. I understand that has been one of the biggest sources of problems, particularly for the Transit Bar, because people have moved from their very quiet suburban homes into the middle of town. As I said the biggest problem, I understand, has been garbage collection, which is relentless, and it is not a particularly attractive noise. But for the homebuyers who came out of very quiet suburban areas, it did not even occur to them that there would be garbage trucks in the very early hours of the morning.

I thank Mr Parton for raising this issue today, and I thank him for his forthcoming support of our amendment. I also want to thank the government for their work on this issue. I particularly thank Minister Gentleman for his announcement today. As I said I would like to see a lot more than this, and I am hopeful that when Minister Gentleman speaks there might be some more information about steps going forward. I do thank the government for taking some action. I look forward to tripartisan support for more loud, wonderful, vibrant noise, otherwise known as music, in the right parts of Canberra.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (4.31): I would like to thank Mr Parton for his motion on the important role of entertainment and live music in shaping Canberra's character, and I note Ms Le Couteur's comments.

As I prepare to address Mr Parton's motion, I want to invite members to reflect on the great nights out that they have had in our city, which I am sure would range from taking part in large festivals to enjoying internationally touring performances and small gatherings in our many restaurants and bars. I have fond memories of listening to Chuck Berry, INXS, Split Enz, Ted Mulry Gang, AC/DC, John Farnham, Sherbet, Jeff St John and Olivia Newton-John. More recently, I have toned down to Missy Higgins. Members' memories will confirm that Canberra is an exciting place to live and play. It will continue to be into the future.

Live music is part of the soundtrack of our city. Residents in our newly established mixed-use areas have convenient access to food, drink and entertainment options without leaving their neighbourhood. We see this through the popularity of new apartments in areas like the city centre and the Kingston foreshore.

To ensure that our night-time economy can thrive, the government is working on a range of information sharing and regulatory solutions to allow our city to prosper. There is not one simple fix to finding the right balance between urban activity and living in our city, which is why we are working across government to produce effective information sharing and regulatory solutions.

The outlook for the night-time food and drink economy remains very positive due to our solid economic and employment picture as well as our continuing population growth and strong tourism sector. We had 1,226 cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services in the ACT as at June 2018. Canberrans spent \$826 million in these premises in the 12 months to June 2018, representing a 5.2 per cent increase on the previous year.

The government has been informed by past reports and inquiries on planning for live music. The government has analysed community input and has implemented a range of actions. These include extending daytime noise standards in the city centre and town and group centres; identifying where and how special entertainment precincts could be applied in the ACT; releasing improved noise information on the Access Canberra noise portal, including new fact sheets for residents and businesses, plus a map of the ACT noise zones; and strengthening government coordination through the establishment of a cross-government urban sounds steering committee.

As the Minister for Planning and Land Management, I have asked the National Capital Design Review Panel to consider acoustic amenity as part of its review of mixed-use development proposals. Studies undertaken to determine the ambient noise levels in our urban centres showed that the ambient noise level is already above what noise regulations permit, particularly during busy nightlife periods.

I have also asked the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to commence work on extending daytime noise levels on Friday and Saturday nights. This will extend the higher daytime limit from the current 10 pm to midnight in the city centre and town centres, and to 11 pm in group centres such as Dickson, Erindale, Kingston and Manuka. This will reflect current activity in these areas and allow for future activation.

The identification of entertainment precincts is a commonly used tool applied in other jurisdictions to cater for activities and events with higher noise levels. The option for establishing special entertainment precincts in mixed-use areas attracted strong support during the urban sounds community consultation.

Entertainment precincts clearly set the amenity expectations by defining the character of the area up front. Existing venues are protected, and new venues are able to open without onerous constraints because they are located within a designated entertainment precinct. By taking the learnings from the use of entertainment precincts in other jurisdictions, the ACT government is working to identify where and how these precincts could be applied in the ACT.

I note Mr Parton's request to consider order of occupancy principles. As order of occupancy principles apply to specific venues and not precincts, they may not be enough to save or support the character of vibrant nightlife districts. Unintended consequences of order of occupancy principles may include a reduction of nightlife: if residential development occurs, these developments may prevent new venues from opening. However, we will consider this as part of the regulatory mix of solutions for entertainment precincts.

I am happy to provide an action plan and subsequently report back regarding the government's actions in ensuring a vibrant night-time economy and live entertainment through our planning system. This will provide an opportunity to outline the work already completed as well as a chance to provide an update on work underway.

In conclusion, I want to thank Mr Parton for his motion and Ms Le Couteur for her contribution. I thank Mr Parton for the opportunity to show how the government is working hard across portfolios to support diverse and exciting nightlife in Canberra.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services, Minister for Government Services and Procurement and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (4.37): I am delighted to hear Mr Parton being supportive of more live music venues in Canberra, though, based on lunchtime's efforts, whether he potentially has a future singing career I would class as a moot point. When it comes to music, I am happy to stay on the keyboard side and leave the singing to others.

Mr Parton might like to consider that, despite his objections to the government's work with ACT clubs in encouraging diversification away from poker machine revenue, a number of clubs in the ACT are utilising the grants and incentives that the

government has been providing to upgrade their facilities to host live music and attract new audiences rather than relying on the dying business model of poker machines. I look forward to his ongoing support for this increased diversification work in the future.

As Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events, I note the progress that has been made in the planning space with regard to protecting and fostering Canberra's live music scene. I also note that there is more work to be done, with reference to Minister Gentleman's comments.

Live music and entertainment are an important part of the life of our cool little capital. I want to correct an impression that was given during Mr Parton's speech. Because of his efforts to make some political points, there was reference to this being a stale city. Canberra is by no means a stale city. Our arts scene and music scene are very strong. They are thriving. Let me give just one example. Art, Not Apart is an excellent example of a festival that demonstrates, highlights, showcases and celebrates our arts, including our very strong music scene. The ACT events calendar is packed full of events, both large and small, that have people travelling to Canberra, not away from Canberra, because of the strength of that scene.

The Canberra music community is diverse, collaborative and inclusive. It is a unique music community full of performers, composers, promoters, bands, solo artists, ensembles and a symphony orchestra, who closely collaborate to bring this city a diverse offering of great musical experiences. This is achieved in partnership with our venues and organisations that support and develop live music here in Canberra.

One of those organisations is MusicACT. I note that they have been with us during the day. I want to thank musician Danny Pratt, who put on a great show at lunchtime on board the Soul Defender, just out in Civic Square. Danny has just arrived back from six years in the United States. He commented to me at lunchtime today that the ACT is doing a great job of fostering musicians.

The ACT government provides significant arts funding, including for musicians and bands to record new work, to compose, to participate in residencies and to perform. In the case of MusicACT, the government provides significant funding for them to deliver a program of professional development activities, building the capacity of Canberra's great musicians. Danny mentioned at lunchtime today how helpful one of those MusicACT forums was that he attended just last night. My thanks to MusicACT for their ongoing strong, important, good work.

Across all art forms, the ACT government is committed to the vitality of the Canberra region, creating and maintaining opportunities for Canberrans to participate in the arts. We fund individual artists, community art groups and arts organisations, including for sector capacity building. We know that Canberra has a vibrant contemporary music sector which has both national and international reach. It makes a strong contribution to Canberra as a livable, lively capital. As a major contributor to our local and national economy, music is central to the identity of our city.

Live music helps to create a sense of community, cultural experience and cultural identity. Immersion in the arts is absolutely critical for a forward thinking, progressive city like Canberra. We have a rich artistic culture here in Canberra. We celebrate participation and engagement in the arts, the development of creativity and the pursuit of artistic excellence.

Live music is an intrinsic element of our city's cultural identity. Our community and our musicians are passionate supporters of music, and they are constantly creating new and inclusive opportunities to engage with the community. We have rock and classical musicians collaborating, visual artists working with composers, and organisations reaching out to Canberrans of all ages to participate in all forms of the wonder of music. The Canberra community seizes these opportunities to play and to hear live music of all genres, from thrash metal to baroque and everything in between. This happens at events and venues as diverse as the Transit Bar, the Arboretum and Llewelyn Hall. These opportunities, activities and cultural experiences contribute to the ACT arts ecology and to Canberra's vibrancy. They promote a very strong sense of community, identity and wellbeing.

I can assure you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the ACT government will continue to support the arts in the ACT, including the live music sector, through our ongoing record level of investment in arts funding, over \$10 million in the 2019-20 budget.

The ongoing work to ensure that live music venues are feasible and strong in the context of mixed-use precincts is another important way that the government can support great arts and events in the ACT. I strongly support the work of my colleague the planning minister in making this happen. I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (4.44): I rise to support live music in the capital and I thank Mr Parton—I do not do this often but I will—for bringing this motion forward. I think all in this place agree that we need to nurture and strengthen live music in the ACT.

I think live music is unfairly characterised as a young person's game. While I admit I have been to a few gigs and concerts in my time I believe that we all enjoy the sound of live music. If you roll up to Bluesfest on the North Coast you will notice that the majority of participants are of the grey-haired variety; definitely not fluoros or blondes. When it comes to live music in the cities I think most people tend to think that it is a young people versus baby boomers argument, and I think that that is inaccurate as well.

People of all ages enjoy their favourite musicians. They enjoy rolling down to their local pub on an afternoon or evening and listening or going off to Llewelyn Hall or maybe the Arboretum. They enjoy live music; they go to live music. People of all ages live near live music venues. However, we are seeing a problem of live music faltering right across Australia. Venues are no longer able to provide live music due to noise and tenancy issues. Bands and performers are finding it harder to book gigs and earn a living. The art form is in trouble in certain places.

We have seen different approaches taken to this issue. Canberra can go the way of Sydney where lockout laws, bad planning and noise regulations have silenced the city. Once lively precincts are now quiet. Noise complaints are being lodged by residents of new apartments about pubs that have been there for over a hundred years. I understand: you have moved into a trendy neighbourhood; you have paid a lot of money for that property; it is understandable that you want to enjoy your own home. But we need to find a way to coexist as residents, artists and businesses. Live music cannot be driven into increasingly smaller areas and then, ultimately, out of Canberra.

There are some common-sense ideas that we can embrace and are embracing to help support live music. The reform announced by Minister Gentleman to extend daytime noise limits is one of these ideas. By extending the noise limits on Fridays and Saturdays in the city and town centres to midnight and to 11 pm in group centres, I believe, has struck a good balance while we pursue further reforms such as, hopefully, entertainment precincts. Entertainment precincts, if used effectively, can nurture and grow live music. By relaxing noise restrictions in certain parts of Canberra we can let artists be artists.

There are many areas discussed as potential sites for an entertainment precinct. Personally, I think Mitchell could be a pretty good location. It lacks residents and it will soon be linked to light rail. With strong backing from the government and the live music scene we could turn Mitchell into a hub for live music. Something like Carriageworks in Sydney would fit in perfectly in Mitchell or at EPIC.

The minister also announced that he would be tasking the National Capital Design Review Panel to consider acoustic amenity when it reviews mixed use developments, as well as more information for businesses and renters. I am also pleased about the addition of noise limit information in ACT government maps so that needless noise complaints are not lodged.

I single out one part of the amendment by Ms Le Couteur about providing potential home buyers in entertainment precincts with common-sense information about expected noise levels. People should know exactly what to expect when buying an apartment. For example, while the sound may seem fine with the doors and windows closed will it be different in the peak of summer when you have them open to allow air flow? And what is the sound like on the balcony or in common areas? There are questions that deserve to be answered so that live music and residents can coexist.

I think that developers need to incorporate better sound insulation in these areas and everywhere. It is a natural recipe for disaster to allow a hotel or apartments to be built next to a live music venue without properly constructing the building for the setting. And this is a problem that is happening right now. The buildings that we are building and have built along light rail have been built to old standards. I struggle to see how we can have a thriving live music scene in some of these places.

We should look to other jurisdictions that have successfully balanced the needs of venues, artists, residents and attendees. The Victorian government, in conjunction with local councils and peak bodies, has successfully implemented a comprehensive

policy to strike this balance. The government protects venues from encroaching residential development and proactively funds programs for artists and venues through its multimillion-dollar music works package. This program calls for political buy-in from stakeholders to come together to achieve mutual benefits. Clearly, the plan is successful, as Melbourne is known for its fantastic live music scene. This plan has been described as a gold standard by interest groups and experts.

Canberra is well equipped to follow in the direction of Melbourne, to continue to grow our live music scene and cultural events. We must not follow in the footsteps of Sydney, which has effectively killed off large portions of the live music industry, reducing the cultural vibrancy of the city and negatively impacting tourism and business.

Our government is committed to encouraging and nurturing cultural programs in our city, and that includes live music. As well as the announcement made by Minister Gentleman today, the government has provided funding for a number of different arts programs that encourage live music in our city, including funding MusicACT to help grow the contemporary live music sector in our city.

I think this motion by Mr Parton is a timely one. This discussion has been going on for too long. I am glad that he has brought it forward at this time. It is always good to debate and reaffirm the commitment of every member of this place to live music. And hopefully this is a new starting point and not the end of the discussion.

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (4.51) I rise to speak today in support of Mr Parton's motion. A diverse and bustling nightlife and vibrant live music scene are crucial to a city's culture and local economy, to tourism and to youth employment. Having bars, restaurants, clubs and live music venues open well into the evening is a key component of a young, vibrant and global city. This is something that many young Canberrans want to see in our city and something that we must strive to develop and foster.

However, our current nightlife is under threat if this government continues to fail to provide certainty around noise restrictions for these businesses. The current limit of 50 decibels, no louder than a passing truck, is far too low for many venues in our town centres and entertainment precincts to lawfully operate. We have already seen far too many small bars forced to shut their doors following noise complaints from a vocal minority of local residents, and many others forced to change their opening hours.

The construction of a hotel in Garema Place only raises further concern that the music and activity that flow out of our clubs and bars might soon be subject to a government crackdown. It would be devastating for the small business owners who work so hard to contribute to our economy. It would be devastating for the many hundreds of young Canberrans who work in our hospitality sector and who rely on this night-time work to fit around their uni schedules and other commitments. It would be devastating to up-and-coming musicians and performers who rely on these venues to launch their careers. It would be devastating to the other community groups for whom live events and festivals are the highlight of their calendar, bringing life to areas of our city and providing immense cultural value to our community.

We must make sure that Canberra never follows the bad examples of burdening night-time venues with nanny-state regulations such as lock-out laws and compulsory ID scanners like in Sydney and Brisbane. Our nightlife must not only be kept free and vibrant but it must be encouraged to grow as our city does. As more and more residential spaces are built in Civic and across our other town centres, dated regulations that provide little certainty will threaten this growth and investment in nightlife. It will hurt local artists who rely on the openness and flexibility of venues to host gigs, and it will hurt Canberra's local economy. A free city with an active nightlife is a city that attracts tourists and investment, with higher employment and more opportunities.

The most frustrating part of this entire debate is the hypocrisy that we have seen from the Greens. While we welcome their support today I think that this still needs mention. The hypocrisy of standing in front of a crowd of people and blaming the government for being too slow to act on this issue, the government in which you are a cabinet minister, is completely absurd.

The question which must now be answered by Minister Rattenbury is: what has he done before now to raise noise restrictions? In this place he holds the balance of power and has formed government with the ACT Labor Party. What is the point of Minister Rattenbury and the ACT Greens if they are so reluctant to use their power in this place to actually achieve the outcomes that they claim to support? The question really answers itself.

My other frustration here is the inconsistency that we have seen from the government on the issue of noise restrictions. While bars and music venues are subject to noise restrictions the same rules do not apply to government infrastructure projects. A few months ago I was inundated with emails and phone calls from constituents who live along the Northbourne Avenue corridor who experience night after night of lack of sleep due to the all-night light rail construction work going on outside their windows. Some of these residents recorded noise levels of 80 decibels from inside their apartments at 2 am, with the windows closed, well above the legal limits. Why is it that these noise restrictions apply to some and not others?

The Canberra Liberals have consistently supported the development of entertainment precincts and have firmly opposed the implementation of lock-out laws and other stifling legislation for over 10 years. Unlike Labor and the Greens, we actually think that less regulation is a good thing for music venues, bars and clubs in Canberra.

Minister Gentleman's announcement today does not go nearly far enough. God forbid that people have fun on a weekday evening or after midnight on weekends! The government should quite simply get out of the way and raise decibel limits to unleash the real potential of Canberra's nightlife.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.55): I thank Ms Le Couteur for working with my office regarding this amendment. I can understand what my Greens colleague is feeling in regard to the time line on what was her first motion in this place. It is 10 years that the Legislative Assembly has been talking about making some changes

in this space. We have had a number of motions voted for to make some changes. We have had commitments from the government over a decade, and by and large they have sat on their hands and done nothing.

I know that Ms Le Couteur was gasping and making that face that she makes but I must agree in part with what my colleague Miss C Burch said. When I say that the government has sat on their hands and done nothing, it is a government that has included Mr Gentleman and Mr Rattenbury in cabinet. And they have done nothing. Ultimately, Mr Rattenbury, in his cabinet role, has much more opportunity to tap Mr Gentleman on the shoulder and say, “Hey buddy what’s going on in this night-time entertainment space?”

When I unveiled this motion to the assembly, magically Mr Gentleman wakes from his slumber and does something; does something in terms of that announcement this morning. After a decade of sitting on their hands, after 10 years of it being just a little too hard, in less than 48 hours Mr Gentleman has finally done a little of what should have been done a decade ago. It is a win and it is heading in the right direction but it is only a minor win. I support the changes announced by Mr Gentleman but they fall a mile short of what is required.

If we were, for argument’s sake, expecting Mr Gentleman to kit out the whole band, what he has done this morning is the equivalent of supplying a couple of guitar picks. And that is good. That is good but there is a way to go. Much more is required.

I cannot get away from the fact that, and I mentioned it earlier, my colleague Mr Rattenbury stood in Garema Place with the musos a few weeks ago and out here at the front of this place. My message to Mr Rattenbury would be: you are the government. You have been a minister of this government for quite a number of years. My message to Mr Rattenbury would be: any failure of the government is a failure of yours, and he has had abundantly more opportunity than I have to get the ear of the planning minister to get these things done. I think stakeholders in this space have every right to be extremely disappointed that he has failed to achieve the outcomes that they would have liked.

I am going to agree with something that Mr Ramsay said earlier, which does not often happen in this place. He mentioned some of the work that the clubs are doing in regard to diversification into live music. I know Mr Rattenbury on ABC radio this morning basically called on the club sector to pull their finger out and use live music as a means to diversify. I point out to Mr Rattenbury that our local clubs do a hell of a lot of the heavy lifting in this space and they account for nearly half of the total live music spend in the ACT. Certainly, if some of the diversification assistance that is coming in that space occurs, which I am sure it will because it is, that figure will increase even more. I am sure that our clubs will continue to lead the way in this area. I look forward to the vote on this one.

Ms Le Couteur’s amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Light rail stage 1—review

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.59): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the original business case for Light Rail Stage 1 promised to deliver a net economic benefit to the ACT community;
- (b) both the former and current Ministers for Transport have promised a comprehensive review following six months of the operation of light rail; and
- (c) most recently, Minister Steel made this commitment during Assembly debate on 13 February 2019 when he stated the ACT Government would provide a report back to the Assembly on the comprehensive lessons learnt process within six months of the start of light rail services; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) report back to the Assembly on the scope, terms of reference and methodology of this review no later than 30 September 2019;
- (b) provide clear advice within the report on how stakeholders can provide input to the review, including local businesses impacted by Light Rail; and
- (c) commit to making the report publicly available by tabling the final document at the next scheduled sitting of the Assembly.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak again today on this important matter. As a member for Yerrabi and a former small business owner, I feel very passionate about the impact that light rail has had on businesses in my electorate. It has been a long three years for the Gungahlin region. Let us not forget that the first sod of this project was turned on 12 July 2016. For three years the Canberra Liberals have been advocating for local businesses on this issue, and for three years this government has tried to fob businesses off. I am optimistic that following a concerted campaign by me and the many voices from the community, perhaps this government and the new minister for transport are starting to listen.

To give the background for those who have not been paying attention to the plight of local businesses, I formerly raised this matter in a motion in June 2018. This motion requested the government to conduct an independent review on the businesses impacted by light rail construction. For too long I had heard from local businesses how much the construction of this major project was impacting on their bottom line, livelihood and wellbeing.

We have to remember that most small businesses are run by families, are funded by savings and second mortgages, and are easily affected by external forces outside their control. Whilst businesses can seek expert advice to deal with some of those forces and can implement strategies to stay afloat, poorly planned and executed public projects are very difficult for them to manage.

I was very pleased to see that the former transport minister provided her support in June of last year, and the motion was successful. The next step saw the Canberra Business Chamber appointed to conduct the review. Now fast-forward to September 2018. The report from this assessment was tabled in the Assembly. Whilst I was disappointed with some aspects of the report, I was pleased that the lessons learned reflected what we had heard directly from businesses. To be honest, most of this stuff was common sense.

Madam Speaker, despite having spent three years in this place, I still cannot understand why this government spends so much time and money doing reviews on things we already know. Worse still, they take these reports and put them on the shelf, not actually following through or delivering on the contents.

Still, the lessons were clear and the impacts have been proven with evidence. I took the report back to the many business owners that I have been working with to get their feedback. Sadly, it was almost a case of too little, too late, as the light rail was due to start in December 2018. When we realised that light rail would be delayed to April 2019, I knew I had to take further action. In good faith I could not leave local businesses to face another six months of construction without some kind of support.

The next step was to move a second motion in February 2019. That called on the government to act on the lessons learned. Whilst providing compensation was a key driver, I was also aiming to get some of the practical support that was listed in the lessons learned. With the damage from light rail still hurting, many in the business community felt that the government just did not care about their contribution. There seemed to be no interest in their survival.

This second motion was an opportunity for the government to set the record straight. Sadly, this was not as successful. Instead, the government used the opportunity to spruik the benefits of light rail. Living in Yerrabi, travelling to the city and talking to my constituents, I can see that many people do, in fact, feel that light rail has had a positive impact on their lives. And from our perspective, light rail is here. We want to see it become economically viable and useful to the community.

But every story has two sides, and for every person who sees this project in a good light we have many stories to the contrary. This motion is not the time to debate these issues fully, but there are issues like construction and roadworks in residential areas, the new transport network forcing people onto light rail without adequate bus connection, the lack of a stop for businesses in Mitchell, and issues with safety and compliance across the corridor. Madam Speaker, let us not pretend that these issues are resolved now that light rail is operational. Take a drive down Northbourne Avenue or Flemington Road. Visit the Gungahlin town centre. These places are still construction sites. The impact continues for business owners.

Yes, I was disappointed with the outcome in February and went back out to local businesses to talk about the next steps. Noting that during the February debate the government committed to a further and more comprehensive six-month review, I thought a logical step was to ask, "What will that entail?" To do this, I submitted a

question on notice. The response we received from the minister, dated 28 June 2019, did not fill me with confidence. I was told that the scope of the review and consultation was yet to be finalised. That brings me to today moving a third motion on this issue that urges the government to conduct a more comprehensive and focused review.

Sadly, with this government nothing seems to move fast, though. It has been one of my biggest frustrations in coming from the private sector that things take so long in this place. Also, I have found that nothing with this government is what it seems. Whilst at different points I was hopeful of an outcome for local businesses, I have learned quickly that reports or reviews can be used like smoke and mirrors. More often than not they say things we already know and do not actually provide tangible outcomes.

That is why I am back today to ask the government to be transparent about the next review. This issue is just too important to play politics and it is too urgent to ignore. Many of you in this place might know just how desperate the situation is for local businesses along the light rail corridor. With many already forced to close their doors, the stress and strain are very real.

Gungahlin business people were shocked that the government had spent \$447,000, not the \$100,000 originally promised, on the light rail launch party. This anger has been inflamed with the announcement of \$1 million to go towards changes to the public play area in Gungahlin Place. This is like a kick in the guts when local businesses were refused compensation. And even here, with this updated park, we see that the town centre is facing more construction. With the poor planning by this government, I just do not know when the chaos will end.

Getting back to the motion, a point I want to make clear is that the original review did not provide tangible outcomes to local businesses. When we followed up with the government in February, our calls for action seemed to fall on deaf ears. To ensure that this does not happen again, we want to see the scope, terms of reference and methodology before the next review starts. My intention here is to get the best outcomes for local businesses.

I also want stakeholders to know what is being planned so that they can get involved. That is why we have asked that these be tabled in September, well before the date light rail will have been running for six months. Finally, this motion asks that once the report is done, it is tabled in the Assembly and made publicly available. These do not seem like unreasonable requests given the commitment made by this government back in February.

I predict that the new transport minister is likely to cite the recent light rail project delivery report that was released on 21 June 2019 as providing some of the review that was promised. However, here we see the tricks of the trade, with reports from this government being used to cover up inaction. We have a 58-page document that does not really say too much. This report has been compiled without any consultation with local business. It also focuses on project delivery, not operational outcomes or impacts. How can economic benefit in this report actually be measured when the

report states that the modelling used is not yet available; the only business benefit listed relates to the Mantra Hotel on Northbourne Avenue; and the report was based on approximately two months of operation? To my mind, this just does not cut it.

The latest report even tries to reduce the impact of light rail on businesses, saying that it is difficult to attribute how much of this was related to the project itself. Clearly the downturn in local businesses along the light rail corridor can be directly linked to the construction of light rail. All you have to do is go out there and ask them. Trying to blame other projects in the town centre is ridiculous; all of these projects are directly related to light rail.

As I have said all along, let us stop the spin and just use a bit of common sense here. Again, I stand here today to ask the government, in good faith, to conduct a comprehensive review for local businesses. I want them to consult in a meaningful way, to allow local businesses the time and opportunity to provide financial data. Local businesses deserve this chance to be heard. We need to assess this project, and not just in terms of cost-benefit ratios or abstract values. After all, we are talking about people, not just dollars.

Whilst so many Canberrans work hard and struggle to get by, business owners are a unique bunch. They take risk; they put it on the line; they try to do something different. In doing so, they provide economic benefits to the ACT; they provide jobs for Canberrans; they provide valuable products and services to our community; and they provide opportunities for commercial development and innovation.

Madam Speaker, I want the government to stop and listen. I want them to avoid the usual spin. I want them to deliver on the commitment they made back in February to do this. I want them to be transparent and honest about the impact of this project. And we want a positive outcome for local businesses after years of chaos. That is why I commend this motion to the Assembly. I ask the government to provide support for this long overdue action.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Transport and City Services) (5.11): I am very pleased to speak to this motion today, which highlights the benefits that light rail is bringing to our city. Light rail is a significant investment in better transport for Canberra and also in the economic development of our city and growth in the business sector, directly and indirectly creating jobs in our local industries and creating new transit-supported communities.

Investment in our transport system helps to reduce congestion and improves the community's mobility. It improves access to employment and services and ensures that Canberra continues to be a better place to live and to do business. Canberra's light rail is already leading new investment in the transit corridor through new development projects and the establishment of new businesses that take advantage of the certainty that comes with a light rail line.

Last September, the government tabled a report on the business impact assessment of the ACT government-led construction activities in Gungahlin. It was prepared from a

number of sources and in consultation with businesses in that area. The assessment included a range of opportunities for businesses to provide input through a survey and face-to-face interviews. A total of 210 businesses were identified in the assessment area and contact was attempted by email, by phone or in person. Of these, there were 151 successful contacts and feedback was received from 100 businesses to inform the assessment and findings as presented in the report.

The report identified recent major activities in the town centre and, in particular, noted that impacts are not always clearly distinguishable from a particular project. Rather, they can be the result of a cumulative impact. The government acknowledges that the report identifies some perceptions of negative impacts but also clear optimism for the future with the works being, on balance, positive for Gungahlin. The government notes that statistical analysis identifies that the rate of business growth in Gungahlin has continued to be above the average growth rate for businesses across the ACT.

Suggestions from respondents ranged from strategically spreading works over a longer period, but limited to smaller areas, providing greater certainty about the timing and extent of road closures, noisy activities and delays, assistance with better wayfinding signage for customers and practical measures like window and facade cleaning where construction activities have generated excessive dust.

The government values these findings and sees them as key lessons learnt that can be implemented when undertaking similar construction projects in the future. We continually aim to better understand and communicate with businesses and to minimise impacts through improved coordination and by enhancing the proactiveness of impact management.

This community feedback has already started to lead to changes in the way that we engage and support businesses in public works. For example, during the Northbourne Avenue Sydney Building and Melbourne Building verge improvements, TCCS proactively engaged with businesses in the area to ensure that they could continue to operate effectively during construction.

Madam Speaker, we also understand that our works do not occur in isolation, which is why we have continued to work with all stakeholders to minimise the cumulative impacts of private and public sector construction on Gungahlin businesses and the Canberra community more broadly. Partnering with the Canberra Business Chamber on the light rail business link program is a demonstration that our government is alert to the opportunities but also to the challenges that light rail construction can bring. The government is committed to assisting the business community to access those opportunities and to supporting businesses with those challenges.

The light rail business link program is innovative and it is delivering opportunities for businesses to engage with the project. The program works specifically identified actions to mitigate adverse impacts and to provide businesses with support in marketing and promotion during light rail construction. It has continued to do this through the final stages of project delivery. Canberrans can already see many of the benefits of light rail in their lived experiences: a new entrance for Canberra, communities that have been built on a transit-supported corridor, and reliable and

shorter travel times to their destinations. They are also anecdotally reporting a change in road traffic.

Significant benefits are being experienced by the number of Canberrans embracing the new services, with light rail patronage already exceeding the projected estimates. Light rail has already celebrated the one-millionth passenger just three months into operations. The government is committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of the project. In February we agreed to report back to the Assembly on these findings within six months of the commencement of light rail services.

In adherence to this commitment, in June the then minister for transport, Meegan Fitzharris, publicly released the *City to Gungahlin light rail project delivery report*, which measures the performance of the project against the business case. I table a copy of this extensive report:

City to Gungahlin Light Rail—Project delivery report, dated June 2019.

The report reflects on the outcomes from the procurement and delivery of this world-class project and confirms that the delivery of the project was both under budget and largely on time. The project delivery report steps through the successes and challenges of delivering this major infrastructure project. Importantly, the report looks closely at the experiences of the local community, business owners, regulators and the National Capital Authority and sets out lessons learnt through all phases of the project and community engagement.

The key outcomes of the report confirm that the final cost of construction was \$675 million and the benefit-cost ratio increase from 1.2 to 1.3, noting that this could improve even further as future benefits are realised. The review project has also been delivered within the time frames of our original investment decision. We have continued to draw on the learnings, not only from our delivery of Canberra's first stage of light rail but also from other jurisdictions that have delivered, and are delivering, light rail, such as the Gold Coast, Newcastle, Parramatta and other cities around the world.

The report has highlighted the success of the light rail business link program in coordinating and providing an established communication link between local business and government on the project. As a proactive government, we recognise that there is always an opportunity to learn and to improve, even more so as we navigate an environment of change, new experiences and evolving opportunity. That is why we have welcomed the opportunity to deepen our understanding of how we can continue to better work and communicate with local businesses on this project and future projects.

Canberrans have been part of a long conversation on light rail going back to 2011. We had over 5,400 stakeholder discussions and inputs, 29,500 interactions from engagements, letters, face-to-face discussion, construction updates and various programs of outreach, including the light rail business link program.

An extensive retrospective review is in progress that captures all communication and engagement approaches over the past eight years to identify key areas where we can improve. This has included reviewing information from our ongoing program of engagements for light rail city to Woden, where we have already reached nearly 10,000 people face to face. We identified a number of information needs for the community, for businesses and for stakeholders around project awareness when we are in planning and approval, design and construction, and when we enter operations.

The government is soon to commence a program to engage with businesses near the next light rail route to help shape an effective program of support, advice and activation for the construction period. We are already engaging early to build relationships, project awareness and program support for businesses near light rail construction. We will engage with businesses through a range of avenues to seek operational and logistical information, to test awareness of future works and to initiate relationships that can be maintained through the delivery of our major projects.

These learnings are shared across the ACT government to improve the way we engage with businesses and the community when we deliver our infrastructure projects. The government is continuing to listen to the community and learning from all of our interactions and the insights that are provided to continually improve our processes. In February the Assembly called on the government to continue to work with businesses to optimise benefits from light rail stage 1 and the provision of support programs to mitigate construction impacts. And that is what we have done.

The Assembly also called on the government to ensure that lessons learnt inform future infrastructure projects across the territory, and we are doing that. This Assembly called on the government to provide a report back to the Assembly on lessons learned within six months of the start of light rail services and that is what we have done through the comprehensive project delivery report.

As my amendment circulated today states, the government is committed to ensuring a 12-month review of light rail stage 1. This involves proactive consultation with local businesses in Gungahlin and along the light rail corridor and ensuring that both those businesses that operated during construction and those that have opened since are able to contribute. We are also committed to ensuring that other key issues that have been raised since services commenced are reflected on in this review. Anyone who wishes to contribute to the review can do so by contacting Major Projects Canberra.

I am looking forward to seeing the one-year review of light rail stage 1. I think it is going to be a very interesting document. With the benefit having a full year of operations, that will enable us to look at what some of the challenges have been, particularly in that first stage of operations, but also what some of the benefits have been. Potentially, new businesses are starting operations with the commencement of light rail operations. We would also be looking at what businesses may no longer be there during the operations. Overall, I am expecting a very positive report and I hope that those who want to contribute can do so.

In November I intend to provide the Assembly with an update on the scope and methodology of this review. I look forward to tabling the completed report by May next year and continuing the discussion about light rail and the benefits that it brings to Canberra. I move the amendment to Mr Milligan's motion circulated in my name:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) the original business case for Light Rail Stage 1 promised to deliver a net economic benefit to the ACT community;
 - (b) in response to an Assembly Resolution on 6 June 2018, the ACT Government tabled a report entitled *Business Impact Assessment of ACT Government-led construction activities in Gungahlin* in September 2018, which included lessons learnt that could be implemented to reduce impacts to businesses during future construction projects;
 - (c) the *Light Rail Project Delivery Report* published in June 2019 provided the initial Post-Implementation Review of the City to Gungahlin light rail, including assessing and reporting on key lessons learnt;
 - (d) the *Light Rail Project Delivery Report* also highlighted the economic and social benefits the project provides to the Canberra community and detailed the extensive communication and engagement activities undertaken with a wide variety of stakeholders including local businesses;
 - (e) the *Light Rail Project Delivery Report* notes that a future review of the benefits of City to Gungahlin light rail will occur consistent with the ACT Government's Capital Framework within 12 months of operations commencing (April 2020);
 - (f) as part of this 12-month review, the ACT Government is committed to:
 - (i) proactively consulting with local stakeholders;
 - (ii) proactively consulting with local businesses along the light rail route, including those that ceased operation after light rail construction began and those that commenced operation after construction was completed; and
 - (iii) reviewing other issues that have been raised since the commencement of light rail services, including disability access, women's safety at night on light rail and when walking to stops, and bicycle access on light rail during peak periods; and
 - (g) the ACT Government encourages anyone wanting to provide input to the 12-month review to contact Major Projects Canberra via MajorProjectsCanberraEnquiries@act.gov.au;
- (2) further notes that the ACT Government has met its commitment to report back to the Assembly within six months of the commencement of light rail services, in response to the Assembly Resolution of 13 February 2019, by publicly releasing the *Light Rail Project Delivery Report* in June 2019 and tabling this document today; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) report back to the Assembly on the scope and methodology of the 12 month review by November 2019; and
- (b) table a copy of the 12-month review in the Assembly by May 2020.”.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (5.21): As we look to begin light rail stage 2, I think it is important that we review stage 1 to learn the lessons of the project. We have seen the delivery report and the business impact assessment, but I think everyone is eagerly awaiting a 12-month review. It goes without saying that building a huge infrastructure project such as this, along a busy and populated area of our city, is bound to throw a few curve balls, both in the construction and in the rollout.

The light rail project delivery report, released in June, outlines the successes of the project but also the areas that need some improvement. The delivery report raised numerous issues we must be mindful of for stage 2. Safety, the impact on businesses, communicating road closures and managing passenger numbers are just a few that I think need attention.

I turn first to safety. The report found that generally there was an increase in safety incidents after holidays, construction breaks and long weekends. Put simply, there should be no incidents; let us do better next time. Second, the report noted that whilst the project implemented an engagement program to coordinate with affected businesses, there are areas for improvement to reduce impact on businesses during the construction period. Gungahlin and Mitchell businesses did it tough through the construction period. Let us figure out how to do better. Finally, from the huge success of the first weeks of light rail opening, we have learnt to more effectively manage the passenger numbers. Let us hope that continues to stage 2.

I turn to a couple of my personal observations. It is hard to miss how popular light rail is. Whilst the construction of the light rail could be tedious, especially when stuck in peak hour trying to get out of Gungahlin in the morning, it has clearly been worth the inconvenience. Light rail is a fantastic addition to our city and an example of the bold, transformative vision this government has to make Canberra an even better place to live.

Our Labor government has implemented a key plank of the Burley Griffin plan for our city. Since light rail began taking passengers this year, it has been a resounding success. The free transport month was a fantastic initiative as it encouraged people who have never caught public transport before to try out Canberra’s upgraded system. Already, this month light rail passed its one millionth passenger milestone.

This has already exceeded the government’s expectations for passenger numbers. This shows how Canberrans, in Gungahlin and in the inner north, are embracing light rail and incorporating it into their commute. We have seen an increase in the number of people using public transport, with 32 per cent more passengers taking public transport than this time last year. This success led Canberra Metro to increase the length of the peak time services for light rail, a clear indicator of its popularity.

Weekend trips have massively increased. Canberrans are ditching the car, even out of peak hour and on weekends, highlighting their preference for using the public transport system, making it a real alternative. Whilst we have seen the benefits of the light rail, I understand the frustration of Canberrans who live along the corridor with the road work. There are still ongoing rectification works that are a genuine source of annoyance, especially on the weekends and late at night, but these works will be completed soon.

I have had a few meetings of late with the Mitchell traders who are frustrated that the Mitchell light rail stop has not been built yet. I understand their concerns, especially given the frequency of the bus service in Mitchell that takes passengers to the closest light rail stop. I hope to see the Mitchell light rail stop completed soon so that these businesses and their customers can more easily utilise light rail.

The benefits of light rail are already having a positive impact on our city and will continue to do so as we further expand the network. Light rail provides a modern, reliable and sustainable alternative to driving a car. Light rail is better for our environment and will help further reduce our city's emissions and tackle climate change.

Light rail is helping to renew areas of the city with flow-on economic benefits as areas are improved and more businesses and cultural precincts can thrive along the light rail corridor. As we expand the network, this positive impact will be spread throughout the city. Future light rail stages will further connect population hubs in our city, moving people across Canberra more efficiently and, ultimately, hopefully, reducing our reliance on cars.

We continue to push the government's bold vision for a connected, effective and environmentally sustainable transport system for our city. I look forward to seeing the continued expansion of the light rail network to Woden and beyond. In closing, it is still early days for our light rail network. Hopefully, the 12-month review provides a bit more confidence to Canberrans about their new light rail network.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (5.26): The Greens will be supporting the ALP amendment to this motion. Mr Milligan has consistently raised concerns about the impact of construction of light rail stage 1 on local businesses along the route. I have been aware of these concerns as well. I visited the Mitchell Traders during construction, and I have to say that it was very challenging to catch a bus there at that point. It has improved a bit since.

Today's motion goes to Mr Milligan's motion of 13 February this year. The result of that motion was a commitment by the government to a "comprehensive lessons learnt process within six months of the start of light rail services". This is due in October 2019. The question, obviously, is: why are we having this debate again?

My understanding from Mr Milligan's office is that they were concerned that businesses had not been consulted yet, despite being halfway through the six month-time frame. They also had a justifiable concern that some people may get

missed, particularly those businesses that, for whatever reason, be it the light rail or some other reason, may have closed down.

I understand from the government that they believe that they have discharged the requirements of the February motion with the light rail project delivery report released in June. I can see that it does basically meet the requirements of the motion, in that it does have almost a page under the heading “Engagement with business owners”. Clearly, it does not adequately address Mr Milligan’s concerns.

Mr Milligan’s intent—and, to be frank, what I also thought the Greens were voting for in February—was that business owners would be met with again after the commencement of light rail. I also thought this would include meeting with business owners who have closed their businesses and believe that light rail was at least instrumental in that decision. But there is no indication in the light rail project delivery report that this happened.

Doing this work is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, business owners and owners of former businesses deserve being given the respect of having an opportunity to talk to someone about their concerns. Secondly, they may, and probably will, have useful suggestions that can feed into the light rail stage 2 process.

The amendment that I have negotiated with the government will, I hope, deliver what needs to be done. The review will take an extra six months, but I suspect that at this point that is unavoidable, having regard to the outcomes we are looking for. Importantly, the motion text says very explicitly that there will be proactive consultation with local businesses, including those that ceased operation after the start of construction.

It also provides a contact point for businesses who want to discuss their concerns now, so that their views can be fed in to the review. That is good, but I make the point that it is a generic email address and it is really important that somebody actually looks after this address and responds to it. I hope that it does not become a dead-letter box as, unfortunately, it would appear that some email addresses in the ACT bureaucracy and elsewhere have become. If that happens, we will end up here in September with another motion. Quite frankly, there are other matters about which we could move motions.

I have spoken about this with Minister Steel’s office. I am very hopeful that his office appreciates the issues that I am trying to raise here about how the review needs to be taken seriously, and that the email address does not become yet another dead end.

The ALP amendment retains the call from Mr Milligan about reporting back to the Assembly on the scope and methodology of the review. Given that the last go at this has not resulted in what Mr Milligan wanted, I think that is an entirely reasonable statement.

I would like to note a couple of things that the 12-month review will be looking at, as listed in paragraph (1)(f)(iii). These are the areas where we can learn detailed lessons from stage 1 and make sure that they are factored in to stage 2. These are the sorts of

things I have been talking about: that we proactively consult with local stakeholders, and proactively consult with businesses along the light rail route, including those that ceased operation after construction began, and, as Mr Steel's office suggested and put in, those who have begun operations after construction was completed. I must admit that there is a group that is missing, those who started during construction. I am sure Mr Steel's office will add that to the group.

Point (iii) of paragraph (1)(f) refers to reviewing a number of other issues that have been raised since the commencement of light rail services, such as disability access, women's safety at night on light rail, including when walking to destinations from stops, and bicycle access on light rail during peak periods, which, I have been told by a number of constituents, is simply not possible because the vehicles are just too full. I assume that this was not anticipated, and I assume that the solution is to put on more services, so that there is more space for bikes and human beings.

I would hope that on day one of the next stage we will not have these problems, and I would hope that fairly soon on this stage at least some of these problems, like the bike access one, have been solved.

In conclusion I will be supporting the ALP's amendment, with the hope that this time Mr Milligan's concerns will be properly addressed. Mr Milligan has raised a serious issue and it needs to be dealt with seriously.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (5.33): I, too, rise to comment briefly on this motion. Mr Milligan has raised an important issue. Mr Milligan has been absolutely steadfast in his commitment to businesses in Gungahlin and, indeed, to all residents who have been severely impacted during the construction phase of light rail.

Anybody who saw the construction process saw the huge levels of dust, the huge inconvenience, the lack of parking and all the other ways that businesses in Gungahlin were adversely affected by the project. We kept getting promises that the government was going to give support to these businesses. It was always three or four months away. As it turned out, that three or four months, of course, never eventuated. For some businesses the process was all too difficult and they went under. There are so many businesses that had to lay off staff, so many businesses that had to downsize in order to compete with all of the challenges that the construction phase posed.

Of course, there is light at the end of the tunnel, but it does not mean much if you do not make it there; and that is the story for some of the businesses in Gungahlin that James Milligan was championing. It is just not right that people can make investments based on government decisions and have the rug pulled out from underneath them. This government has real expertise in shifting the goalposts. We saw it in the taxi industry; we see it in light rail construction and in other industries such as green waste collection. We owe it to all of the small businesses of Canberra to back them in the risks and investments that they make. They do not deserve a government that is actively working against them.

With regard to light rail, we have debated this many times in this place. Today's debate is not about the substance of light rail, the cost of light rail or how effective it

is; it is about what the impact is during the construction phase. For the government to try to fob off so many of the issues that have been raised by residents and businesses in Gungahlin, and articulated by James Milligan, does a disservice to them individually and to the government at large.

I want to conclude by thanking James Milligan for being a strong voice for businesses in Gungahlin. He will continue to advocate for them and for the community. I very much hope that at some stage businesses do get the support they desperately need from the ACT government.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (5.37): I would like to thank all speakers here today for their contributions, especially my fellow Liberal member for Yerrabi, Alistair Coe, and Caroline Le Couteur, who understand the plight that businesses are going through along the light rail corridor. After all, the Liberal Party is the party for small business and we recognise that they are the backbone of our local economy.

What really upset me was Minister Steel pretending in this place that the light rail project delivery report was what was promised. It is laughable given that when I submitted a question on notice last month about the scope of consultation for the post-six-month review, the former minister for transport said it was yet to be finalised. I realised that that response was dated 28 June 2019—after the light rail delivery report was released.

Just to be clear, this government released a report on 21 June, then told me on 28 June that the scope of the review was still being finalised. Either there has been a major breakdown in communication or this minister just is not across his portfolio.

Getting down to the guts of the amendment put forward to my motion, Minister Steel's amendment refers to the light rail project delivery report highlighting the economic and social benefits. Given that this report was published on 21 June 2019, and knowing that this government probably took months to compile it, how much data, analysis or reflection would have been possible in such a short time frame? Light rail only started on 20 April, and there is just no way that this report can report on how an operational light rail has impacted local businesses in a positive way.

In Minister Steel's amendment he refers to the extensive communication and engagement activities undertaken with a wide variety of stakeholders, including local businesses. How and when has this consultation occurred? Not one business that I have spoken to has been contacted about this apparent review. The amendment states that the report assessed and reported on key lessons learnt. Yes, page 54 talks about ways that the government tried to engage with the community, one of which relates to business, but this just does not cut the mustard.

Apparently, the only relevant lesson learnt for business was a positive one about how great communication and support services were. This completely ignores the negative impact in the government's own report tabled in September last year. Whilst I am pleased that the government has committed to a 12-month review, this does not deliver on the promise made to local businesses. Businesses should not have to wait

for that long, especially when the government is happy to splash cash on other pet projects.

After we heard that the government had spent \$447,000 on a launch party, I received a flurry of complaints. The recent announcement of upgrades planned to an existing park in the town centre running up to \$1 million was, for many, the last straw. We have seen several local businesses close in recent months and there have been many more on the brink. We have seen people lose their life savings and they are now trying to find alternative careers, forced to give up the dream that they had fought so hard to establish.

Restaurants, cafes and retail stores: we are talking about the little guys, not the chains who may be better equipped to weather the storm. And it has been a storm, a hurricane, that has left a wake of destruction behind it. It is a storm that still rumbles in the north of Canberra as construction continues, despite light rail being operational.

A saying that I like to remember in the way I approach my work and my life is, “The past is where you learned the lessons and the future is where you apply them.” This was an opportunity to get to the crux of what happened for local businesses during this project.

I can only hope that this next review might deliver some useful results. I am pleased that the scope and methodology of the 12-month review will be tabled in November 2019, and I will keep putting pressure on the government to follow through on what they have promised today. I remind the minister that he has promised to proactively consult with local businesses, including those who have ceased operations. You can take it to the bank that I will be holding you to account on that commitment.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Bruce Carmichael

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services, Minister for Government Services and Procurement and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (5.42): I rise to recognise a person who has made a remarkable contribution to the performing arts in the ACT and beyond, retiring Canberra Theatre Centre Director, Bruce Carmichael. Few people have had such a long and varied career in the theatre industry as Bruce or such a range and depth of experience in that industry. While Bruce is unfortunately unable to be here today as he

is recovering from surgery, it is great to welcome his wife, Karen, and his son Angus to the chamber along with some of his many colleagues.

Bruce has been with the Canberra Theatre Centre for a total of 34 years, starting as a mechanist before providing production management for three National Festivals of Australian Theatre under the artistic direction of Robyn Archer. He moved on to become the centre's production manager and then the operations manager, a position where he played a key role in the development of the Playhouse, now celebrated as one of the nation's finest venues of its size. Bruce became the director of the centre 12 years ago in 2007.

By working in so many of the key jobs in a major performing arts centre Bruce developed a profound understanding of how theatre works. In doing so he has gained enormous recognition and respect from his peers in the industry. As the Director of the Canberra Theatre Centre Bruce has overseen a major increase in patron numbers and income levels.

Through his leadership and his vision the centre's programing has retained its reputation for high quality drama and dance and has also extended into a greater focus on comedy, contemporary music and major commercial productions, like the musical *Mamma Mia*, which premiered its national tour in Canberra in 2017. This wider range of programing has had a direct beneficial impact on the night-time economy of Civic and Canberra's economy more generally. Indeed, the Canberra Theatre Centre's contribution to the ACT economy is now estimated at \$30 million each year.

Bruce's focus has not just been on bringing major commercial shows to Canberra. Under his leadership, the Canberra Theatre Centre has supported local theatre companies, directors and choreographers. It has increased its focus on making theatre relevant and accessible to everyone in the community, and it has placed particular emphasis on education and training, including through developing a new certificate course in theatre technical training.

In the director role Bruce has served on a number of regional, national and international bodies, such as being a board member for South East Arts, an executive councillor for Live Performance Australia and an executive member of the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association and the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres. These roles demonstrate the high regard in which Bruce is held throughout the theatre industry.

Bruce's contribution to the performing arts is recognised locally, nationally and internationally. But in terms of the legacy he leaves for Canberra, Bruce's work to raise the profile and status of the Canberra Theatre Centre to where it is today has been critical in building the case for a major new theatre for the future. I thank and congratulate Bruce for his generous and extensive legacy that he leaves in Canberra and far beyond as well. I wish him and his family the best for the future.

MADAM SPEAKER: With a level of indulgence, I pass on warm wishes and regards to Bruce and his family. I am sure that many members have attended the Canberra Theatre Centre and have benefited from his vision and legacy. Thank you.

National Tree Day

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.46): I rise to talk about National Tree Day which took place in Canberra on the Sunday just past, 28 July. Planet Ark initiated the first National Tree Day, which is traditionally held on the last weekend in July because it is the most appropriate day across many regions. But the Planet Ark website acknowledges that this may not suit everyone or every region and that that is okay; you can have your tree day event at any time that suits because every day can be tree day. Canberra, of course, celebrates Tree Week in May because that is when our autumn leaves are at their best.

The ACT has an enormous number of tree varieties, and we can thank the early government bureaucrats for that. They believed that it was important to encourage people to plant trees, so when you bought a block of land in the ACT you were given some free trees from the Yarralumla Nursery.

The free plant issue scheme started in 1930 with the intention that Canberra would retain the garden city concept. The idea was that by being provided with species suitable for the local climatic and soil conditions new home owners would plant trees that had a reasonable chance of success in our climate. The result has been wonderful avenues of trees and wonderful gardens in the suburbs old and new. The scheme continues to today for anyone who has purchased a brand new residential block of land in the ACT at no cost to the householder. Many early home builders were new to the gardening scene so trees that would grow too big were sometimes planted too close to houses et cetera, which may have created dilemmas later down the track.

With increasing development a lot of pressure has been placed on Canberra's bush capital and garden city image and on the trees themselves. In this time of changing climate trees are and should be one of the most precious assets in our city. They capture carbon, they provide valuable shade and wind protection, they are home to wildlife, they have the capacity to reduce heat and they beautify our suburbs.

Some trees in Canberra have a public profile in themselves. For example, at the end of Kings Avenue, there is the York bunya pine, planted by the Duke of York at the opening of Old Parliament House in 1927. At Government House is a much-photographed yellow box gum which is several hundred years old. Corroboree Park in Ainslie has the corroboree tree, a focal point for the local indigenous community before white settlement.

There are rows of trees in Haig Park running between Mount Ainslie and Black Mountain, and these are on the ACT Heritage Register. At the top of Anzac Parade are some pine trees as part of the Kemal Ataturk Memorial which were grown from seeds from the Gallipoli lone pine, and there are many varieties of trees at the Arboretum. Many trees have been planted by visiting dignitaries; the PNG Prime Minister was our most recent visitor to plant a tree there.

Trees make great presents and planting trees is a most worthwhile exercise. I went to a Tree Day event in Bonython on Sunday, and I thank local resident Nev for

organising this tree planting and all those who turned up near the barbecue area at Stranger Pond in Bonython to help not just to plant trees but to water some of the other plants and generally beautify the area. It was a great community event and a great community feel.

Next time you are out and about in Canberra take the time to look at some of our older and more significant trees, wonder who planted them and wonder what Canberra is going to look like in the future with the trees we are planting now and potentially the trees we may be cutting down now.

Yerrabi electorate

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.51): I rise to update the Assembly on some of the things that have happened in my electorate of Yerrabi since our last sitting. During NAIDOC Week I attended the NAIDOC in the north event in Gungahlin, a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through songs, stories, dance, art and ceremony. I was also able to participate in a program of drop-in workshops that enabled Indigenous participants to practice or revive traditional skills alongside non-Indigenous participants. Overall the day provided our community with the opportunity to connect through cultural exchange and to build an understanding and appreciation of the region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

I also had the opportunity to drop in to the Gungahlin Child and Family Centre to see their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander holiday program. Dhani, a young Wiradjuri woman and educator from the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, taught the children about some of the native animals around the Canberra region, and we all took part in a special acknowledgement of country. I had a fantastic time at the program and enjoyed seeing Gungahlin families engaging with the culture of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Gungahlin's community has been exceptionally active this month because I was also invited to attend the Gungahlin Jets high-flyers ball. The club and its players came together to celebrate the success of the Gungahlin Jets, in particular their women's team who had scored their first goal of the season that day after working very hard to rebuild their team.

Earlier this month I attended the BAPS ladies cultural program as part of the Guru Purnima Festival. I was honoured to be offered the opportunity to speak on my experiences in becoming a member of the Legislative Assembly and encourage the ladies and girls to pursue challenging job opportunities and career aspirations.

In environmental news I am pleased to say I have been working with Friends of Grasslands and the Ginninderra Catchment Group towards a plan for the North Mitchell Grasslands reserve as a conservation and recreation reserve. We have proposed a model with high value grassland patches surrounded by urban development that prioritises the grasslands. Together we hope to make the grassland more attractive to Gungahlin residents as a place to experience and enjoy nature.

North Mitchell Grasslands has recently been allocated funds by the ACT government to help conserve, manage and restore the grassland and habitat for related threatened species. These include the golden sun moth, Ginninderra pepper cress and striped legless lizard. There is the potential to trial and develop new approaches to grassy ecosystem restoration, encourage opportunities for continued cultural learning and practices, and provide an experience of nature. The reserve may also be used as a place of Indigenous education, sharing a community involvement and for education and research for people of all ages.

I recently participated in another workshop at the grasslands which gave community members and stakeholders an opportunity to express their views about the concept plan and offset proposals. The workshop involved a walk around key areas of the site and addresses from me, Peter Hazell from the Mulloon Institute, Donna Hazell from the New South Wales Biodiversity Trust, Clare McInnes from the environmental offset team, Karissa Preuss from the Ginninderra Catchment Group and Geoff Robertson from Friends of Grasslands.

Overall it has been a busy few months in the Yerrabi community since our June sittings, and I am looking forward to being back out and about in the community.

Vanuatu Independence Day

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (5.54): Yesterday was Independence Day for Vanuatu, Australia's neighbour on the other side of the Coral Sea. As is the case with many Pacific Islands nations, Vanuatu has close historical links to this country. The New Hebrides group of islands, as it was then called, was one of the major sources for workers brought into Australia in the second half of the 19th century to provide cheap labour on Australian plantations. It is estimated that before this practice ended approximately 60,000 South Sea Islanders were imported through a practice commonly known as blackbirding, which often relied on deception to coerce people into leaving their native lands for the promise of jobs or other benefits and even on outright kidnapping.

We do not know how many of the labourers who came to Australia were specifically from the New Hebrides, but at one point more than half of the adult male population of several of the islands had been taken away to work. This has had a lasting impact on independent Vanuatu in some significant ways. Although most labourers were on three-year contracts it is estimated that 30 per cent of the South Sea Islanders who work in Australia died during their three years. This resulted in significant depopulation, meaning that there are fewer people in Vanuatu now than there may well have been in previous centuries.

Modern Vanuatu is a beautiful nation comprising 82 volcanic islands, only 65 of which are inhabited. Its wet and warm tropical weather have carpeted these islands with lush tropical forests. To share a fun fact, it was in certain of these forests on the island of Pentecost that the precursor to bungee jumping originated. Land diving, as it is properly called, involves men carefully selecting tree vines, tying them around their ankles and then diving head first from wooden towers that soar up to 30 metres into the air. The best dives are those where the man's shoulders actually brush the ground.

Vanuatu only achieved independence from France and the UK in 1980, making it one of the world's newest nations. This was the first year that Vanuatu Independence Day was celebrated in the Canberra region. It was my privilege to attend the event that was held this past Saturday evening. The theme was, "We're bringing tropical Vanuatu to Canberra," and the celebration certainly lived up to that promise.

On a cold winter's night I was immediately greeted by the warmth of the islands, which absolutely includes the warm and friendly embrace of the islanders themselves. I take this opportunity to wish all Ni-Vanuatu living in the ACT a happy Independence Day. I also wish to thank those who organised the event this past weekend, including Brigitte and Sylvie and the rest of the amazing team. I greatly enjoyed the food, the Pacific Islands floor show and, most importantly, the opportunity to be with dear friends and make several more in the process.

Trash Mob Canberra Active Aranda

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (5.58): I recently had the pleasure of attending two fantastic community initiatives in Belconnen. I do not think it will surprise anyone that, in keeping with today's theme, I might talk a little more about rubbish by reflecting on more of the good work of our friends at Trash Mob Canberra.

Many people both here and in the community will be familiar with the wonderful work of Trash Mob Canberra. These volunteers collect rubbish and recyclables from parks and reserves across Canberra, ensuring that our green spaces and waterways continue to shine. I have volunteered at a number of Trash Mob events in the Ginninderra electorate and I am always struck by how committed regular volunteers and residents are to preserving our environment and enriching and connecting our community.

To mark World Environment Day in June, Trash Mob Canberra teamed up with Canberra schools strike 4 climate to organise a clean-up at John Knight Memorial Park at Lake Ginninderra. It is always disappointing to see rubbish strewn around and dumped in Lake Ginninderra but getting together and working together to improve the environs is always a pleasure, and I was very happy to support the groups by organising a barbecue lunch for these hardworking volunteers who collected bags upon bags of litter. We were very lucky that, despite the fact it was winter, we had clear blue skies and many hands making light work on the day.

I have always enjoyed supporting Trash Mob Canberra and keeping Belconnen and the broader Canberra beautiful. I emphasise my thanks to all the volunteers who participated in the clean-up and who have participated in countless clean-ups since, and special thanks, of course, to their coordinator, Maddie Diamond. Members of this place will, of course, be very familiar with her, due to her hard work.

After the Trash Mob clean-up, on the very same day, I attended another great community event: an active Aranda meeting at the suburb's district playing fields. The Aranda Residents Group recently created the active Aranda project to encourage

residents to be simply more active for both health and pleasure. Community-run initiatives like this one are a great way to bring residents of all ages together to discuss how Canberra's public spaces can be improved. This meeting of residents on the playing fields was no exception, with participants discussing how the suburb's play equipment could be upgraded to best suit families and how the Aranda oval could best cater to the needs of the community.

A number of great ideas were raised and there were innovative ways discussed, including my favourite: putting sticky dots on ideas and different designs that you prefer. It is always a great democratic institution, that one. The diversification of the suburb's play equipment was on the agenda so that we are able to better cater for all ages and increase, perhaps, the seating capacity and some of the shade at the oval. I am sure that the minister will look forward to hearing some more of these ideas.

Residents also talked about the footpath improvements program proposed for the area, which is of course part of this government's age-friendly suburbs program. The footpath upgrades are fundamental to Aranda's connectivity and ensuring that Canberra continues to be an accessible and age-friendly city. I also doorknocked in the days prior and these initiatives are very welcomed in Belconnen's oldest suburb, which recently celebrated its 53rd year.

It is great to see people of all ages coming together to discuss these important local issues and I thank active Aranda and everyone who participated, giving up their time for the event and for their continued engagement in this initiative, and a special thanks to Richard Lansdowne for his leadership of this important initiative.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 6.03 pm.